

COACTEA AUGUST 2005

President's report

2005 continues to be a busy year for COACTEA as it plays an active role in representing its member professional associations at both local and national educational forums and meetings. A high priority for COACTEA is professional learning and the committee is presently working diligently through its national body, the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations (AJCPTA), to secure further funding to support the development of professional learning projects in 2006.

The work of the AJCPTA is expanding and represents over 120,000 teachers in all systems and sectors in early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and adult learning. Its members are representative of all curriculum areas, cross curriculum areas such as ESL and Teacher Librarians, and leadership and administration. The AJCPTA currently represents its members on the following bodies: the National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership, the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), and the National Education Forum (NEF). It is regularly involved in writing submissions in response to government enquiries, for example, the recent NIQTSL Guidelines for Quality in the Practicum. An updated AJCPTA brochure will be available shortly through the COACTEA office.

The highly successful Values Education Forum 2005 held at ACU Canberra, reflects the energy and enthusiasm of those associated with COACTEA and their commitment to strengthening the public profile of professional associations throughout the local and national educational community. The role of the AJCPTA in assuming national coordination of the Values Education Project worked effectively to build community and ensure the quality of project outcomes. This has resulted in an invitation by DEST to the AJCPTA to submit a new proposal for funding to take this project forward throughout 2006-2008. The AJCPTA is also fortunate to have the support of the Curriculum Corporation as it plans for the future. COACTEA, of course, will be seeking assistance from member associations in leading and implementing the new projects as soon as funding is available. Your suggestions regarding appropriate professional learning for your members would be most welcome.

Asia Education Foundation (AEF)

I represented the AJCPTA at the Asia Education National Forum held in Canberra on the 20-21 June. The structure and high quality of all aspects of the Asia Education Forum, including the keynote speakers, resulted in a healthy debate covering issues surrounding the involvement of young Australians with Asia. The new draft *National Statement for Australian Schools on Engaging Young Australians with Asia* was well received and focused discussion enabled the Forum participants to deepen understanding and set directions for the future.

National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL)

(i) Research Project: Leadership and Learning with ICT

COACTEA was invited to contribute to the *Leadership and Learning with ICT* research project being conducted on behalf of NIQTSL by Assoc/Prof Kathryn Moyle. This project is investigating the relationship between leadership support and the use of ICT in Australian schools. The research includes identifying, documenting and analysing school-based models of leadership that support teachers' professional learning and facilitate decision-making about the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in schools, and their impact on students' learning. The research concentrates on the years K-10. As highlighted in the NIQTSL communication, the research is interested in:

- models of leadership within Australia and overseas that support teaching and learning using ICT in schools;
- school leadership models that can impact on the quality of the use of ICT in Australian schools;
- existing models that are being employed to determine whether ICT improves student learning outcomes; and
- models of professional learning for leaders that enable them to enhance the capacity of appropriate ICT use.

Further information is available from Kathryn.moyle@canberra.edu.au

(ii) Professional Standards for Teachers

I also represented COACTEA at the National Conference for the Teaching Profession *Sharing Experience: Ways forward with Standards* at the Hilton Melbourne Airport, 21-22 August 2005. The Conference was convened by NIQTSL.

The keynote speakers and workshops provided opportunities for stimulating discussion regarding the 'way forward'. Professor Judyth Sachs, University of Sydney, challenged participants to 'move outside their taken-for-granted assumptions' by highlighting the differing schools of thought regarding the why, how and where-to of advanced standards for teaching. Her talk centred on three assumptions:

1. For standards to contribute to the broad project of quality teachers for the future they must be dynamic rather than static.
2. In their most strategic and far-sighted form they can be seen as a touchstone for teaching as it moves into whatever the future holds for teaching and learning rather than an anchor in the past.
3. Standards are not value free nor politically neutral, they serve particular interests and they have effects.

The development of Standards should not reduce the importance of teachers' professional judgements and important distinctions need to be made between regulatory versus developmental emphases. From an English perspective, excessive regulation had been shown to lead to depression, lack of morale, and powerlessness of the profession, and tended to reduce good teaching to a set of basic skills. Clearly, there is a need to inform the public that teaching is a creative endeavour and requires intellectual work. It is also about relationships, learning relationships, and conversations about practice need to ensure the language is sufficiently sophisticated,

rather than merely 'common sense', to maximise opportunities for learning across disciplines and from each other.

In *Mapping the territory: Standards for accomplished teaching*, Lawrence Ingvarson presented an overview of ACER research regarding the analysis of current developments, nationally and internationally, in relation to advanced standards for teaching to present a report raising issues for consultation with the profession. Lawrence argued that two facets, Standards as emblems or flags, and Standards as measures, remain pivotal to the discussion. Of importance are the questions: What is it we value in teaching? and What is it that teachers should get better at? Teaching standards, he argued, should embody the professional values that teachers develop over time, and be able to show evidence of: a deeper understanding of content from the learners' point of view; deeper knowledge and awareness of students as individuals; a capacity to provide useful feedback; learning how to let your authority 'go' and promote independent thinking and learning; and an ability to make assessment a vehicle for student learning. Effective professional learning, he argues, equals a long term, personal quest.

If we adopt the 'Standards as measures' premise then three essential questions must be asked:

- What is to be measured? (What is accomplished teaching?)
- How will it be measured? (What evidence is valid/relevant?)
- What counts as meeting the Standard? (What level of performance is good enough?)

As Ramsey (2000, p.7) highlights, 'good teaching does not come through imposed requirements but through the individual teacher's commitment to high professional standards. The important changes needed in teaching are those that teachers must make for themselves'.

Ramsey, G. (2000). *Quality matters: Report of the review of teacher education, NSW*, NSW Department of Education and Training.

Members might find the following Reports, distributed as pre-reading for the conference, of interest:

National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism (May 2003)

This report followed a series of events hosted by the Australian College of Educators (ACE). The report provides a succinct statement on accomplished teaching standards that has been 'signed off' by a range of bodies. The Statement was published in the *Report of a National Forum on Teachers Standards, Quality and Professionalism* (Canberra, 26 May 2003).

A National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching (November 2003)

The MCEETYA Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce produced this agreed national framework for the whole spectrum of teacher professional standards. The framework can be found on pages 8-11 of the full document (available at http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/national_framework.pdf)

Teachers Teaching – Teachers Leading: Professional Standards for Australian Educators (March 2001)

This Report resulted from the Teacher Professional Standards Workshop that was funded by the Australian Government. Participants in the Workshop were members of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, Australian Association for the Teaching of English, Australian Literacy Educators Association and Australian Science Teachers Association who were involved at that time in projects to develop professional teaching standards. The Report is available from

www.aamt.edu.au/standards/research.html

(iii) 2005 National Awards for Quality Schooling

COACTEA members are strongly encouraged to support the NIQTSL National Awards for Quality Schooling. These awards provide an ideal opportunity for Australian schools, teachers, principals and school support staff to be recognised for their achievements. Some 88 awards will be made to recognise and reward these achievements. For 2005, the prizes to individual teachers, principals, and support staff will be accompanied by funding to their schools to foster professional collaboration and development.

Who can apply? The awards are open to people at pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, government and non-government.

How to apply. Visit www.niqtsl.edu.au or call the Awards Coordinator on freecall 1800 131 323 for detailed information about the awards, the selection criteria, and the application form. Applications close on **21 October 2005. Don't let this opportunity pass.**

Dr Carolyn Broadbent
President COACTEA
2 September 2005