

About me:

- I'm a Teach for Australia alumni who has taught senior mathematics for four years.
- I was placed in a rural Northern Territory high school as part of TFA and have also taught at an international school in Asia.
- I received a UAI of 99.6 and scored above 90 in all my subjects in the NSW HSC, including extension 2 mathematics.
- Prior to becoming a teacher, I worked as a management consultant and I have also worked in a tech startup.
- I took a 40% pay cut to become a teacher, after four years I'm still not back to the salary I left as a management consultant. If I had stayed in the corporate world, my salary would likely be double my teacher salary

I will be responding to two specific questions from sections 4 and 5 of the discussion paper.

Q4.1 RE: • Are the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Teacher Standards) fit for purpose in identifying the key skills and knowledge pre-service teachers need to be ready for the classroom? Do the Teacher Standards adequately reflect the role of teachers in supporting pre-service and graduate teachers? See: <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards> for more information.

Yes and no.

I believe the teacher standards are a reasonably good reflection of the skills and knowledge required to be a teacher. However, I do not believe that knowing what to do, means that the teacher will be able to do it day-in-day out during the relentless grind of being a new teacher. Being able to 'know a student and how they learn' is not the same as being able to know all your students, every day and adapt your teaching accordingly. It's the synthesis of all those skills which takes time to develop and I believe that the resilience required by first year teachers can't be taught in a university.

From my experience, graduate teachers are prepared with the knowledge of how to teach, but resilience against the physical and emotional exhaustion of being in challenging classrooms took time to develop. I don't believe that anything other than being in the classroom could prepare teachers for that. I also think that a gradual release of responsibility is required for that, and teachers need more paraprofessional style work in schools before being given a full-time teaching load. They could take some of the administrative load off experienced teachers in return for mentoring and coaching.

I had amazing support by mentors and networks through the Teach for Australia program, but my first year of teaching was still incredibly demanding and at times overwhelming. I've witnessed other

new teachers both through traditional pathways and TFA experience the same phenomenon. I believe the AITSL standards are reasonable, however, I believe expecting a first year teacher to implement them day in day out is what leads to early career burnout. No other profession has as steep a learning curve as teaching with such high expectations from day 1. Doctors don't perform heart surgery in their first year as a doctor, however, first-year teachers are expected to perform the same tasks that a teacher with 20 years experience would. I compare my experience as a first-year teacher with being a graduate management consultant, another highly demanding profession. In the corporate world, my bosses pushed me hard but wouldn't send me to present reports to CEO's, they had reasonable expectations of me. As a teacher, I found that my principal didn't expect too much of me, however, my students did. My students don't care that I'm a first year teacher, they still expect the same from me as all their other teachers

In summary, I believe that the AITSL standards are a decent reflection of the breadth of skills required to teach, however, expecting a first year teacher to be able to perform all those skills every day is an unreasonable expectation.

Q5.5 How could teacher and school leader workloads be made more manageable to allow them to provide more support to pre-service and newly graduated teachers?

I believe a co-teaching model rather than a pure mentor-mentee model would be more effective. When a new teacher shares a class with a more experienced teacher, the depth of collaboration and knowledge transfer is greater than if they simply observe classes and provide feedback.

This would allow the new teacher to focus less on high-level tasks such as unit planning and assessment, and more on day to day instruction. New teachers could also take some of the administrative load from experienced teachers such as marking and reporting. Striking a healthy co-teaching balance would help both the mentor and the mentee