

The work of teachers is complex and multi-faceted.

Valuing teachers as professionals

Key questions

- What is the nature of a teacher's work?
- What are the characteristics of an effective teacher?
- What is role of the professional standards and professional learning?

Although the role of teachers is constantly evolving, research is now able to describe the qualities of an effective teacher. Teachers need to know their students and understand how they learn as well as know the content of the curriculum and the most effective ways to teach it. They also need to continually monitor student learning to inform the next steps in learning — for teachers and students — so that students make continual progress.

Teaching is a collaborative profession that is constantly informed by new research and evidence. Teachers must access quality professional learning to remain up-to-date and work with colleagues including other teachers, teacher aides, and specialists such as guidance counsellors and speech pathologists.

The value of teachers is not always acknowledged. Yet, effective teachers have a significant impact on learning and must be supported in their demanding and complex work. Effective teachers hold high expectations for all students, are creative, adaptable and reflective practitioners, life-long learners as well as positive and good communicators. Their achievements should be acknowledged and celebrated.

To be effective, teachers need to establish education as relevant beyond the classroom and beyond the years of schooling. They need to value student voice, parent engagement and community partnerships.

Accountability is important in every profession and teaching is no different, however measures of quality should reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of teaching. Professional standards are a useful way to describe the complexity of teachers' work at different stages of their careers, provide the basis for substantive conversations about practice within a school setting and guide professional learning.

Key points

- The work of teachers is complex and multifaceted.
- Teachers have a significant impact on learning.
- Measures of teacher quality should reflect the complex nature of teaching.

Further information

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Resources to support teachers can be found on the PETAA website www.petaa.edu.au