

Quality Teaching for Excellence and Equity

A report from PPTA's quality teaching taskforce

PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests of some 18,500 secondary teachers in state secondary, area, manual training and intermediate schools, as well as tutors in community education institutions and alternative education and activity centres, and principals in secondary and area schools. More than 95% of eligible teachers choose to belong to the association.

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Foreword



“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.” - John Dewey

Teaching has rarely been under such a spotlight. There are clamorous demands on schools to solve social problems, lift the nation’s economic performance and increase equity for the disadvantaged, whilst having resources severely constrained and inequities increasing in society at large. Schools, however, continue to remain at the heart of New Zealand communities.

Sitting alongside this is a clear message that the quality of teaching that students experience matters. Sometimes it is framed by politicians as the only thing that matters.

During 2012 the minister of education proposed various changes with the declared goal of improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement for young people. These include introducing performance pay, raising the qualifications of teachers, loosening registration requirements and allowing school leaders to more easily “sort the wheat from the chaff”. However well intentioned, these will not raise the quality of teaching in New Zealand schools.

In May 2012 PPTA’s executive established a quality teaching taskforce, made up of representatives from a range of association groups, to define the profession’s case for what will promote and enhance system-wide quality teaching for students. The focus is on what helps teachers be the best that they can be throughout their careers. No one cares more than teachers about making education as good as it can be, and no one knows better than teachers how to do it.

Nevertheless, PPTA is well aware of the importance of this matter to many other stakeholders and society at large. Collaboration, and ideally consensus, on how to address the challenges facing education is the best way to make systemic changes. Consequently, PPTA invited politicians, sector leaders, academics and officials to address the taskforce on four key questions:

- ❏ What are the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to teacher development and performance management?

- ❏ What approaches should be taken to enhance quality teaching for diverse learners?
- ❏ What are the risks that need to be guarded against in any change proposals?
- ❏ How do you see your proposed approaches working?

Their responses have helped inform the findings of this report. There is no silver bullet and it will take time. The report identifies the following as the most significant strategies for education systems to enhance and promote quality teaching:

- ❏ Collaborative professional inquiry.
- ❏ Career pathways to share good practice.
- ❏ Ongoing and resourced professional learning.
- ❏ Developmental appraisal systems.
- ❏ Shared understanding of quality teaching through aspirational criteria.

Many factors, which undoubtedly affect teachers' work and student learning, fall outside the scope of this report. Some of these are touched on because the context in which teaching takes place cannot be tidily cut off from

the act of teaching. Nevertheless, this report focuses largely on teacher performance and development, as one important element in making our already excellent education system even better. As Dewey said, we must aim for the best possible education for all our young people.

Joe Hunter, PPTA national executive

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Erica Schouten, PPTA national executive

John Russell, NZ Secondary Principals' Council

Martin Henry, PPTA senior positions advisory committee

Thomas Newton, PPTA establishing teachers committee

Introduction

Excellent education is enormously important to Aotearoa/New Zealand; it is as much a social and cultural imperative as an economic one. Quality teaching contributes to each learner's individual development whilst strengthening our society as a whole.

Students' individual characteristics, including socio-economic status, are widely accepted as having the greatest impact on their achievement. The most significant in-school influence on student achievement is asserted by many researchers¹ today to be the quality of teaching experienced by a student, and that is the primary concern of this report.

PPTA affirms its commitment to all students receiving high quality teaching throughout their education

1) The extent of teacher influence is hotly contested and various researchers claim widely varying figures. In John Hattie's widely quoted research the usual figure is 30%. See John Hattie, *Teachers Make a Difference. What is the Research Evidence?* (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2003). Adrienne Alton-Lee claims that "up to 59% of variance in student performance is attributable to difference between teachers and classes" in the report *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (NZ Ministry of Education, 2003). Much lower numbers of 7-21% of variance are cited by, for example, Konstantopoulos and Hedges, in their article *How Large are Teacher Effects? Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* (American Educational Research Association, 2004).



wherever they live in New Zealand. This means that all students, with all their individual diversity, are afforded the greatest opportunities for learning and personal development to the greatest of their abilities. This is the fundamental business of teaching.

The focus here on the quality of teaching rather than the quality of teachers is deliberate. The phrase "teacher quality" personalises and fixes the terms of the discussion onto individual teachers, rather than recognising that teachers' work is highly contextualised and their ability

to provide quality teaching depends on many factors. The phrase “quality teaching” emphasises that the values, knowledge and competencies that inform the work of teaching are not individual and fixed attributes but something all educators should be enabled to aspire to, acquire and continue to demonstrate across all the contexts within which they work.

A narrow focus on individual teacher quality is politically popular because it conveniently allows governments to ignore their responsibility to properly resource public education, and distracts attention from the wider context in which education occurs. Improving learning for students requires attention to the wider social and economic lives of learners.

Teachers have an individual and collective obligation to critically reflect on and inquire into their practice and its effectiveness and to continue their professional growth throughout their careers. Likewise the employers of teachers have a reciprocal obligation to provide opportunities for the advancement of the abilities of individual employees.² However, sufficient planning and resourcing for this ultimately falls back to the government through the Ministry of Education so that all state and

state integrated schools’ boards as employers are able to do this. As teachers inquire into their practice they need to have access to appropriate professional learning throughout their careers. Responsibility for ensuring the quality of teaching belongs to many people, groups and organisations, within and outside the teaching profession.

New Zealand has a robust and widely accepted evidence base for good teaching practices, and there is also an increasing understanding internationally of the schooling policy levers that can lift the quality of educational outcomes for learners.

2) Good employer provisions of the State Sector Act 1988 (s.77A).

What is quality teaching?

Teaching is a complex professional activity. Teachers bring professional knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy and child development and integrate this in work that is essentially about interpersonal relationships and knowing one's learners and oneself.

Fundamental to this relational work is a moral purpose based on “doing good” for learners. Different understandings of the nature of this “good” underlie many of the debates that beset education, from the policy sphere to the discussions that take place in schools and communities.

The New Zealand Curriculum places young people's development as learners as the prime “good” at the centre of the education system, with the goal of young people becoming “confident, connected, actively-involved life-long learners”.³ PPTA affirms this goal, and is wary of subsidiary outcomes for education that may undermine this.

With learners at the centre of education, focusing on their experiences of it as a mark of quality should be

fundamental. Many of the people who spoke to the quality teaching taskforce emphasised the importance of student voice in describing their desires for and understanding of what they appreciate about education.

With the New Zealand Curriculum's student-centred objectives in mind, there is a robust body of evidence describing quality teaching practices that help achieve this. In New Zealand the best evidence synthesis iterations have been widely accepted by educators as useful and comprehensive. The 10 key factors identified in the best evidence synthesis on quality teaching for diverse students are:

1. Quality teaching is focused on student achievement (including social outcomes) and facilitates high standards of student outcomes for heterogeneous groups of students.
2. Pedagogical practices enable classes and other learner groupings to work as caring, inclusive, and cohesive learning communities.

³) NZ Ministry of Education, *New Zealand Curriculum* (Wellington: Learning Media 2007).

3. Effective links are created between school and other cultural contexts in which students are socialised, to facilitate learning.
4. Quality teaching is responsive to student learning processes.
5. Opportunity to learn is effective and sufficient.
6. Multiple task contexts support learning cycles.
7. Curriculum goals, resources including ICT usage, task design, teaching and school practices are effectively aligned.
8. Pedagogy scaffolds and provides appropriate feedback on students' task engagement.
9. Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse.
10. Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.⁴

These generic principles, which are strongly reflected in the New Zealand Curriculum, all require contextualisation, sophisticated understanding and practice from teachers

and cannot be simply “picked up and applied”. Therefore they do not lend themselves to the creation of simple checklists or observational tools by which to judge teaching.

The definition of diversity in the best evidence synthesis is also important, as it emphasises the complexity and heterogeneity of people's identities. It states: “Diversity encompasses many characteristics including ethnicity, socio-economic background, home language, gender, and special needs, disability, and giftedness. Teaching needs to be responsive to the diversity within ethnic groups, for example, diversity within Pakeha, Māori, Pasifika and Asian students. We also need to recognise the diversity within individual students influenced by intersections of gender, cultural heritage(s), socio-economic background, and talent”.⁵

The registered teacher criteria also describe broad dimensions of good teacher practice, “representing the essential knowledge and capabilities for quality teaching in Aotearoa/New Zealand”.⁶ These criteria are intended to work both as minimum standards of teaching quality and as aspirational descriptions for career-long improvement, and are increasingly accepted and used as such by school

4) Adrienne Alton-Lee, *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* (NZ Ministry of Education, 2003), pp.89-92.

5) *Ibid.* p.v.

6) NZ Teachers Council, *Registered Teacher Criteria Handbook* (2010).

leaders and teachers. These 12 criteria are:

1. Establish and maintain effective professional relationships focused on the learning and well-being of ākongā (students).
2. Demonstrate commitment to promoting the well-being of all ākongā.
3. Demonstrate commitment to bicultural partnership in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
4. Demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning and development of personal professional practice.
5. Show leadership that contributes to effective teaching and learning.
6. Conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning programme.
7. Promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive learning environment.
8. Demonstrate in practice their knowledge and understanding of how ākongā learn.
9. Respond effectively to the diverse language and cultural

experiences, and the varied strengths, interests and needs of individuals and groups of ākongā.

10. Work effectively within the bicultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
11. Analyse and appropriately use assessment information, which has been gathered formally and informally.
12. Use critical inquiry and problem-solving effectively in their professional practice.⁷

While both these sets of descriptors/criteria are useful, they should not detract from the fact that teaching is complex, relational work that resists being reduced to a simple formula. Reductive descriptions that are easily observed or measured fail to capture the contextual and relational heart of teaching; therefore these criteria must be used thoughtfully and reflectively.

As stated earlier, descriptions of quality teaching cannot avoid addressing some of the challenging questions about the purpose and moral dimension of education. Measures of learner achievement will always to some extent be proxies for the desirable social, economic and moral goals of education.

7) Ibid.

As the debate about national standards has highlighted, assessment information about limited aspects of learning does not describe the holistic and developmental purpose of education. However, the state will always demand some quantification and qualifications to measure the worth of its investment in the education system and for the purpose of credentialing. Governments that are driven by technocratic and neo-liberal instincts will make even greater demands for quantification of these outcomes, as to some extent we are seeing today.

Nevertheless, measurement of student achievement can only be part of the evidence when describing, or looking for, quality teaching. Quantifiable achievement is important, but it is not the purpose of education in and of itself, and certainly should not be used as the prime method of assessing the quality of teaching a student has received.

There is a research based position, presented to the taskforce, which argues that teachers should not be held responsible for student achievement per se, but rather for establishing the right conditions for students to learn. This argument is an important counterbalance to a position that removes all other contextual factors from student achievement other than the “teacher effect”.

There are several important factors with regard to quality

teaching that are at best only alluded to in the best evidence synthesis and registered teacher criteria, and these are the material conditions of teachers’ work and what Fullan and Hargreaves call the “professional capital” of teaching.⁸

The taskforce heard arguments that factors such as time, class size and access to resources are all hugely important for the capacity of teachers to work to a high standard. It is sometimes argued that these are used as “excuses” by teachers and teacher unions to explain away poor teaching practice. However, there are structural and contextual factors that do impact on the effectiveness of teachers’ work and which therefore can limit student achievement. It is dangerous to ignore these.

Similarly, the work of Fullan and Hargreaves on the professional capital of teaching makes clear that individual teacher characteristics are not the key drivers for improving student outcomes, and instead it is collective characteristics that are crucial. The taskforce was cautioned against a heroic model of teaching which individualises good practice, and was urged to emphasise instead the power of collaborative reflection and inquiry, and mutual development.

8) “Professional capital is the systemic development and integration of three kinds of capital – human, social and decisional – into the teaching profession.” See Michael Fullan & Andy Hargreaves, *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School* (Routledge, 2012), p. xv.

What factors affect the quality of teaching and student learning now?

The vast majority of teaching that takes place in New Zealand schools is of a very high standard. This is shown not only by the high placing that New Zealand students receive in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), but also through the comparatively positive rankings that New Zealand teachers receive from students in regular PISA surveys.⁹ This testifies to the skills of New Zealand teachers at establishing productive learning environments and positive relations with students.

Nevertheless the taskforce was reminded that doing well was no reason to not want to do better. Individually, teachers are motivated by wanting to do the best they can for their students; this applies collectively as well.

There are many pressures and tensions that have an impact on the quality of teaching taking place in New Zealand schools. Some of these enable teachers to do their personal best, but others pull teachers in the opposite

direction. One that teachers commonly report themselves is the rate of change, the number of changes, the extent of the change and the lack of professional support for the change. They therefore worry about the time to manage all that and continue to do the best for their students.

The taskforce was also reminded that the material conditions of teachers' work are inextricably linked with quality. New Zealand teachers teach more hours each week for less money than the OECD average, and overall expenditure on schooling is well below the OECD average. "In comparison with teachers from other countries, New Zealand secondary school teachers on average do better in promoting optimum learning conditions for students, despite having fewer resources and less time to do so."¹⁰ Again this is an area constantly reported on by teachers. They are anxious about being able to do the best for each student's learning given the numbers in their classes and the time they have available. Pedagogies that are important for quality teaching, such as student inquiry,

9) OECD, *PISA 2009 At A Glance*. Available from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/46660259.pdf>

10) John O'Neill, unpublished paper presented to the quality teaching taskforce (2012).

cooperative learning and differentiation of learning, require much more planning and time with each student.

Not only is teaching complex, the structural framework surrounding the teaching profession is complex. Teacher recruitment, training, remuneration, performance management, professional learning, career development and leadership are important elements that have an impact on teacher performance collectively and individually. Some of these elements are defined by legislation, some by collective employment agreements, some by regulations and some simply by local practice and culture. The lack of consistency and coordination across these areas was highlighted recently by the OECD Country Report on Assessment and Evaluation.¹¹

A contributing factor to this lack of coordination in New Zealand is the hands-off approach of the Ministry of Education and the absence of a middle tier of educational support and leadership such as a district or local authority. Many countries have worked to coordinate these things more closely, such as Singapore with its single initial teacher education institution and three distinct career pathways for teachers, with training for these

all administered by the same institution, or Scotland where the General Teaching Council also regulates in-service professional learning and elements of career development.

For most teachers in most schools performance management is, at best, similar to what is described in the various teacher performance management resources published by the Ministry of Education in the late 1990s.¹² This is a three step process, with an initial meeting between an appraiser and teacher to agree on expectations for the year, an interim appraisal that may involve an observation, and a final appraisal meeting towards the end of term four, which includes elements of self-review. The developmental nature of effective appraisal is barely referred to and takes second place to compliance demands.

Now, with the current push nationally to focus on quantifiable student outcomes as measures of quality, issues that significantly affect student learning are being ignored. The effect of 270,000 young people living in poverty and 20% of families with school age children

11) Deborah Nusche, Dany Laveault, John MacBeath and Paulo Santiago, *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011* (2012).

12) For example, NZ Ministry of Education, *Teacher Performance Management, A Resource for Boards of Trustees, Principals and Teachers* (1999).

having inadequate nutrition¹³ seems to be of no account to the government and policy makers. Moreover, the fact that these economic conditions impact much worse on Māori and Pasifika correlates strongly with the lower achievement data of these groups.

The current government's response to data on student achievement has been to set targets such as that 85% of 18-year-olds will achieve NCEA level 2 by 2017, without any consideration for the economic conditions that make it harder for many students to succeed. Setting and monitoring targets is not an adequate response to raising achievement for students, nor will it contribute to enhanced teaching. Whether at an individual, school or system level, achievement targets are a "policy technology"¹⁴ that may be useful in conjunction with a range of other measures and when seen as part of a process, but not as key levers for change.

13) Office of Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group, *Solutions to Child Poverty Issues and Paper for Consultation* (2012).

14) Ball, S, 'The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity', *Journal of Education Policy*, 18:2 (2003).



What enhances system-wide quality teaching?



Ben Levin says this on what he has learned over the last 20 years about effective large-scale improvement in the quality of school systems:

This much is certain: achieving real and lasting improvement in student outcomes takes a sustained effort to change teaching and learning practices in thousands and thousands of classrooms and this in turn requires focused and sustained effort by all parts of the education system and its partners. Key aspects of this collaborative effort include careful attention to goal setting, positive engagement, capacity building, effective communication, learning from research and innovation, maintaining focus in the midst of multiple pressures, and use of resources. Effective large-scale change requires careful attention to implementation as well as policy, and to the building of an implementation system that is up to the task of bringing about the necessary changes in daily practice.¹⁵

With these broad principles in mind, the taskforce

identified five factors as critical to enhancing quality teaching across the system. They were:

- ✎ Collaborative professional inquiry.
- ✎ Career pathways to share good practice.
- ✎ Ongoing and resourced professional learning.
- ✎ Developmental appraisal systems.
- ✎ Shared understanding of quality teaching through aspirational criteria.

The following table summarises the taskforce's ideas and proposals on these five strategies.

¹⁵ Ben Levin, 'System-wide Improvement in Education', *Education Policy Series 13* (International Academy of Education 2012) p.9.

What enhances quality teaching in all schools?	What changes need to be made?
<p>Collaborative professional inquiry</p> <p>This is the most effective way to support teachers to do their personal best throughout their careers.</p>	<p>Requires a school culture where professional conversations, inquiry and learning underpin goal setting at all levels.</p> <p>Requires in-school and out-of-school structural supports, resourcing and trust in the profession.</p>
<p>Career pathways to share good practice</p> <p>These already exist to some extent, but are limited in number and type. There should be more opportunities for good practice to become common practice through teachers sharing their knowledge and expertise.</p>	<p>Extension of the specialist classroom teacher positions in all schools to further develop mentoring and coaching, with ongoing and appropriate PLD and support.</p> <p>Dedicated external expert support services available in all regions on induction, mentoring, coaching, developmental appraisal as well as in specialist subject areas.</p> <p>Teachers able to move in and out of school, to specialist positions working across schools or with schools as facilitators of teacher inquiry or sharing evidence based teaching practice.</p>
<p>Ongoing and resourced professional learning</p> <p>Part of the definition of a profession is that its members are committed to developing their practice throughout their careers. The capacity to accomplish this is to a large extent dependent on factors out of the control of individual teachers.</p>	<p>Professional learning opportunities available for each teacher to engage at a deep level with ideas and approaches. There must be extended time and access to external expertise for this as well as learning alongside colleagues. Teachers' thinking needs to be challenged and their leaders need to provide the right conditions for learning.</p> <p>Dedicated external expert support services available in all regions on induction, mentoring, coaching, developmental appraisal as well as on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in specialist subject areas.</p> <p>National post-graduate practice-based qualifications developed to recognise, reinforce and extend teacher inquiry, knowledge-building and research.</p>

What enhances quality teaching in all schools?	What changes need to be made?
<p>Developmental appraisal systems</p> <p>The summative, formative and accountability purposes of appraisal can all be met by a high quality, developmental system.</p>	<p>Appraisal processes across all schools based on ongoing professional learning and conversations targeted to meeting a balance between individual teachers' goals and school goals.</p> <p>Appraisal is for learning, and promotes collaborative professional inquiry.</p> <p>Summative appraisal for attestation and renewal of practising certificates naturally derives from an ongoing developmental process. High stakes competency processes are clearly separate from appraisal.</p> <p>Collective employment agreements provide the parameters for this type of appraisal to ensure that all schools move down this path.</p>
<p>Shared understanding of quality teaching through aspirational criteria</p> <p>The registered teacher criteria serve as the hurdle, the benchmark and the aspirational goal for all teachers.</p>	<p>The New Zealand Teachers Council plays a lead role in promulgating guidelines on developing common understanding of the criteria and making judgements against them.</p> <p>The general nature of these criteria allows them to be contextualised by schools and teachers, and professionalises teachers as they engage with and develop their understandings of them.</p>

Elements of these strategies are already in place, but there is a need for much greater development, in collaboration with the profession, and a consistent long term plan to implement, review and respond accordingly. And as Levin says, “A good plan is nothing without effective implementation.”¹⁶

The strength of these strategies is that they incorporate and recognise teachers’ intrinsic motivation and the factors that promote that: mastery, autonomy and purpose.¹⁷ Teaching is not an activity that can be improved by boosting the extrinsic motivating factors, that is, tastier carrots and scarier sticks. There is no credible evidence to suggest that either differential performance pay or firing more teachers will lead to quality teaching or better student outcomes. A recent OECD paper states that there is no relationship between average student performance in a country and the use of performance-pay schemes.¹⁸

Teaching is a profession with a strong sense of purpose,

which is about making a positive difference to young people’s lives. This moral purpose is undermined by a focus on narrow, reductive outcomes, something that to a large extent has been resisted in New Zealand, as shown by the aspirations expressed in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Being autonomous means having the capacity to make meaningful choices and being trusted to make these decisions. There is an extensive literature suggesting that in recent decades teacher professional autonomy has been eroded. Focusing on accountability and competitive mechanisms of control, such as checklist approaches to appraisal, performance pay and the like, will not improve the quality of teaching in New Zealand.

16) Ibid p.28.

17) Daniel Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (Penguin 2009).

18) OECD, *PISA in Focus 16* ‘Does Performance-based Pay Improve Teaching?’ Available from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/16/50328990.pdf>.

Focusing in on appraisal



The taskforce was asked by the PPTA executive to look closely at performance appraisal as a key tool to enhance quality teaching and because of the current political discourse about judging teachers and “sorting the wheat from chaff”. This section of the report focuses in on teacher appraisal practices. PPTA has recently issued guidelines and models for effective appraisal.¹⁹

The teacher inquiry model, based on the idea of teachers being researchers into their own practice, is the strongest basis for ongoing development of teachers as professionals. Having this model embedded in the New Zealand Curriculum provides a theoretical base that links student learning and teacher development, and is a useful start to creating a culture of teacher inquiry. The Best Evidence Synthesis on Teacher Professional Learning and Development²⁰ emphasises the importance of this reflective cycle of teacher inquiry and knowledge-building to promote valued student outcomes, which traditional

top-down models of teacher learning have ignored.

Basing performance management systems in schools, both school wide and for individual teacher and principal appraisal, on the teacher inquiry model is the next most logical, practical and evidence-based step to take in reaching for the goal of quality teaching for all students. Teacher inquiry as the basis for performance appraisal changes the emphasis from simply measuring results or tick box exercises to teachers actually having serious/critical professional conversations about what is happening for their students. It would also require the development of expertise and capacity in schools to support these processes.

Whether or not teacher inquiry is used as the basis for appraisal in a school, the following principles were identified by the taskforce as underpinning effective appraisal:

1. Improved teaching and learning must be the primary goal.
2. Teacher collaboration must be promoted.

19) <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/resources/publication-list/2239-appraisal>.

20) Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar H., & Fung, I, 'Teacher Professional Learning and Development' (2006), Best evidence synthesis iteration of the NZ Ministry of Education.

3. There must be transparency of process, with teachers involved in the development, implementation and overseeing of school and national systems.
4. Teacher appraisal must integrate with initial teacher education, induction and mentoring and ongoing professional learning policies.
5. There must be mutual accountability and trust between teachers, school leaders and the sector with feedback flowing in each direction.
6. Appraisals must be differentiated for teachers with different needs.
7. Summative and formative roles for appraisal should be combined, with a primary focus on the developmental role.
8. Data should be used fairly and wisely to inform the process.
9. Appraisal must be well-resourced, including time and adequate training provided for appraisers.

The taskforce considered the question of whether there is a need for further levels of the registered teacher criteria

as recommended by the OECD report.²¹ The taskforce concluded that the differentiation of levels of performance should be contextualised for each teacher according to their role and stage of career and does not require extra levels of descriptors or standards to describe “even better practice”.

The development of “higher” (or more specific) levels of criteria and standards, despite a burgeoning literature²² in support of them, has not been shown to improve practice by teachers. The chartered teacher scheme in Scotland was closed recently as it was seen to be not leading to changes in practice (and was expensive); the threshold in England is met by almost every teacher who applies (98%) and has little credibility; while the National Board of Professional Standards in the USA relies heavily on a “heroic model” which the taskforce was warned against. Professor Martin Thrupp’s paper, written to inform the discussion around the development of the registered teacher criteria, argued for generic standards on the grounds that while they “require a higher trust approach ... [they] are a sensible response to the paradox that the

21) Deborah Nusche, Dany Laveault, John MacBeath and Paulo Santiago, *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011* (2012).

22) Lawrence Ingvarson & Elizabeth Kleinhenz (2006), *Standards for Advanced Teaching, A Review of National and International Development* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2006).

more managerial and performative pressure is placed on teachers, the less authentic their teaching will become”.²³

Related to this is the question of recognising ‘excellent teaching’, supposedly that which goes far beyond what might be expected of a teacher in a particular role and at a particular stage of their career. The taskforce identified that a better goal should be to foster a culture of excellence across the whole system: “Not a heroic teacher, but a heroic system”. Instead of the individualised model, which can never guarantee system-wide excellence, there need to be positions and roles created which enable excellent teaching practice to become common practice. Teachers are not driven by personal gain, but by the opportunity to make a difference to the profession, to students, and to their communities. Teachers see themselves as belonging to a professional community with a moral purpose, and value being recognised within that.

Another consideration of the taskforce was around the value of external input to appraisal as recommended by the OECD report.²⁴ It concluded that external input into making judgements was not required, but that there was



a need for external input to help schools build appraisal capacity.

The taskforce also considered the place of student achievement data and value-added measures, often proposed by politicians to be the sole focus of appraisal. They took the view that while it is vitally important for schools, departments and individual teachers to inquire into the impacts of their work on student achievement, a sole focus on quantitative measures is unduly one-dimensional. The student-centred and holistic vision of the New Zealand Curriculum is far wider than that.

23) Martin Thrupp, *Professional Standards for Teachers and Teacher Education: Avoiding the Pitfalls* (PPTA and NZEI, Wellington, 2006), p.4.

24) Deborah Nusche, Dany Laveault, John MacBeath and Paulo Santiago, *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 2011* (2012).

Summative aspects of performance management



The question of competence was discussed by the taskforce and it was recognised that appraisal and competence processes are not the same, while acknowledging that issues of competence may well arise through the appraisal processes.

Teachers who are not meeting minimum standards and show no ability to do so should not be able to continue to teach. The current system of addressing teacher incompetence strikes a good balance between protecting learners and protecting the employment rights of teachers. It involves a careful and staged process:

1. Ensuring that a teacher has had reasonable opportunities (under the good employer provisions) for appropriate and effective professional development.
2. Advising the teacher of their right to be supported throughout because of the potentially serious outcomes as well as the need for there to be an understood and fair process to work through.

3. Putting in place an appropriate assistance and personal guidance programme to assist the teacher. This may be the end of the matter. But if that has not remedied the situation, then:
4. Advising the teacher in writing of the specific matter(s) causing concern, the ways this can be remedied and a reasonable timeframe within which to remedy the matter – usually 10 weeks.
5. An assessment is made as to whether or not the teacher has remedied the situation and this is recorded and signed and the teacher given an opportunity to comment. If the teacher fails to remedy the matter(s) causing concern they may be dismissed without notice and paid one month's salary in lieu.

Problems arise generally because of employers' lack of knowledge of how the system works, difficulty in accessing the resources required and the unwillingness of some employers to take on the responsibility of moving to this step. This emphasises the need for external support for schools in terms of their capacity for performance management.

The recent work by the Teachers Council on teacher competency has shown how keen school leaders are to access support with this process. PPTA field staff know how difficult it often is for school leaders to access the expertise for personalised support that is required for teachers going through competency procedures. The costs and difficulties involved in this are sometimes barriers for undertaking the process. Locally responsive professional assistance from supporting agencies would be valuable in providing this.

Teachers do not have automatic annual progression up the salary scale, and the attestation process ensures that teachers demonstrate development and performance appropriate to their stage in their career. Successful attestation allows teachers to move to the next step on the salary scale. As with the competence process, if there are issues about an individual teacher's progress, the school must consider what issues the appraisal system is identifying and what professional development and support the teacher has had.



Implications for collective agreement negotiations



The key focus of PPTA's 2012 Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (STCA) claim is on what thoughtful and coherent change will support quality teaching for all students; therefore the findings of this taskforce are germane to that. In bargaining, PPTA will seek commitment from the secretary for education to work collaboratively to manage effective change and innovation in the secondary sector over time, which evidence indicates supports quality teaching.

PPTA will be seeking agreement to a programme of work. This will include:

- ❧ A review of the 2003 ministerial taskforce report.²⁵
- ❧ A work group on expanding career pathways with improved professional support for teachers at all stages of their career.
- ❧ An investigation into how professional learning of teachers can be recognised including through post-graduate practice-based qualifications.

A series of specific claims for more immediate change includes:

1. One set of standards

Early in the work of the taskforce, agreement was reached that the Teachers Council's registered teacher criteria should be adopted by the profession as the set of standards that best describe quality teaching, and the single set by which teachers should be "judged". The reasons for this include that:

- ❧ They were developed through extensive consultation with the profession as representing the essential knowledge and capabilities for quality teaching in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- ❧ They encapsulate the complexity of teaching and can be contextualised for the different stages and roles within a teacher's career.
- ❧ They have the potential to serve as a hurdle, a benchmark and as an aspirational framework for ongoing professional learning and development in that career.

²⁵) This report recommended a work plan for a decade on implementing change in the secondary sector.

The implication of adopting one set of standards is that they need to replace the current professional standards found in the collective agreements. They would therefore be central to attestation and competency procedures as well as underpinning annual appraisal processes and renewal of practising certificates every three years.

2. Commonalities in appraisal across schools

Equally early on it was also apparent to the taskforce that central to effective appraisal for quality teaching was a focus on a teacher's ongoing professional learning and inquiry into practice, rather than making judgements for summative purposes. The taskforce noted that appraisal guidance on ministry websites already pointed to this. Because of this the taskforce agreed that, together with adopting one set of standards, there needed to be a set of "wrap-around" clauses in the collective agreements about the fundamentals and parameters of effective appraisal for professional learning.

This would provide mandated direction towards best practice for teachers, leaders in schools and school boards about how to focus on ensuring quality teaching for all students through their performance management systems. It would guard against excessive processes and build in a three-year cycle to align with renewal of practising certificates.

3. Extended mentoring and coaching capacity in schools

The position of specialist classroom teacher, whose role is to be a mentor on teaching practice, arose out of work from the 2003 ministerial taskforce and it had been intended to expand this over time. This is the kind of position that is identified as critical in the Te Kotahitanga schools where there needs to be dedicated support for changing teaching practice over time through careful mentoring. The claim is to extend this provision as currently there are only four hours (or eight hours in the largest schools) available for this.

It would be unusual and disappointing should the Ministry of Education or the School Trustees Association balk in bargaining at including either the registered teacher criteria or clauses about appraisal, given that no costs are involved.

Conclusion



A quality public education system which addresses the learning needs of all students sits within a wider societal commitment to valuing all young people, reducing inequities, and ensuring access to services that they require. A commitment to equity must come first, and excellence will follow.

Quality teaching is about much more than individual teacher characteristics or quantitative student results. Teachers are motivated to make a positive difference for their students so that each student can achieve to their full potential, and their biggest area of frustration is when they are not able to do so. The key strategies identified by this taskforce, if developed comprehensively, would go a long way to enabling teachers to make this difference for their students.

The taskforce has taken careful note of a large body of evidence about what works, and related that back to its professional knowledge of teachers and how New Zealand schools function. We would hope that government policy would avoid a misplaced focus on individual teacher quality and instead focus on putting in place a framework that enables excellence across the whole system.

The taskforce recognises that progress in the identified areas of focus will also require commitment and effort by teachers, and a willingness to engage professionally with processes which may require them to be open to new ways of thinking and working. The taskforce believes that teachers are ready for this, and require only that the framework, with appropriate support, resourcing and commitment by all parties, be put in place to enable it to happen.

There is no better time than now to move on this.

Submissions



Submissions to the quality teaching taskforce were received from:

Catherine Delahunty, Green Party education spokesperson. She spoke about the importance of student voice, and making learning relevant to and centred on the needs and experiences of learners.

Tracey Martin, New Zealand First Party education spokesperson. She spoke about the strengths of the current system, of which she said that there were many. She also spoke about how teachers and communities should work together.

Steve Thomas, Maxim Institute. He emphasised the importance of collaboration amongst teachers, and that the appraisal system should be formative and encourage this. He focused on change management in schools and the system.

Ian Leckie and Sandie Aikin, New Zealand Education Institute. They emphasised the centrality of professional learning and development for teacher development and the proper resourcing of it. They emphasised the

importance of career pathways for accomplished teachers that did not simply involve the traditional leadership route.

Dr Cathy Wylie, New Zealand Council for Educational Research. She discussed the importance of grasping the nettle in terms of making sure that teachers who are not meeting minimum standards don't stay in teaching. She warned of the risks of value-added measures for teacher evaluation and spoke about how good school cultures foster good teaching.

Professor John O'Neill, Massey University. He spoke about the challenge for the taskforce to disrupt the discourses around teaching, which makes teachers seem like a cause of the problems. He cautioned the taskforce about the complexities of being a quality teacher and having the ability to make a difference.

Professor Russell Bishop, Waikato University. He pointed out the tension between capacity building and accountability. He spoke about resourcing and long term investment required to create sustainable change. He also spoke about the importance of theory underpinning practice.

Dr Peter Lind, New Zealand Teachers Council.

He emphasised the complexity of teaching and the importance of contextual difference. He talked with the taskforce about how the registered teacher criteria can work as a “hurdle, compass and beacon”.

Frances Kelly and Rebecca Elvy, Ministry of Education.

They spoke about the strength of the New Zealand Curriculum for professionalising teachers. They discussed to what extent schools are a unique system and to what extent they can learn from other organisations.

Dr Graham Stoop, Education Review Office.

He discussed the imperative to keep improving, and how the system doesn't have to be bad to get better. He spoke about the main findings of recent Education Review Office reports, in regards to personalising learning and using data to make decisions.

John Minto, Quality Public Education Coalition. He cautioned about focusing on short term, market driven outputs. He was concerned about social inequities and the challenges these present.

