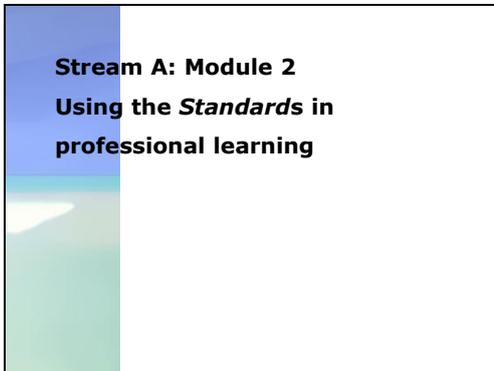# Using the *Standards* in professional learning

NOTES

Stream A: Module 2

Using the *Standards* in professional learning

Session objectives

- In this module you will
  - develop ways to use the *Standards* in investigating your own teaching practice
  - begin planning your own professional learning based on these investigations

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Module 2:
Using the *Standards* in professional learning

Overview

This module will enable you to apply the *Standards* to your own professional learning. You will begin to investigate the implications of the *Standards* for your own professional practice and plan the development of a professional learning portfolio based on these investigations.

The module is divided into three sections:

1. Recap of module 1 (optional)

2. Investigating the standards in your professional context

3. Planning for professional learning.

You will develop an understanding of the *Standards* through a combination of presentations and tasks. The emphasis will be on the tasks, which will give you opportunities to develop your ability to use the *Standards* in your own teaching practice, and to document and extend your own professional learning.

We will conclude with a session focusing on the ways in which you plan to use the standards in your own professional learning, and how you can use the additional resource, *Guidelines for investigations,* to support this process.

Objectives

In this module you will:

- develop ways to use the *Standards* in investigating your own teaching practice

- begin planning your own professional learning based on these investigations.

NOTES
Section 1: Recapping Module 1

Recapping module 1

- The *Standards* cover both **Teacher standards** and **Program standards**. These two interact to produce high quality language teaching
- The *Standards* are designed to reflect the high level of professional knowledge, understanding and practice of accomplished language teachers – they are aspirations to guide teachers in developing their professional expertise over the course of their careers
- The **Teacher standards** are developed through a set of interrelated dimensions as a way of capturing the diversity of teachers' professional expertise, but they form an integrated whole

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This section of the module is designed to reconnect with the introduction to the *Standards* given in Module 1. If both modules of Stream A are completed in a single day, this section may be missed. Alternatively, it may be useful to use the task without the presentation.

Three key ideas about the *Standards* should be kept in mind:

- Both the **Teacher standards** and the **Program standards** are relevant to teachers' work.

- The standards represent a very high level of professional expertise and are designed as something to aim for over one's career.

- Together, the standards form an interrelated whole. Each standard represents only a part of the overall expertise of accomplished teachers. The divisions help focus attention on dimensions of expertise.

Task 1: Reconnecting with the *Standards*

- In groups, discuss the *Standards*
  - What ideas about the *Standards* did you take away from the first module?
  - What possibilities did you see in the *Standards* for developing your own work?
- Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task

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Task 1: Small group task

The aim of this task is to reactivate knowledge of the *Standards* and to focus thinking on the sorts of activities that this module will develop. If there is an extended period between Module 1 and Module 2, you may need to spend some of this time re-reading the *Standards*. It is important, however, that you take the time to reconnect with your own perceptions and contexts rather than just recalling the *Standards*.

Key ideas / learning
Recapping Module 1

Interaction / tasks / questions	*Supporting resources*
Facilitator presentation The facilitator will briefly recap the focus of Module 1 and the *Standards*. **Task 1: Small group task** In groups, discuss the *Standards* and the connections you made with them in Module 1. Focus on the questions: • What ideas about the *Standards* did you take away from the first module? • What possibilities did you see in the *Standards* for developing your own work? The facilitator will draw together some of the ideas that emerged in the discussions. Anticipated time: 30 minutes	PowerPoint slides 2.4 -.2.5

NOTES
Section 2: Investigating the standards in your professional context

The *Standards* as a guide to professional learning

- The *Standards* are intended to be used as a guide and support for teachers in identifying and addressing their professional learning needs
- Using the *Standards* as a guide involves
  - connecting the *Standards* to what teachers actually do in classrooms
  - developing an understanding of the *Standards* in this context
  - using this understanding in an ongoing way in planning and reflecting on teachers' professional learning
- This ongoing approach to professional learning requires an 'investigative stance'

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The *Standards* are intended to be used as a guide and support in identifying and addressing the learning needs of both yourselves and your students, not as a test of your current performance. It is important, then, to understand how to use the *Standards* as a guide to professional practice. It is not enough just to read and become familiar with the *Standards* as they are presented. You also need to connect the *Standards* to what teachers and learners actually do in classrooms. Using this understanding of the standards, you can then plan and monitor your own development as an ongoing project of professional learning.

Professional learning as an ongoing project

- In using the *Standards*, professional learning should be understood not as a series of discrete activities but as
  - the systematic collection and documentation of evidence that shows
    - ways in which teachers are developing as professionals
    - what they have focused on in their learning/teaching
    - their success in promoting student learning
- Documentation could occur in varied ways, through, for example, a professional journal or portfolio
- What is important is that the documentation of evidence occurs in an ongoing, systematic way that provides a record of and basis for continuous reflection and professional learning

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This approach emphasises professional learning not as a series of discrete activities that are collated as a list but as the systematic investigation, collection and documentation of evidence of how you teach and how your students learn, based on, for example, recording and analysing classroom activities.

The aim of this process is not documentation for its own sake but to support your growth and development as a teacher, based on evidence of how teaching and learning actually occur in the classroom. You could document this evidence in a variety of ways. What is important is that:

- the documentation of evidence occurs in an ongoing, systemic way that provides a record of and basis for reflection and change

- you consider the selection of evidence carefully, including:

  - what constitutes relevant evidence

  - what kinds of evidence may be available for investigating a particular question

  - how you might analyse/reflect on the evidence

  - what insights the evidence might provide into your own teaching and your students' learning.

Developing an investigative stance

- An investigative stance is not an 'add on' to language teaching and learning. It is
  - an orientation to noticing, documenting, and making sense of the actions of teachers and learners
  - an ongoing interest in using evidence about the classroom to develop language teaching and learning practice
  - a way of developing a reflective understanding of your own teaching and learning and how the *Standards* apply in this ongoing process in your particular teaching context

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This approach to professional learning is facilitated using an ongoing 'investigative stance'. An investigative stance is not an 'add on' to language teaching and learning. It is an ongoing orientation to noticing, documenting, and making sense of the actions of teachers and learners; and an ongoing interest in using evidence about the classroom to develop language teaching and learning practice. As such, an investigative stance is itself a feature of effective teaching practice. It provides a way to use the *Standards* in particular teaching contexts, and to plan for your professional needs.

Key ideas / learning
Using investigations to develop professional learning

Facilitator presentation	PowerPoint slides 2.6 – 2.12
The facilitator introduces and explains how the development of an investigative stance provides a basis for applying the *Standards* in professional learning.	
Anticipated time: 30 minutes	

NOTES
Section 2: **Investigating the standards in your professional context**

Investigation in teaching

Effective teaching is informed by personal knowledge, trial and error, reflection on practice and conversations with colleagues. To be a teacher means to observe students and study classroom interactions, to explore a variety of effective ways of teaching, and to build conceptual frameworks that can guide one's work

(Fischer, 2001: 29)

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The value of an investigative stance for using the *Standards*

- An investigative stance facilitates the use of the *Standards* in guiding professional learning because
  - changing your teaching and learning practice requires an understanding of what you and your students currently do
  - to change what you do in your teaching context, you need to understand students' perceptions of and interactions with language(s) and culture(s), and consider the *Standards* as a resource in this process
  - to use the *Standards* in professional development, you need to be able to monitor and reflect on the changes you are making

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The value of an investigative stance is that it enables you to use the *Standards* to support the development of your own teaching and your students' learning in your particular professional context.

Where do you focus your investigation?

- The focus of your investigation depends at any particular time on the issue that you are addressing. This may be an issue arising in your professional context which leads you to use the *Standards,* or an issue you become aware of through your use of the *Standards*. It may be
  - a particular question about teaching and learning in your classroom
  - a particular area of interest/need for the teacher
  - a particular professional learning focus of interest in the school as a whole

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For example, the investigation might focus on how you encourage learners to see the world from other cultural perspectives, or how you plan for all students to have the confidence to take risks in language learning.

What form might the investigation take?

- Your investigation is an ongoing project of noticing, documenting, and analysing/reflecting on your teaching and your students' learning
  - the process of noticing involves asking questions about your teaching and your students' learning
  - the process of documenting involves gathering and recording evidence which can inform your professional learning e.g. samples of students' work, recordings of classroom interactions, your reflections on your teaching, and conversations with colleagues
  - the process of analysing/reflecting involves interpreting how the evidence you have gathered answers the questions you have raised, and deciding how this will inform your professional learning
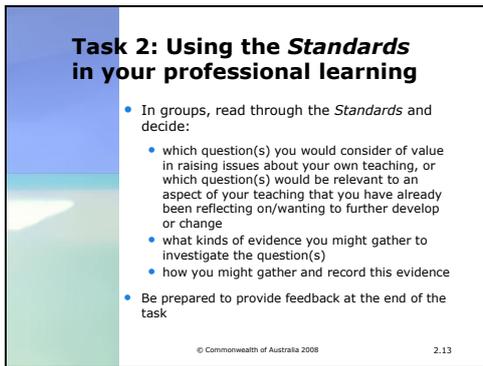
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Whatever the sequence and focus, the investigation should be understood as part of an ongoing project of noticing, documenting, and analysing/reflecting on your practice and students' learning in relation to the *Standards*.

NOTES
Section 2: Investigating the standards in your professional context

Task 2: Using the *Standards* in your professional learning

- In groups, read through the *Standards* and decide:
  - which question(s) you would consider of value in raising issues about your own teaching, or which question(s) would be relevant to an aspect of your teaching that you have already been reflecting on/wanting to further develop or change
  - what kinds of evidence you might gather to investigate the question(s)
  - how you might gather and record this evidence
- Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task

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Task 2: Small group task

The purpose of this task is to provide an opportunity to identify questions to explore in relation to your own teaching and your students' learning, and to decide how you will gather and record information to support this investigation. The task is important because it focuses on the processes by which you can use the *Standards* as a support for your teaching and your students' learning.

Consider carefully:

- what might be suitable evidence

- what kinds of evidence might be available

- the extent to which this could address the question being asked

- how it might be gathered and recorded.

For example, evidence might include samples of students' work, teacher observation notes, audio recordings of students engaged in class activities, the teacher giving instructions or explanations, or other aspects of classroom interaction. It may also include the teacher's reflections on teaching and learning in the classroom, and conversations with colleagues.

Key ideas / learning
Using investigations to develop professional learning

Task 2: Small group task In groups, read through the *Standards* and decide which questions are of value in raising issues about your own teaching. Consider: • what information you might gather on your teaching practice to address the question(s) • how you might gather and record this information. Allow 10 minutes for feedback from the groups at the end of the task. Anticipated time: 30 minutes	PowerPoint slide 2.13

NOTES
Section 3: **Planning for professional learning**
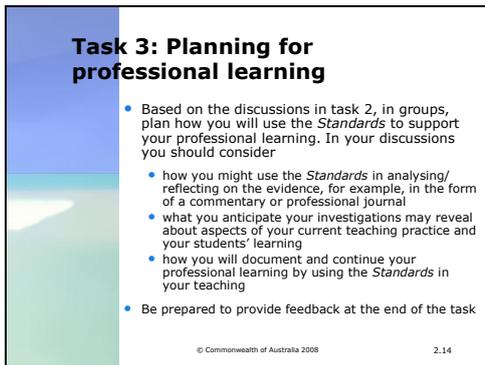
Task 3: Planning for professional learning

- Based on the discussions in task 2, in groups, plan how you will use the *Standards* to support your professional learning. In your discussions you should consider
  - how you might use the *Standards* in analysing/ reflecting on the evidence, for example, in the form of a commentary or professional journal
  - what you anticipate your investigations may reveal about aspects of your current teaching practice and your students' learning
  - how you will document and continue your professional learning by using the *Standards* in your teaching
- Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task

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Task 3: Small group task

This task will give you an opportunity to foreshadow how you are going to use the *Standards* to support your teaching and your students' learning.

The task invites you to develop your discussions from Task 2. Consider how you might use the *Standards* in analysing/reflecting on the evidence gathered in your investigation, and what you anticipate the investigation might reveal about your teaching and your students' learning. The analysis/reflection will depend on the particular context and questions asked, but might be in the form of a commentary on the evidence gathered, identification of relevant patterns or issues raised for teaching and learning.

Beyond this particular investigation, the task asks how you will continue to use the *Standards* to support the development of your professional learning interests. This process of ongoing development could, for example, be in the form of a portfolio or professional journal in which to record and respond to reflections and changes in teaching and learning related to the *Standards*.

Key ideas / learning
Developing a professional learning plan

Whole group discussion The facilitator recaps the key points made in the previous section and facilitates a discussion on the need to investigate and reflect on one's current professional practice in planning for professional learning. Anticipated time: 15 minutes	

Task 3: Small group task Based on the discussions in Task 2 and the whole group discussion, plan how you will prioritise and plan your professional learning using the *Standards.* Consider: • what you anticipate your investigations will reveal about your current teaching practice • how you will draw on the *Standards* in reflecting on your current teaching practice • how you will prioritise and plan your professional learning • how you will use the professional learning to further develop your teaching. Allow 10 minutes for feedback from the groups at the end of the task Anticipated time: 40 minutes	PowerPoint slide 2.14

NOTES
Section 3: **Planning for professional learning**

Using the *Guidelines for investigations*

- Elaborated guidelines for conducting investigations are provided with the professional learning materials for all participants
- The guidelines provide a useful, additional resource to support teachers investigating their professional practice using the *Standards*
- Included is a proforma for planning an investigation, with a completed example of a planned investigation
- Participants in Stream B are required to conduct a classroom based investigation and may choose to use these guidelines, along with the suggested investigation questions provided in each module, to plan and develop their investigations

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The *Guidelines for investigations*, located within their own section of the folder, are provided to assist in planning and implementing investigations, for both those participating in Stream A only and for those participating in Stream B as well. They are intended to support teachers in ongoing investigation of and reflection on professional practice, in line with the aspirational targets of the *Standards*.

Stream B participants are required to conduct an investigation, and may find the guidelines useful in clarifying the focus, scope and extent of their investigation. The guidelines may also provide ideas as to the sorts of evidence that will support investigations and provide an ongoing, useful resource for teachers.

The pro forma for planning an investigation is provided to assist in developing questions for investigation and considering what forms of evidence might support such investigations.

Depending on time constraints and interest levels, the guidelines may be explored in more detail. Using the pro forma, groups could examine the range of questions posed and the rationale for an investigative stance and its connection with the *Standards*, and develop some possible investigation questions.

Key ideas / learning
Using the *Guidelines for investigations*

|	
Facilitator presentation and/or whole group task The facilitator will explain the purpose of the additional resource for planning and implementing investigations, located in its own section of the folder. Depending on time and interest, further elaboration and/or discussions about these guidelines may occur. Anticipated time: 10 minutes or more	PowerPoint slide 2.15
Reflection Use the notes page to consider/think about the observations you have made on the *Standards* as a guide to your professional learning. Anticipated time: 10 minutes	Notes page

Questions for reflection

- How would you describe your overall stance as a language teacher

  – to a colleague

  – to a new colleague

  – to your principal

  – to your students?

- What aspects of your own practice do you wish to reconsider in the light of the *Standards*, the discussions in the workshop, and your overall stance?

- How might you begin the process of reconsidering?

- What kind of investigations might you undertake?

- How might you involve others in these investigations?

Suggestions for school-based investigations

Modules 3–10 suggest tasks and investigations in aspects of teaching and learning relevant to the *Standards*. Consider those provided in the modules and/or specific aspects of your own practice that are of particular interest to you in this module. Depending on your career goals, you may wish to consider preparing a professional portfolio of your practice.

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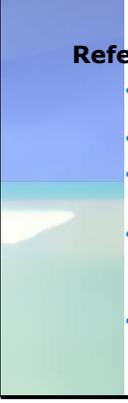
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