

A Habermasian Analysis of Qatar's National Teacher Professional Standards

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Abstract

The belief that implementing professional standards will improve teaching and learning has led many countries to embrace standards based educational reforms. Qatar is one of those nations implementing, *Education for a New Era* that includes the adoption of professional teacher standards. This paper examines Qatar's professional standards for teachers using Habermas' knowledge constitutive interests (KCIs) as a theoretical framework. Findings provide insight into how the KCIs are embedded in the professional standards. Suggestions are provided regarding the possible use of Habermas' knowledge constitutive interests in the preparation of teachers.

Keywords: teacher professional standards, critical theory, educational reform

1. Introduction

When it comes to educational reform, what country would not want professional teaching standards to serve as the foundation of education reform? Commonsense tells us that having professional standards is a good thing because standards equal quality. Stakeholders in education desire high quality learning experiences and teachers striving for excellent outcomes. Consequently, educational reformers' accept and promote professional standards as a cure for an ailing educational system. This is the case in Qatar whose national educational reform embraced a standards based educational reform that includes national professional teacher standards.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Habermas' theory of knowledge constitutive interests is evident within the discourse of the Qatar Professional teacher standards and once this is determined, to develop possible ways that the technical, practical and emancipatory interests framework could be used in teacher preparation. Habermas' theory is utilized as a framework for analysis because it is believed that teachers' pedagogical practices are complex and are based on an amalgamation of these interests and leading to a framework that can enhance teaching. The research objectives for the study are as follows:

- 1) To determine how each of the knowledge constitutive interests are embedded in Qatar's Professional Standards for School Leaders.
- 2) To provide specific example of how the interests shape teaching.
- 3) To establish ways that the KCI can be used in the preparation and development of teachers.

In what follows, the findings form this critical discourse analysis based on Habermas' KCIs are presented, discussed and the possibilities of using the KCIs in teacher professional development and preparation are considered.

2. Background: Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers

In 2001 because of the secondary students' low scores on international tests, the Qatari government grew concerned that the country's K-12 education system failed to producing high-quality outcomes and outdated, and resistant to reform (Brewer et al., 2007). The belief was that Qatar's educational system was not able to produce the necessary outcomes for the future development of the country. In an attempt to reform the system, Qatar's government approached RAND, a non-profit research organization to investigate the Qatari educational system and provide recommendations and options that would serve as a framework for reforming the entire school system. The assessment pointed to a number of problems. First, it revealed that the existing system was highly centralized, with limited strategies for evaluation and monitoring of policies and processes. Second, it indicated that there was a lack of communication and shared vision among education stakeholders because of a top-down decision-making policy. Finally, it demonstrated that there was an over emphasis on rote learning and little attention to the development of critical thinking. As a result, Education for a New Era (EFNE), a systematic reform designed to convert Qatar's schools into "a

world-class system that would meet the country's changing needs" (Brewer, et al., 2007, p. xvii).

EFNE is based on a key standard that is "no matter what else was to occur, the basic educational elements of a standards-based system had to be put in place" (Brewer, et al. 2007: xviii). Therefore, Qatar developed and implemented National Curriculum Standards for English, Science, Math and Arabic coupled with Qatar National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders (QNPSTSL). The Supreme Education Council (2007) states that the QNPSTSL provides a common set of reference points for educators in Qatari Independent Schools. The professional standards describe the skills dispositions and knowledge teachers and school leaders need to know in order to be effective in their profession and this will aid Qatar's reform efforts and improve student learning (Supreme Education Council, 2007) and provides a 'framework to describe tasks and professional development throughout the career of teachers or leaders. This will improve their participation in Qatar's education reform initiative, which in turn improves the students' learning quality' (Supreme Education Council, 2007b, p. 14). To ensure a successful implementation of the reform, the Supreme Education Council plays an integral part in ensuring that teachers are performing according to the national professional standards and is involved in teacher preparation by offering professional development for leaders based on the professional standards.

Qatar National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders (QNPSTSL) is a document containing 12 professional standards for teachers and 7 professional standards for school leaders developed by Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia. In 2006, EQI met with stakeholders in the Qatari Independent Schools and discussed the development of standards with different institutions, universities, School Support Organizations and officials involved in the Diploma of Primary Education, offered by Qatar University and Texas A&M (Supreme Education Council, 2007). The purpose of these meetings was to gain input for the development of standards and the results was the development of the QNPSTSL. According to the Supreme Education Council, the QNPSTSL were "developed taking into account the real education environment in Qatar and the goals of the reform initiative" (Supreme Education Council, 2007). EQI states that the standards provide "a common reference point to describe, celebrate and support the complex and varied work of teachers and school leaders in the new Independent Schools" (Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders, 2007, p.1).

Table 1. Elements of the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers

Elements included in the National Standards for School Leaders	Number Included in the Leadership Standards
The <i>standard title</i> is a short, action-oriented statement that describes the key area of professional practice for teachers and leaders.	12 Standard Titles
The standard descriptor is a brief description of the aspect of professional practice covered by the standard.	12 standard descriptors
Statements describe in outcome terms the key components of professional practice covered by the standard. Statements are focused on performance and can be demonstrated.	55 Statements
The <i>indicators</i> identify the actions a teacher or leader would normally take to perform the aspect of professional practice detailed in the relevant statement including the required skills, knowledge, understandings and dispositions that underpin the aspect of professional practice described in the standard.	236 Indicators including: Required Skills: 74 Bullet Statements Required Knowledge: 187 Bullet statements Required Dispositions: 69 Bullet statements
The <i>Evidence Guide</i> identifies the performance expected of teachers and school leaders at each stage of career development and includes a list of the types of evidence that demonstrates the achievement of the particular standard.	Numerous lists of the types of evidence that demonstrate the achievement of the particular standard.

In addition to the above elements of the QNPST, there are 12 Standard Descriptors that provide a brief description of the aspect of professional practice covered by the standard. Also included are 235 Standard Indicators that identify the actions a teacher would normally take to perform the aspect of professional practice detailed in the relevant statement. An example of a statement indicator would be “Information from assessment data is used in the design of flexible and innovative learning experiences” (QNPSTSL, p. 9). In addition, the required skills, knowledge, understandings and dispositions that underpin the professional practice are described in each standard. These include 73 required skills, 199 statements of required knowledge and 59 required dispositions. Finally, an evidence guide is provided identifying the performance expected of teachers at each stage of career development; entry level, proficient and advanced skill teachers. The evidence guide also includes a list of the types of evidence that demonstrates the achievement of the particular standard. These professional standards were applied in the 2007-2008 academic year with the goal of providing a framework for the teaching profession.

3. Habermas and Knowledge Constitutive Interests

Habermas’ critical theory of knowledge constitutive interests (KCIs) has been used in a wide range of disciplines and studies. Although not specifically developed for examination of teaching standards, the KCIs serves as an effective framework to examine knowledge, in particular the knowledge embedded in national standards because the KCI centers on how

human interest generates knowledge. McLaren (2007) argues knowledge production “is never neutral or objective but is ordered and structured in particular ways; its emphases and exclusions partake of a silent logic” (p. 196). All knowledge embodies particular interests, assumptions and beliefs and is intimately linked with broader political and economic interests. Carr and Kemmis (1986) point out that when knowledge is produced it is never detached from everyday concerns. Rather, knowledge is always established based on interests developed out of human needs that are shaped by historical and social forces. Fiske (2010) states knowledge is power and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power. The discursive power to construct a common-sense reality that can be inserted into cultural and political life is central in the social relationship of power (p. 120).

In this context, the professional teacher standards are never simply a neutral collection of knowledge and skills placed in a nicely packaged handbook. Rather, the knowledge embedded in the standards and the conceptions of teaching is the commonsense, Fiske addresses. He further points out that “discursive power involves a struggle both to construct (a sense of) reality and to circulate that reality as widely and smoothly as possible throughout society” (p. 121). This is the case with professional teacher standards that go unquestioned and are at the center of all discussion regarding teaching.

All educational choices or programs regarding what to teach or the development of standards are based on some interest or value commitment or the educational program itself creates an interest or need. Habermas (1971) explained, ‘the expression ‘interest’ is intended to indicate the unity of life context in which cognition is embedded’ (p. 9) and that knowledge originates in human interests and interests, either presupposes a need, or it produces one. Accordingly, there are three KCI that guide human efforts: the technical, practical and emancipatory.

It is important to understand that the KCI cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as an integrative model with each interest being broader and more inclusive than the previous one (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). For many teachers, the KCI interact simultaneously. For example, the technical interest shape a teacher’s understanding of standardized testing by creating a view of testing as an efficient tool to achieve a set of predetermined ends (prediction and control). However, at the same time, the teacher’s practical interest (understanding) considers the worth and value of those ends placing these in a cultural context, while the emancipatory interest (moral, political, social, ethical and power issues) enables the teacher to consider moral and ethical issues and leads to making judgments not only about the educational value in testing practices, but also place these practices within a social and political context (Rennert-Ariev, 2005). The teacher implements standardized testing while possibly thinking about the real value of the process and hopefully there is some reflection about the political climate the reasons for the embracing of national standardized testing.

3.1 The Technical Interest

Habermas’s technical interest is based on the notion that the interests of human beings are found in acquiring knowledge that will allow for their control over natural objects. The technical interest is grounded in the need for survival and desires to reproduce those aspects

of society that are deemed valuable. Grundy (1987) argues that to achieve this purpose the emphasis of the technical interest lies in control and management of the environment. This form of knowledge finds its roots in traditional Western scientific thought that includes the empirical-analytical sciences, hypothesis, empirical data, experience and observation, experimentation, deduction and value-free objectivism (Quong, 2003; Grundy, 1987).

The technical interest gives rise to a certain form of action or behavior. This is commonly known as instrumental rationality where the goal is the effective control of reality and knowledge is based upon empirical investigation and governed by technical rules with the goal of controlling or manipulating the environment. The thought is that universal laws determine human action. The technical cognitive interest centers on looking for causes and solutions based on objectivity and this is then used to determine what is or is not appropriate action (Quong, 2003).

Tuinamuana (2011) argues that this type of knowledge includes an “emphasis on certainty, objectivity, the ‘scientific-method’ of measurement, efficiency, and control and these are transferred to understandings about education and teaching” (p. 74). More importantly, this knowledge is reduced to concepts and facts that can be operationally defined, that is, they have precise meaning and definitions. The end result is the reduction of “moral, aesthetic, educational and political issues to technical problems: why and what are reduced to how” (Bullough & Goldstein, 1984, p.144).

Grundy (1987) points out that the technical interest is the basis of much of the educational research. As an example she writes, “if we can discover, through observation and experimentation the laws which govern how pupils learn, we can presumably structure a set of rules which, if followed, will promote learning” (p. 12). More importantly, Habermas (1987) argues “instrumental reason assimilated itself to power and thereby relinquished its critical force” (p. 119). Questions centering on “why” are ignored to focus on practical concerns about “what works.” A key issue embedded in the technical interest is the elimination of ethical issues. Ethics and morality are reduced to “facts” and “laws” that allow for prediction and control providing us sound decisions.

Teachers with a technical interest unquestionably emphasize the technical aspects of teaching which result in presenting knowledge as a realm of objective facts. In this sense, technical competency or successful teaching is defined as treating knowledge as objective; avoiding moral and political controversy by remaining neutral; mastering and refining predetermined sets of teaching methodologies; and accepting and maintaining the political and economic status quo. Successful teachers simply “carry out” pre-determined educational objectives and lack an awareness of the moral and ethical consequences of their educational decisions.

Let me provide an example of the technical interest when applied to assessment. Because the technical interest is concerned that all activity must be directed toward efficient fulfillment of predetermined ends, any critical examination of the worth or value of the ends is not a concern for the teachers who engages in a technical form of assessment. Rather, these teachers view the task and are expected to choose and construct questions and answers or demonstrate performances that adhere as closely as possible to relevant professional standards.

Rennert-Ariev (2005) points out that the technical interest applied to assessment fails to allow the teacher to examine the context of assessment or if assessment promotes or hinders worthwhile experiences for students. More importantly, when assessment is guided by the technical interest teachers are limited in their ability to interrogate their own practices.

3.2 The Practical Interest

Habermas' practical interest centers on "understanding the environment so that one is able to interact with it" (Grundy, 1987, p. 13). This type of understanding does not seek to formulate universal laws so that the environment can be manipulated, but rather the practical interest lies in understanding the environment through interaction and allowing meanings to emerge; so, one is better able to interact with the particular situation (Grundy, 1987). Habermas (1971) explains the practical interest gains "knowledge in a different methodological framework . . . access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation" (p. 309). The practical interest seeks to understand the environment through interaction based on consensus.

McLaren (2007) argues the practical knowledge attempts to enlighten, so individuals can play a role in shaping their actions in the world. The practical interest is "generally acquired through describing and analyzing social situations historically or developmentally" (p. 198). However, when moving into the realm of describing and understanding places individuals within the moral sphere. The questions that emerge within the practical interest are no longer what can I do? but rather, What ought I do? (Grundy, 1987). This requires an understanding of the social situation and the practical interest is an interest in taking the right action or the practical action (Grundy, 1987). It is important to keep in mind that social situation are ongoing and situational and it is difficult to determine right and wrong, thus there is a need for dialogue and discussion.

This practical interest recognizes that education takes place in complex social situations and because educational goals and ends are seldom clear and definitive, there must be communication, authentic collaboration and negotiation among teachers and students. The production of knowledge is achieved through the making of meaning. For teachers with the practical interest, teaching centers on communication and understanding and the construction of shared meanings. There is a shift in the teacher-student relationship. In the practical interest, mutual understanding is important and requires understanding students, providing students with a voice, using persuasion, negotiation and discussion rather than coercion. The educational theory of constructivism aligns with the practical interest. Constructivism based on the concept that students construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences, forces teachers to understand students individuals, rather than a class and to improve communication to better understand each student from his or her own perspective, rather than to label the students from my perspective. To accomplish this teachers must ask questions, explore, and assess what they know and one of the teacher's main roles is engaging in the critical reflection process that requires teachers to interrogate their own educational practices.

To provide examples of the practical interest applied to teaching, I will again address

assessment. The “significant difference between the technical and practical interests is that while the technical points the individual towards the efficient achievement of predetermined ends, the practical invites exploration of the worth and value of those ends” (Rennert-Ariev, 2005, p. 6). The practical interest allows for reflection and provides a space for teachers to ask important educational questions centering on assessment revisiting their own practices. Teachers with a practical interest are more comfortable with the concept of authentic assessment. They would provide students with some control over the conditions and context of their assessment and these teachers are more likely to engage in critical reflection. Teachers with a practical interest would look for varied and new forms of authentic assessment and consciously drawing significant distinctions between authentic assessment and traditional testing.

3.3 The Emancipatory Interest

The third KCI is the emancipatory interest. Habermas (1971) identifies the emancipatory interest with autonomy and responsibility. The emancipatory cognitive interest centers on self-knowledge through critical self-reflection that exposes how the past influences current situations (Bullough & Goldstein, 1984). It enables us to understand why things are the way they are and gives insight into the relations that present constraints on actions appearing as natural (Habermas, 1971). Knowledge is gained through critical reflection leading to a transformed consciousness or perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981). Furthermore, the emancipatory interest represents a concern with the moral and ethical criteria surrounding human action and a responsibility to society.

Sergiovanni and Cobally (1984) argue that the knowledge provided by critical reflection is emancipatory enabling individuals to recognize the reasons for the problems and provides to some degree a connection to the ideal human situation. This interest centers on the possibilities of what could be. Self-reflection for Habermas is the way to emancipation. He argues "self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinants of a self-formative process of cultivation and spiritual formation which ideologically determine a contemporary praxis of action and the conception of the world" (Habermas, 1973, p. 22).

Emancipatory actions involve self-knowledge and critical reflection on one's own life and in this context teaching, and a commitment to questioning power structures, societal conditions and embedded ideologies. This critical reflection includes a moral and ethical component that is incorporated in the discourse. The major concern is to determine if educational goals, activities and experiences lead towards forms of life that are characterized by justice, equity, caring and compassion (Gore & Zeichner, 1991).

Teachers who have an emancipatory KCI recognize both the technical and practical interests. However, because they engage in critical self-reflection and critique they move beyond interest in control and mutual understanding and incorporate these within emancipation. Teachers develop a consciousness that challenges the existing structures because they are genuinely concerned with barriers or constraints that restrict people's attainment or cause inequity. Furthermore, “the emancipatory interest might guide a teacher toward recognizing the role that schools play in perpetuating social and political divisions and encourage that

teacher to look for ways, both individually and collectively, to begin to challenge these problems” (Rennert-Ariev, 2005, p. 3).

For example teachers with an emancipatory KCI makes judgments about not only the educational value of assessment but also places these practices within a social and political context and begin to uncover “unjust or inequitable practices at work that serve to privilege certain groups and marginalize others” (Rennert-Ariev, 2005, p. 7). Rennert-Ariev (2005) argue

the emancipatory interest is also compatible with authentic assessment. In order to empower students in ways congruent with an emancipatory intent, students will need to have a significant amount control over how they are assessed and the conditions and context of the assessment (p. 8)

Hence, teachers working from the perspective of the emancipatory interest engage in critical reflection about the social and political context and encourage students to engage in this type of reflection. They challenge their own and the institutional assessment practices with the goal of providing a more just and equal system.

4. Research Methodology

The purpose of this research was to examine the Qatar Professional Teacher Standards in order to determine how Habermas’ theory of knowledge constitutive interests are embedded in the standards and how this knowledge can be used to develop possible ways that the technical, practical and emancipatory interests framework could be used in teacher preparation. In this study, Habermas’ theory of knowledge constitutive interests is used as the conceptual framework from to illuminate cognitive interest in the discourse of professional standards for teachers.

Discourse refers to an individual’s expressions and communications that reflect their organization of knowledge, values, ideas and experiences that is based in language and context. It is important to note that power plays a significant role in discourse. Using Foucault’s work, Weedon (1987) states “discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern” (p. 108). McGregor (2004) explains that discourse is used to build power and knowledge and to regulate and normalize. Essentially, the claims and words of the powerful are taken as truth and the words of those not in power, are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance (Van Dijk, 2000). This is the case with QNPSTSL where professional standards are granted power by being legitimized and authorized by governing educational institutions, in turn regulating thinking about education and teaching and over time, normalizing the particular understandings and definitions of effective instruction.

Professional standards serve as a good example of discourse being accepted as the “truth.” Teachers must use and embrace these standards because the standards are what define good

teaching and teachers are often assessed by their ability to show evidence of their effective use of each standard. Thus, professional standards are taken-for-granted and viewed as unquestionable truths about education and teaching that shapes teachers' thinking by producing meaning of what it means to be an effective and proficient teacher. Since the "Western experts," who are well paid, produce the standards they must contain the most up-to-date knowledge of teaching and learning. Because the discourse of QNPSTSL has the power to shape teaching by defining the accepted knowledge, dispositions and skills of desired teachers, it is important to engage in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

CDA is an analysis that examines the relationship between discourse and ideology (Johnstone, 2008). In this context, the CDA examines the versions of reality, the set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (ideology) embedded in the teaching profession and how this represents good teaching. The purpose of CDA is to uncover the ideologies embedded in written text or oral speech so individuals are able to resist and overcome various forms of power (Fairclough, 1989). Furthermore, Fairclough (2002) argues that CDA examines text but CDA does not start with the text but rather with the related social problems and issues. This moves the analysis from merely looking at abstract language and understanding that words have meaning in particular contexts. CDA for this research study is useful because it allows for the development of a unique understanding of the QNPSTSL.

This CDA followed Huckin's (1997) guidelines for conducting a CDA. First, it is important that the first reading of the text should be completed in an uncritical manner and then additional readings are done in a critical manner. When reading the text for the second time, the reader examines the text with a critical eye reconsidering the knowledge, considering omissions, raising questions, considering additional ways the text could be constructed and comparing and contrasting the knowledge to other texts (McGregor 2004). Huckin (1997) points out when conducting a CDA the researcher should not interpret the text word by word. The goal is to analyze the text to determine the perspectives that are legitimized and delegitimized and to identify the omission and inclusion of information and how this shapes the text. Furthermore, the analysis should uncover the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the text, consider the connotations of words, and how all this shapes the meaning of the text.

In this analysis, all 12 professional teacher standards were read over for basic understanding. The second reading examined the professional standards to initially determine if there were any of the KCIs evident in the standards and other written discourse such as the evidence guides. The third reading applied the technical interest to all 12 standards, following by a reading that applied the practical and then finally the emancipatory interest. The analysis included noting examples for each of the KCI, particular words or connotations that present any of the KCIs were marked. Responses to the research objectives were developed in order to provide a deeper understanding of how KCI are embedded in QNPSTSL and what knowledge is deemed important for teachers. Finally, discussion about the possible uses of KCI in the preparation of teacher is provided.

5. Findings

The Professional Standards for Teachers describe the capabilities that teachers need to provide challenging and rewarding learning experiences for students (QNPSTSL 2007). The standards require teachers to focus on learning experiences and teaching strategies, the use of ICT, assessment, knowledge of students and subject areas, school-community relations, and to engage in reflection to improve practice.

Professional standards do not specifically define terms or concepts but allows the users or more likely, an authority figure to interpret meanings. Thus, these findings should consider how the standards might be actually used in classrooms. What is written in professional standard and how they are implemented can greatly vary. For example, a particular standard may appear to serve the technical interest but when implemented, it may move to serve the practical KCI. In addition, one could argue that during the implementation of standards, teachers develop culturally relevant meaning from the standards and adapt these to their particular cultural context. For each interest, evidence from the professional teacher standards is provided demonstrating how the KCIs are manifested in the teaching discourse. Table 2 provides an overview of how the KCI are located in the professional teacher standards.

Table 2. KCIs Embedded in the Professional Teacher Standards

Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers	Technical Interest	Practical Interest	Emancipatory Interest
1. Structure innovative and flexible learning experiences for individuals and groups of students	X	X	Not Evident
2. Use teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning	X	X	Not Evident
3. Foster language, literacy and numeracy development	X	X	Not Evident
4. Create safe, supportive and challenging learning environments	X	X	X
5. Construct learning experiences that connect with the world beyond school	X	X	X
6. Apply ICT in managing student learning	X	X	Not Evident
7. Assess and report on student learning	X	X	X
8. Apply knowledge of students and how they learn to support student learning and development	X	X	X
9. Apply teaching/subject area knowledge to support student learning	X	X	Not Evident
10. Work as a member of professional teams	X	X	X
11. Build partnerships with families and the community	X	X	X
12. Reflect on, evaluate and improve professional practice	X	X	X

5.1 The Technical Knowledge Cognitive Interest

The technical KCI is evident, although by no means dominant within all 12 professional

standards, defining and promoting a particular understanding of teaching and learning centering on wide assortment of capabilities teachers need regarding teaching practices, assessment, use of ICT, working with parents and professional evaluation and improvement. When the technical interest is apparent, teachers are required to know a particular policy, link an educational practice to the policy and/or implement the particular policy. For example, several indicators emphasize educational practices that are in line with particular predetermined policies.

Standard 1 Indicator: Learning goals, forms of assessment and assessment criteria are identified and documented in line with school policies (QNPSTSL 2007, p. 12).

Standard 4 Indicator: Supreme Education Council and school policies and procedures on behavior management are known and followed. (QNPSTSL 2007, p. 26).

Standard 8 Indicator: Supreme Education Council and school policies and procedures on providing care and support for students are known and followed. (QNPSTSL 2007, p. 42).

In this context, the technical KCI centers on ends and outcomes and predetermined policies that guide and shape educational decisions such as behavior management and assessment. The technical teacher's interest lies in actions that implement the means (policies) but the ends remain unchallenged.

The technical KCI is further evident in the teacher's role in student assessment. Standard 7 places a strong emphasis using assessment evidence and data in a limited manner by scoring, linking decision and results to predetermined school policies and learning outcomes. For example standard 7 indicators state "Assessment evidence is evaluated and assessment decisions made in relation to students' achievement of the learning outcomes;" "Assessment results are recorded, using appropriate scoring systems, in line with school policies" and "Assessment results are moderated in line with school policies" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 38). The concern is placed on cause and effect relationships and using data to improve the means in the existing system leaving the ends unchallenged.

The professional standards require teachers to develop and use the skill of reflection. Standard twelve centers on the teacher's ability to reflect on, evaluate, and improve professional practice. Under standard twelve, teachers must meet ethical, accountability and professional requirements. For example, when teachers engage in reflection, the "National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders are used in analyzing teaching and learning practice and identifying personal professional learning and development needs and goals" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 58).

Another example illustrates this point. Standard eleven required dispositions is a commitment to "the Education for a New Era reforms" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p.55). The technical interest rest in the idea of the reform controlling schools and teaching requires an acceptance and commitment rather than a critical critique of the reform, offering productive suggestions and improvements in the implementation of the reform policies.

In summary, when technical KCI is evident in the QNPSTSL, teaching is reduced to

following preset policies and linking educational practices to those particular policies or professional standards. Teachers appear to be technicians as previously defined and good or successful teachers are those as technicians who carry out the given task without questioning the standards, existing policies or implications but rather meet the professional standards.

5.2 The Practical Knowledge Cognitive Interest

The Practical Knowledge Cognitive Interest is dominantly located in all the QNPSTSL when the discourse includes terms and competencies found in the professional standards such as gathering and using student information to make educational decisions; valuing students' ideas, beliefs and opinions; develop students' understandings of themselves; and concerns about ethical issues all illustrate the practical KCI. These concepts reflect Habermas' practical KCI by reflecting the need for understanding the environment through interaction and allowing meanings to emerge; understanding students as individuals; considering the moral realm of education and teaching; providing students with a voice, using persuasion, negotiation; and becoming enlighten so teachers can play a role in shaping their daily actions.

The analysis demonstrates that the practical KCI is evident in all of professional standards. As examples, standard 6 exemplifies the practical interest when teachers must consider "individual learning needs and personal circumstances are taken into account in allocating access to systems and resources" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p.34). Standard 4 requires "learning experiences are conducted in a supportive environment in which students' ideas, beliefs and opinions are valued and shared" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 25). The direct emphasis on understanding students backgrounds, viewing students as individuals and providing students with voice to express their values and opinions all illustrate the practical interest quite well.

Teachers must engage in assessment and standard 7 assess and report on student learning comprehensively. It covers student assessment from setting learning goals, planning, conducting providing feedback and reviewing assessment. An example of the practical interest located in the professional standards states "assessment processes are explained and, where appropriate, negotiated with students" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 38). This illustrates the movement toward authentic assessment where the understanding of students is important, provides students with some control over the conditions and context of their assessment and this would allow teachers to reflect and use a variety of assessments to better meet the individual student needs.

Other examples of the practical interest are illustrated in the following components of the professional standards:

Standard 1 Indicator: Information on the background, prior learning, learning needs, preferences and styles, and special learning requirements of students is collected from a range of sources (QNPSTSL 2007, p. 12).

Standard 5 Indicator: Learning experiences are focused on the examination of significant ideas and concepts that have the potential to develop students' understanding of themselves and their world (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 30).

Standard 8 Required Skill: strategies for gathering information on students' backgrounds, skills, interests and prior achievements and using this in the design, implementation and review of learning programs (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 43)

The indicators and skill mentioned illustrate teachers who embrace the practical interest because of the emphasis on understanding the complex backgrounds of students, allowing for students to develop understandings of themselves and their world and using this understanding to design and implement pedagogical practices. In addition, teachers are required to have knowledge and understanding of "learning styles of students" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 13). Finally, the practical interest is further illustrated in the standards when there is emphasis on dispositions that require teachers to "conducting assessment in an ethical way" and "understanding and sensitivity to individual differences and needs" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 39).

5.3 The Emancipatory Knowledge Cognitive Interest

There is evidence that the emancipatory KCI is embedded in seven of the twelve QNPSTSL. The emancipatory KCI is apparent when issues that center upon equity, ethics and the social and political contexts are raised. Two examples illustrate the emancipatory interest. One disposition in Standard Seven presents the emancipatory interests by raising ethical concerns regarding assessment. The statement reads "conducting assessment in an ethical way" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 39). Also, standard 12 requires teachers to "meet ethical, accountability and professional requirements" (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 59). When teachers begin to reflect and consider ethics and ethical issues in their practices, as this is the case with the two previous examples, they move into the emancipatory KCI that is illustrated by a concerned with the moral and ethical issues involved in human action. This provides opportunities for teachers to apply their ethical criterion and leads to making ethical judgments.

There are other standards that reflect the emancipatory KCI that begin to raise issues of equity, social and cultural issues as follows:

Standard 6 Indicator: Ensure equity and access for all students (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 33)

Standard 7 Indicator: Assessment and reporting activities are conducted in an ethical way with regard for confidentiality and the privacy of students. (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 38)

Standard 10 Required Skill: Interpersonal skills to communicate and relate to a broad range of people, from diverse social, economic, cultural and professional backgrounds, in an ethical way (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 51).

As these statements indicate, there is a concern for equity for students, ethical concerns regarding assessment and a clear concern for the awareness of the complex background of people and the use of this knowledge in an ethical fashion. Issues of justice and equality are raised and both are essential aspects of the emancipatory interest.

In the evidence guide for Standard Four, entry level teachers are given a suggestion that a piece of evidence should be provided that illustrates how they as teachers are "interacting and communicating with students in an open, inclusive, equitable and ethical way" (QNPSTSL,

2007, p. 28). In order to be working within the emancipatory KCI, the many aspects of teaching must integrate ethical criteria with communication and engage in practices based on justice, equity, caring and compassion.

6. Discussion

These findings illustrate that the KCI are embedded within the various teacher professional standards and the conceptions of teaching and competencies considered important for teachers are defined by the KCI. Although the KCI are found in the standards in varying degrees, additional discussion of each of the KCIs, is necessary.

6.1 The Technical Constitutive Interest

It was evident from the analysis that the technical interest manifests itself in all twelve of the QNPSTSL. The technical interest is evident when teachers align their assessment and teaching practices, with school policies; know and follow policies and procedures; and personal work related goals and learning goals are aligned with policies and procedures. Based on the Qatar National Professional standards for Teachers, teachers with a technical interest would be efficient in aligning multiple aspects of their teachers with “handed down” policies that are already established by the Supreme Education Council. Goals, results from assessment and teaching practices would be grounded in previously developed policies that the teacher with the technical interest would become efficient in embracing the policies, working within the system and utilize technical skills to “align,” “identify and document” and “moderate” educational goals and practices to existing policies. Standards are to be managed and mastered.

Teacher reflection in the technical interest requires an examination of their teaching from the perspective of each standard more or less determining if their teaching meets the standard and seeking evidence to illustrate meeting the requirement. In the QNPSTSL, the reflection is reduced to how to best apply a particular policy not any consideration of the policy itself, the values or theory behind the policy or an evaluation of the policy. This type of reflection is commonly known as instrumental action where teaching is based upon empirical evidence and governed by technical rules (standards). The questions asked in this type of reflection include how does my teaching reflect a particular standard?; what can I do to make my instruction meet the standards?; and how can my teaching be improved to include all standards?

This reflection is limited because it fails to provide teacher with opportunities to question the standards and related educational practices in order to demystify the standards, question the pedagogical assumptions embedded in the standards and possibly consider changing the direction of these practices. More importantly, teachers can be reduced to technicians. That is, simple technicians: “uncritical, “objective,” and “efficient” distributors of information” who neglect the more critical aspects of culture and schooling (Giroux & McLaren, 1996, p. 304). Eliminated from teaching are the important political, social, ethical and educational issues in favor on the pragmatics of how to and what works.

6.2 The Practical Constitutive Interest

As with the technical interest, the practical interest is evident in all twelve of the QNPSTSL and when the need for understanding becomes an integral part of teaching. When teachers are required to gain insight into students' background, value and utilize students' ideas, opinions and begin considering the ethical realm of education the practical interest emerges. Teaching from a practical interest teachers are not simply transmitters of knowledge but rather recognize the value of students' knowledge, experiences and opinions. This knowledge is taken into consideration when making educational decisions. Teaching from a practical interest considers learners' learning styles and preferences and difference.

In the QNPSTSL, teacher reflection in the practical interest requires teachers' understanding and interpretation that is used to shape pedagogy and curriculum. There is a concern for developing students' understanding and how education can be deliberately more personal. There is an interrogation of goals and practices and an exploration of the value and worth of the ends. The professional standards examined above invite teachers to "review of learning programs." The questions asked in this type of reflection center on what is the right action?; What ought I do?; and to consider the moral or ethical aspects of teaching, or assessment in this context, and the ethical aspects related to the sensitivity of individual students differences and need, they require to move beyond the technical interest and to begin to consider the practical interest.

6.3 The Emancipatory Constitutive Interest

While there was evidence of the emancipatory constitutive interest embedded in the QNPSTSL, it was somewhat less frequent (7 out of 12 standards) than the presence of the technical and practical interests. Still, the main element found in the QNPSTSL reflecting the emancipatory interest is the emphasis on ethics, diversity and equity. In several of the standards examined above, teachers must have awareness about how concerns for equity, caring and ethical concerns impact their ways of thinking and in turn shaping communication with diverse students and their teaching practices. All of these are essential elements of the emancipatory constitutive interest. More importantly, the QNPSTSL provides a space for teachers to critique the purpose and outcomes of a policy and examine more closely their teaching and assessment practices.

However, throughout the QNPSTSL when the emancipatory interest is evident, the majority of the times, the standards themselves are not always quite clear. Instead the standards provide opportunities for teachers to move the knowledge to the emancipatory level. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers need to develop much deeper understandings of the standards and the KCIs would help provide that understanding. For example, the QNPSTSL addresses terms such as inclusive, equitable and ethical. The issue here is how these terms are defined and that teachers must move beyond awareness to the integration within their ways of thinking, communication with students and their teaching practices.

However, at times, there must be some inferences made in order to see the emancipatory KCI emerge and several of the statements that reflect the emancipatory interest hinges how the

teacher interprets and uses the particular standard, knowledge or skill. For example, Standard five requires teachers to possess the disposition of “engaging in reflective practices” (QNPSTSL, 2007, p. 51). If the teacher engages in a self-reflection that calls into question issues of equity, justice and power and using this reflection to create and awareness on which they act then they would be working within the emancipatory interest. However, if reflection were limited to the understanding of professional practices and pedagogy, then the interest would be in the practical realm.

7. Conclusion

There is little doubt that most teachers probably use all three KCI in their work. It can be argued that teachers must be aware of how all three KCI can inform and question their practices. In other words, teachers should be able to utilize all three KCI to “gain conscious access to and control of his or her knowledge structures and how these relate to practice” (Quong, 2003, p. 285). Furthermore, the KCIs can enlighten teachers in many teaching areas such as assessment, teaching strategies, student relationships and many other important aspects of being a teacher. It can help better define terms such as effective teaching, authentic assessment, and differentiation just to name a few.

Therefore, teacher preparation at the undergraduate, graduate level and professional development must provide teachers with opportunities to engage in critical reflection about the specific professional standards and also the overall use of standards. Using the KCIs as a framework provides opportunities for teachers to examine and interpret not only professional teachers standards but also their own presuppositions and assumptions about pedagogy curriculum, learning and assessment.

Teachers and future teachers need to be taught to critically reflect on standards and given time to reflect on how they negotiate the contradictions and dilemmas of accountability measures and their own experiences, beliefs and educational philosophies and practices. Assignments that allow teachers to engage in dialogue where they can critically engage in the *ideal* (how things should be), *prescribed ideal* (what professional standards desire) and what is the *reality* (what is actually occurring) would be very useful. Here is an ideal entry point to introduce teachers and future educators to epistemological concerns, the construction of knowledge and the technical, practical and emancipatory cognitive interests can be introduced and applied to standards and in other contexts. Developing a framework based on the KCI could enable teachers to gain a more complex understanding of the schooling process and the complexities of teaching.

In closing, any use of the KCI as a framework for understanding professional teacher standards can be a useful tool that will provide opportunities for teachers and others who use these standards to gain an awareness and insight into the different forms of knowledge and the interests that are served. More importantly, it provides teachers with an understanding of the limits of a particular interest and in turn, the limits of standards. This is vital because the process will enable teachers to see the different forms of knowledge and how the different

interests play out in classroom practices in turn, allowing them to see the influence of standards on their thinking and teaching. Furthermore, using the KCI encourages teachers to engage in critical reflection that will lead to the raising of important political, cultural and ethical issues and hopefully, teachers will begin to rethink their role as teachers in fundamental ways. It could allow them to develop complex understanding of educational practices such as assessment and this rethinking of education and teaching is vital for educational reform.

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