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**IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
PRINCIPAL APPRAISAL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**A Case Study of Principal Appraisal in Five New Zealand
Primary Schools**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
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at
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ABSTRACT

This thesis was motivated by the researcher's need to prepare a Principal Appraisal programme for her own school. A paucity of local literature on the topic and anxiety amongst colleagues about the appraisal process, prompted this investigation. Changes in legislation led, in 1995, to principals in Grade 4 and Grade 5 schools being required to negotiate Individual Employment Contracts (IEC's) in which remuneration is linked to appraisal. This had the potential to create tension between the appraiser and appraisee. A case study of five G4 and G5 primary schools was conducted to ascertain how principals and their boards dealt with this issue, how they developed their appraisal programmes and what factors contributed to the successful implementation of the appraisal process.

The review of literature compares changes to educational administration in England and New Zealand and the resulting moves toward corporate models of management in both countries. Issues that arose from English appraisal trials dating from the mid 1980's, mirrored concerns that were surfacing in New Zealand - concerns about accountability, credibility of and training for appraisers, linking salary to appraisal and evaluating the whole school through principal appraisal.

Major findings in this research study confirm that principal appraisal programmes work best when the purpose for the appraisal is clear from the outset; when the appraiser and principal communicate frequently about school matters; when professional development needs of the principal are recognised and catered for; and when the appraisal is based on specific areas of the Performance

Agreement rather than trying to cover too much. Other issues which arose from this study are concerned with self-appraisal; the nature of 'effectiveness' and the difficulty of proving the effectiveness of appraisal; the lack of professional educators in the process of principal appraisal; evaluating the whole school when appraising the principal; and the suitability of a lay person as a principal's 'line manager'.

In the conclusion to this research the researcher has summarised elements of the five appraisal programmes that have made them successful. Recommendations are given which may assist schools to refine their principal appraisal programmes and suggestions are made for further research which could be undertaken in this topic.

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