

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Factors that Influence Teacher  
Appraisal in Primary Schools:  
Making appraisal meaningful for teachers**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**Doctorate in Education**

**at Massey University,  
Palmerston North,  
New Zealand**

**Bilinda Offen**

**2015**



---

## Acknowledgments

There have been many people who have supported, encouraged and motivated me to complete this thesis. My husband Tony has always supported me in any madcap adventure I have decided to undertake – this research being one of them. He has always challenged me to be the best I can, and is unwavering in his belief that I can do whatever I set my mind to, even when I have had doubts.

I would also like to acknowledge the role my parents played in this journey. Mum critiqued and proofread every chapter on more than one occasion. She said she ‘enjoyed reading it’ but I am sure there are better ways she could have spent her weekends and evenings. Dad encouraged me when it got tough, calling me ‘Doctor Daughter’ – I would have looked a right twit if he had to change it to ‘Almost Doctor Daughter’.

I am not an academic, but I wanted my children, Stacey, Lorissa, Frank and Tom to see that even their quirky mother could achieve something wonderful. I hope I have shown them that they too, can achieve whatever they set their minds to.

My thanks also go to all of my teacher friends who, over the years, have entered into vigorous debate and discussion about the purpose of appraisal and why and how we carry out this process. It is through this debate and discussion that the concept of this study grew. I have always believed that ‘authentic purpose’ was the key ingredient missing from appraisal processes, however, I now know the whole process is so much more complex than that.

Finally I would like to thank my supervisors, Margaret Walshaw and Sally Hansen for their support and ideas. I need to specifically acknowledge the wisdom and patience of Margaret throughout this journey. Without Margaret’s guidance I doubt I could have made the leap from a Masters Degree to a Doctoral thesis. Margaret’s timely responses to my seemingly silly questions and her purposeful, yet gentle critique and feedback of my work made me think harder and probe deeper. I feel proud and privileged to have had Margaret as my supervisor.

---

## Abstract

Research from a range of countries revealed commonalities in how teachers perceived appraisal. It was common that teachers viewed appraisal negatively, and that appraisal was a process teachers completed because it was mandated to do so.

In order to present a solution to the negativity that is often associated with appraisal, this study investigated teachers' perceptions of the appraisal process in relation to the purpose of appraisal, the impact of appraisal on student learning outcomes and how appraisal can lead to improved teacher practice. The roles of communities of practice, reflective practice and the impact of leadership on the appraisal process were examined. The key component of effective appraisal was identified as being a quality relationship of teaching colleagues within a school. A school that incorporated improved student learning outcomes through improved teaching practice as a key objective of their appraisal process was examined in depth. This case study illustrated how an effective and purposeful appraisal process resulted in empowered teachers, which led to a positive impact on student outcomes.

The overall findings of this study reveal that there are a set of conditions that need to be embedded into a school's culture before appraisal can become meaningful. In order for a school to develop an effective appraisal strategy, these conditions must be inherent in the school culture. A four-step process for establishing the conditions is offered, followed by a suggested cycle of appraisal. However, the cycle would be ineffective if the conditions for effective appraisal were not embedded into the culture of the school first.

## Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Overview.....	7
Teacher Appraisal Processes: What does a successful process need?.....	7
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>A brief history of Teacher Appraisal in New Zealand .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>The current state of play in New Zealand.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>What is happening around the globe? .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>What does this mean for New Zealand context? .....</i>	<i>20</i>
Theoretical grounding for the study .....	22
Reflective Practice and Reflexive Praxis: a brief description .....	30
Conclusion .....	31
<b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Specific Aims.....	33
General Aims .....	33
Rationale .....	33
Data Collection .....	35
<i>Phase One: Survey Data.....</i>	<i>35</i>
Instrumentation .....	36
Reliability .....	37

---

Internal Validity .....	38
Phase Two: Interviews.....	39
Phase Three: Case Study .....	40
Design Overview .....	42
Data Analysis.....	45
Justification for Research Method.....	46
Participants .....	47
Principles .....	48
Treaty of Waitangi.....	49
<b>CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Specific Aims.....	51
General Aims .....	51
Phase One – Survey Data .....	51
Section One.....	51
<i>Specific Aim 1</i> .....	51
Section Two .....	57
<i>Specific Aim 2</i> .....	57
Section Three .....	61
<i>Specific Aim 3</i> .....	61
Section Four.....	64
<i>Specific Aim 4</i> .....	64
Survey Comments.....	68
Survey Findings Summary .....	70
Phase Two: Interviews:.....	70
Interview Findings .....	72
Interview Findings Summary .....	76
Phase Three: Case Study .....	77
School A: Case Study .....	78
<i>Principal and Teacher Face-to-face Interviews</i> .....	78

---

<i>The Process</i> .....	81
<i>Implications of the inquiry process of appraisal</i> .....	82
Summary of Appraisal - Case Study: School A .....	84
Comparative Survey Findings .....	84
Chapter Conclusion .....	87
<b>CHAPTER FIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>89</b>
Engaging Teachers in Appraisal .....	91
Factors That Influence Effective Appraisal .....	92
An Analysis of an Effective Appraisal Process .....	101
Leadership .....	105
<b>CHAPTER SIX IMPLICATIONS OF CASE STUDY FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>111</b>
Conclusion .....	116
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN FINAL THOUGHTS</b> .....	<b>123</b>
Limitations .....	124
Further Research .....	125
Changing Beliefs .....	126
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>129</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>137</b>
Appendix One: Survey .....	137
Appendix Two: Participant interview consent form .....	144
Appendix Three: Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal in Schools Information sheet .....	145
Appendix Four: Principal follow up letter .....	147
Appendix Five: Directory of Schools – Dunedin .....	149



## List of Figures

Figure 1 Overview of Research Process .....	43
Figure 2 Research Design Sequencing.....	44
Figure 6 Example of an annual cycle of appraisal after the pre-requisite conditions are established .....	121

## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Comparative Table for Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards .....	10
Table 4.1 Role of participant and purpose of Professional Standards .....	53
Table 4.2 Role of participant and purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria.....	54
Table 4.3 Schools and purpose of Professional Standards.....	55
Table 4.4 Schools and the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria .....	56
Table 4.5 The basis of schools' appraisal system .....	57
Table 4.6 Participants' and relationships between appraisal and teaching practice .....	59
Table 4.7 Schools and relationships between appraisal and teaching practice .....	60
Table 4.8 Role of participant and relationship between appraisal and improved student learning .....	62
Table 4.9 Schools and relationship between appraisal and improved student learning.....	63
Table 4.10 Role of participant and feelings regarding the appraisal process.....	64
Table 4.11 Individual school and feelings regarding the appraisal process.....	65
Table 4.12 Role of participants and the appraiser in relation to the appraiser.....	66
Table 4.13 Individual Schools and the appraiser .....	67
Table 4.14 Survey comparisons from case study school .....	85
Table 5.1 The actions of School A as they relate to the criteria for a rich community of practice.....	102
Table 5.2 Teaching as Inquiry: Evidence as a basis for appraisal .....	108
Table 6.3 Summary of progressions before appraisal can be implemented.....	118