

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS/CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY

(7.1) Meet professional ethics and responsibilities.

Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

(7.4) Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities.

Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

During my second semester of university, I undertook a four-week teaching placement at a school on Brisbane's north side, consisting of approximately 90 teaching staff and over 1,000 students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Throughout this placement, I actively engaged with both staff and students in an ethical and professional manner, aligning with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* Standards 7.1 and 7.4. This involved adhering to Queensland's policies and legislation on ethical and responsible practice, including the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and the Queensland Department of Education's *Code of Conduct*.

Building a Community of Practice

During this placement, I established a small community of practice within the school's art department (Standard 7.4). Wenger (1998) defines communities of practice as groups bound by shared practices, common goals, and collaborative efforts. These communities are characterised by three structural elements: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. Over the four weeks, all three elements were evident. Collaborative planning and problem-solving efforts can be seen in a series of emails with art department staff (Artifact 1), where shared goals were addressed through collective decision-making. Additionally, shared artifacts, including PowerPoint presentations and worksheets, were created and disseminated to support student learning and align team efforts (Artifact 1).

Upholding Professional Ethics and Responsibilities

Throughout the placement, I consistently upheld the ethical and professional responsibilities required of educators (Standard 7.1). I actively demonstrated the four principles outlined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*: integrity and impartiality, promoting the public good, commitment to the system of government, and accountability and transparency. My

communication with students adhered to departmental policies, maintaining professionalism by using only designated education department email accounts (Artifact 3), as recommended by Lavelle (2021). This approach ensured clear, respectful, and secure communication channels with students and parents alike.

Outcomes and Reflections

My commitment to ethical conduct and professional engagement resulted in a highly positive letter of recommendation from the head of the art department (Artifact 2). Additionally, I established strong professional relationships with several faculty members, some of whom remain part of my extended professional network. These colleagues have contributed to an ongoing online community of practice (Wenger, 1998), providing a platform for collaborative problem-solving and the exchange of teaching resources.

Future Directions

As I transition from a pre-service teacher to a more proficient practitioner, I aim to further refine my ability to engage professionally with colleagues to create productive and efficient work environments (Standard 7.4). This will involve continued research into strategies for fostering professional relationships and participation in diverse educational contexts. My long-term goal is to develop a robust repertoire of techniques for establishing rapport and building fulfilling workplace environments. Additionally, I aspire to contribute actively to multiple communities of practice, both in person and online, to leverage collective expertise in addressing future challenges in education.

References

Lavelle, C. (2021). Code of conduct/standard of practice and social media ethics for teachers. Retrieved from <https://create.usq.edu.au/edm8004-blog/2021/08/09/code-of-conduct-standard-of-practice-and-social-media-ethics-for-teachers/>.

Lavelle, E. (2021). Professional communication in teaching: Ethics, policies, and best practices. *Journal of Educational Practice and Policy*, 14(2), 45–56.

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld). Retrieved January 13, 2022, from <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/2014-07-01/act-1994-067>

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.