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**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**

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## 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.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

I have always been fascinated by the concept of teacher appraisal. When my teaching career started in 1999, mandatory teacher appraisal in New Zealand had been in effect for two years. The Professional Standards and the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions were models for teacher performance and were introduced to schools around the same time as mandatory appraisal. These two models, while similar in content, had arguably opposing objectives. The Ministry of Education (MoE), introduced Professional Standards as a basis for pay attestation, whereas the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions were initiated by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) to support the professional development of teachers. This meant that when I entered the teaching profession, schools were in the early stages of implementing mandatory appraisal strategies whilst developing an understanding of the practical implications of Professional Standards and Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions.

In my first school, the appraisal process consisted of a meeting with the Principal early in the school year. During this meeting, my goals were set and I was allocated a specific ‘appraisal week’ for later in the year. In the months between the initial meeting and the oft dreaded ‘appraisal week’ I continued the business of teaching without another thought to the appraisal process. During my ‘appraisal week’ I submitted my planning folder to the Principal and my teaching was observed at pre-arranged times. My ‘appraisal week’ culminated in a meeting with the Principal, during which I was praised on my exemplary planning skills, I was teased about my anxiety regarding the observations, and my appraisal was ‘signed off’. I left the meeting unsure of the purpose, but breathed a sigh of relief that it was over for another year. This cycle continued for the next eight years.

Later in my career, I was part of a management team that was charged with the task of establishing an appraisal cycle that engaged teachers and gave teachers ‘ownership’ of their appraisal. At this point in time, teacher appraisal had been a mandatory requirement for ten years, and the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions had been replaced

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with Registered Teacher Criteria, although the key objective of supporting teachers remained the same. In order to develop a new, purposeful appraisal cycle, the management team attended a seminar conducted by Eileen Piggot-Irvine on the rudiments of appraisal. Our goal was to integrate both the Professional Standards and the Registered Teacher criteria into our appraisal cycle and to make teachers more involved in the appraisal process. Our guiding text was “Appraising Performance Productively – Integrating Accountability and Development” (Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005). Over the course of a year, we developed an appraisal strategy that incorporated both the Professional Standards and the Registered Teacher Criteria. This approach required teachers to gather evidence that they had met the requirements stated in each. We developed ‘indicators of evidence’ that teachers could refer to and use to assist them when gathering evidence. Teachers used individualised portfolios that were created for them by the management team, to collate their evidence. The intent was that teachers ‘owned’ the portfolios and could build on them over the year, and also in subsequent years, thus providing evidence for growth over time. Teachers were still allocated a specific ‘appraisal week’, during which time teachers presented their portfolio of evidence to the Principal and received prearranged classroom observations. However, by giving teachers ownership of the portfolios, the implementation of the revised appraisal cycle inadvertently added to the anxiety our teachers experienced relating to appraisal. The onus of finding evidence shifted from the appraiser to the teacher, which resulted in added work for teachers who saw little, if any, benefits, of appraisal. Moreover, the appraiser was still directing appraisal, and teachers were still gathering evidence for the sole purpose of ‘appraisal week’. As a team, our attempts to use appraisal to empower teachers and grow their practice had failed. Our biggest failing was that we did not consult with teachers at any stage of the development process.

These personal experiences formed the impetus for this study, fuelled by my desire to understand what teachers believed made appraisal purposeful. However, in the very early stages of this study, it became evident that in addition to ‘purpose’, there were many more factors involved for effective appraisal to develop. It also became evident that the issues around effective appraisal are not unique to New Zealand. Studies from around the globe highlighted issues such as: a sense of purpose; anxiety and stress levels attributed to appraisal; the impact of appraisal on teaching practice; the impact on student learning outcomes; relationships between teachers and appraisers; and the

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quality of leadership (Bartlett, 2000; Flores, 2010; Jensen & Reichl, 2011; Larsen, 2009; Ngwenya, 2008; Piggot-Irvine, 2002; Yariv, 2009).

Research Question:

“What are teachers’ and appraisers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teacher appraisal in Dunedin primary schools?”

Specific Aims

- To determine whether or not participants recognise a difference in the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards.
- To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems help improve practice.
- To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal processes are linked to improved student learning.
- To determine trends in how participants feel about the appraisal process.

General Aims

- To determine the mutuality of both teachers’ and appraisers’ perceptions of the appraisal process.
- To identify the role the individual school settings play in the appraisal process.

In the first instance, this study investigated what teachers in Dunedin primary schools believed should be components of successful appraisal. The first two phases of this study were conducted through questionnaires, followed by interviews with a smaller subset of participants. The analyses of these data identified a school that listed improved student learning outcomes as one of the core objectives of appraisal. In the third phase of this study, the appraisal processes in this school (referred to as School A) are examined in depth.

The starting point for the investigation was a belief in the importance of a shared purpose for appraisal. During the course of the investigation, I found that many other factors contribute to the success of effective appraisal.

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The research is based around the premise that schools have a range of appraisal processes in place and that teachers are actively involved in them.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the follow terms are used.

- **Teacher Appraisal**  
This covers any systematic performance management system implemented by schools. Within different school environments this may have a different name – for example: Teachers’ Professional Development; Teachers’ Performance Management System; Teacher Appraisal Process.
- **Appraiser**  
This is a person who facilitates the appraisal process with a specific teacher. That is, the appraiser may have a teaching role, may be the Principal, or may be a teacher who has release time for administrative purposes. However, regardless of other roles in the school, in this study, reference to ‘the appraiser’ simply refers to a person who carries out appraisal.
- **Teacher**  
The person who is being appraised, and does not carry out appraisals. In this context a teacher does not have any appraiser responsibilities.
- **Teacher/Appraiser**  
This is a person who carries out appraisal in school, but is also a teacher. In this study, a teacher/appraiser were usually part of the leadership team and had leadership responsibilities within their school.
- **Principal**  
In the first instance ‘Principal’ refers to the school manager, who is ultimately responsible for the school appraisal process. As such, when the term ‘Principal’ is used it is synonymous with ‘appraiser’ unless stipulated otherwise.

### Thesis Overview

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The next chapter begins by examining the history of appraisal in New Zealand in order to provide context for present day practice. This is followed by a review of appraisal practices from a range of countries around the world. The countries that are included in the literature review have been chosen because the findings from each study incorporate a concept that is relevant when considering appraisal in New Zealand. Elements of appraisal to avoid, or conversely, to aspire to, are highlighted. The notion of community of practice is explained and its theoretical tenets serve as a framework for the examination of teacher appraisal in this study.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological approach and underlying principles for this study. It explains the steps taken to ensure the data gathered were robust in nature, and addresses ethical issues related to the study. Chapter Three also includes a detailed visual representation of the study as a whole, linking the three phases together. The rationale for the decisions made regarding data analysis is also presented within this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study. The findings of each of the three phases are presented separately, that is, findings for the questionnaires, interviews and the case study are offered sequentially. Phase one organises the data according to the specific aims and each specific aim is analysed in relation to the variables taken from the general aims. This means that each of the specific aims are analysed from both the perspective of individual school settings and also from the perspective of the role of the participant. The following two phases feed from the previous phase/s. This means that the findings from the interviews relate to the questionnaire findings, and the case study findings relate to both of the preceding phases.

The links between the findings of this study and the literature review are discussed in Chapter Five. The overall findings of this study suggest how an appraisal process, beginning with embedding the required conditions, might be employed in schools to help grow and nurture effective teachers, which in turn will lead to improved student outcomes. In addition, Chapter Five includes the steps taken by School A to meet the criteria for effective appraisal. These steps are explored and summarised.

Chapter Six generalises, as far as possible, the findings from the case study discussion to offer an approach to employing effective appraisal processes. The findings from phases one and two identified specific conditions that need to be in place before effective appraisal can occur. Based on the findings from School A, Chapter Six suggests a process that would enable these conditions to be realised. It is argued that an effective appraisal strategy that impacts positively on teaching practice, and subsequently improved student learning outcomes, cannot be implemented successfully until these conditions are embedded into school culture. This chapter also offers a guide on how to establish the prerequisite conditions for effective appraisal.

The final chapter of this thesis discusses the limitations of this study. It also suggests further research that could follow on from, and build onto, the key findings of this study.

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## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### Overview

This Literature Review is provided in two distinct sections. The first section reviews the literature specific to the teacher appraisal process from a range of perspectives namely, New Zealand historically, New Zealand currently, global initiatives, and the ways in which these perspectives could impact on the context of New Zealand teacher appraisal processes.

The second section explores the concepts of Communities of Practice, Reflexive Praxis, and Leadership. The discussion includes ways in which these concepts influence how teachers and appraisers interact with their appraisal processes.

#### **Teacher Appraisal Processes: What does a successful process need?**

##### *Introduction*

The teacher appraisal process in New Zealand has evolved from a business model of performance management that was used by executives to help the establishment of goals and targets (McLellan & Ramsey, 2007). McLellan and Ramsey (2007) state “For many in education, performance appraisal feels like an example of pointless corporatisation: that bureaucrats somewhere have decided that imposing this system on schools is a simple answer to the complexities of making sure schools are well managed” (retrieved from <http://www.nzpf.ac.nz>).

The task of initiating an effective Teacher Appraisal process in New Zealand schools is fraught with difficulties. These difficulties have been accentuated since the inception of Tomorrow’s schools and are not confined to New Zealand, but are replicated around the world (Fitzgerald, 2003; Flores 2010; Jensen & Reichl; 2011 Piggot-Irving, 2000; Yariy, 2009). This literature review will investigate teacher appraisal in New Zealand



over the past three decades and compare this to practices in a number of other countries around the world. The literature from other countries has been included if the education system has a form of congruence to the New Zealand system, or if a specific trait has been identified as being either detrimental to an effective process, or conversely, as being imperative for the success of an effective process. The review will then also include the research that reports on approaches to solving the problems within a teacher appraisal process and will explore the conditions deemed necessary for an effective appraisal system to occur. The review will conclude with suggestions from the literature for how New Zealand can move forward in a positive and productive manner.

### *A brief history of Teacher Appraisal in New Zealand*

Prior to the inception of Tomorrow's schools in New Zealand, the responsibility of teacher appraisal lay solely with the internal management of the school. The year 1997 marked the point at which the process of teacher appraisal became mandatory. On the establishment of Tomorrow's Schools in 1989, many teachers lost a felt sense of autonomy in the classroom, as they became accountable to the community and the government (Piggot-Irvine, 2000). Research suggests one of the key factors behind the call for administrative reform in schools during this time was a high level of public dissatisfaction with teachers and outcomes (Fitzgerald, Grootenboer, & Youngs, 2003). There was also concern from the government of the day and the local school communities, in general, that there was no vehicle for identifying or removing incompetent teachers from the classroom (Fitzgerald et al., 2003).

Initially, the intents of the newly mandated appraisal process was to provide a positive framework for improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, in 1999 as part of their drive to improve learning outcomes for students and maintain high quality teaching in schools, the government introduced the Professional Standards (Ministry of Education (MoE), 1997). This initiative established the criteria for the Professional Standards and stated that the purpose of the standards was to 'ensure clear and consistent expectations across each school' (MoE, 1997). However, the Professional Standards did not explicitly state how individual schools were to use the standards. Moreover, the Ministry of Education document (1997) creates an explicit link between performance and pay:

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*The Professional Standards are linked to pay increases through the ASTCEC settlement. The settlement requires that, from the beginning of the 2000 school year, pay progression on the base scale will be subject to the employer annually attesting that the teacher has met the Professional Standards at the appropriate level (p. 6).*

The regulatory aspect of teachers' work, at a time of decentralisation, meant middle managers were placed in a contradictory relationship with colleagues (Fitzgerald et al., 2003). By implementing a business model, with a performance driven system, which relies on a hierarchal distribution of responsibilities between appraiser and appraisee, the premise of a collegial, supportive and problem-solving environment, is potentially undermined.

The inclusion of the Professional Standards in Performance Management Systems, creates an imbalance between the accountability and the development of teaching professionals. Piggot-Irvine (2003) argued that by differentiating appraisal from the professional development component of appraisal, the 1998 mandated guidelines for appraisal in school threatens the balance between accountability and professional development to the detriment of the latter. Fitzgerald et al. (2003) also supports this stance:

*"Tensions have surfaced as schools have been simultaneously faced with the dual challenge of bureaucratic accountability and recognition of the developmental aspects of teachers appraisal" (p. 92).*

Piggot-Irvine contends the imbalance could lead to a climate of mistrust between managers and staff and would reduce the impact of appraisal as a credible process for teacher development and improvement.

The Registered Teacher Criteria (originally called Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, and at the time of writing, in the process of changing to Practising Criteria) were introduced around the same time as the Professional Standards by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) but were aimed solely at the professional development of teachers<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, the NZTC was in the process of being replaced by Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (ECUCANZ) as the new independent professional body for teachers.

While the *purpose* of these two initiatives, the Professional Standards and the Registered Teacher Criteria, were at opposing ends of the continuum, a number of similarities can be identified in the *content*. As a result, for many schools these were - and indeed continue to be combined within the overall teacher appraisal process. This raises questions relating to the purpose of teacher appraisal: Is appraisal expected to measure pay performance or to develop the skills of teachers professionally? In the merger of inherently different intents, what happens is that the aspect of teacher development is lost in amongst the teacher compliance. Piggot-Irvine (2000) argues that the goals of compliance and development have been linked together for expediency in time and effort. As a result, the focus of appraisal is often not about developing programmes and learning opportunities for the students, but about teachers reaching the next pay scale, and not being caught doing anything ‘wrong’. Thus we have the foundation of one of the compelling factors contributing to the fear and mistrust of an appraisal system.

Both the Professional Standards and the Registered Teachers Criteria aim to define what it means to be a quality teacher in New Zealand. However, both have different purposes and reflect different perspectives – in spite of there being close links regarding the content. The links and purposes are demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Table 2.1. Comparative Table for Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards

<b>Registered Teacher Criteria</b>	<b>Professional Standards</b>
Standards for teacher registration	Standards for pay progression
Assessed every three years (more frequently for PRTs)	Assessed/attested each year
One generic set for all teachers	Three sets: beginning teacher; fully registered teacher; and experienced teacher
Within NZTC control	In the teachers agreement
Must be met for full registration as a teacher	Must be met to allow pay progression for the next salary step
Broader and aspirational	Narrower and competency based

### *The current state of play in New Zealand*

In 2013, in response to the on-going need for schools to improve practice around teacher appraisal, the New Zealand Teachers council established the ‘Appraisal of Teachers Project’ to assist schools in this area. At the time of writing, the newly formed Education Council of New Zealand (EDUCANZ) is continuing with the project. This initiative targets Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Sectors and aims to develop national consistency regarding how schools interpret and use the Registered Teacher Criteria in New Zealand.

However, the needs of each sector are arguably quite different, and for this reason, this study focuses solely on appraisal practices in primary schools. The differences between the sectors arise from the appraisal processes and issues in Early Childhood Centres relating directly to the tenets of the Te Whariki document (MOE 1996). Secondary schools’ processes and issues are naturally linked to the specialist nature of secondary teachers, and are likely to be influenced by the requirements of teaching for NCEA qualifications. None of which apply to primary schools, or subsequently link to primary teacher appraisal. It is interesting to note that current research listed on the EDUCANZ Appraisal for Teachers Project website does not include research based in the Primary Sector (see <http://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/appraisal-of-teachers-project>).

Challenging the concept of performance appraisal in primary schools, McLellan and Ramsey, (2007) claim that many schools would not be interested in appraisal if they were not legally obliged to have a process of some sort in place. In the early stages of mandatory appraisal, schools were provided with training and funding to ensure appraisal did take place. At the time schools reported that appraisal had made a difference and was working successfully (Piggot-Irvine, 2000). However when the funding and training reduced, so too, did the commitment of schools to prioritising the development of quality and ‘result seeking’ systems. McLellan and Ramsey (2007) argue that schools are most attracted to initiatives and changes that have a direct impact on students, and that as appraisal systems are not directly linked to student outcomes, by definition, schools will be less inclined to allocate the time, the funding or support to ensure a successful appraisal system is in place. Thus appraisal becomes a matter of

compliance that schools can tick off their 'to do list'. In support of Piggott-Irvine's (2000) concerns regarding the deterioration of relationships between appraisers and teachers, McLellan and Ramsey (2007) state that one of the many downsides of a system based on compliance is that unhealthy attitudes develop towards managers of the schools on the basis that teachers perceive appraisal to be another paper work compliance tick-sheet that uses up their valuable time.

A further negative effect of an appraisal system based on a compliance check list of one person passing judgement on the performance of another based on observation is the sense of unease and anxiety experienced by teachers as they feel at risk with the process (McLellan & Ramsey, 2007).

Shaw and Thomas (2006) have argued that the ability to implement a successful performance management system that impacts on the needs and learning outcomes of students is hindered by the existence of the Professional Standards that are linked to pay progression. They point out that the pay progressions often form the 'centre piece' of appraisal and performance management systems.

What is at issue here, for the process of appraisal, are fundamental questions concerning:

What is the purpose?

Who should do it?

Why should it be done?

How should it be done?

### ***What is happening around the globe?***

In this section I will briefly explore a selection of the available literature from destinations around the world. The selected literature is used as a comparison and as a point of reference for the implications of New Zealand appraisal strategies. The literature I have chosen to review fits into two categories: either the author has identified an element crucial for successful performance management systems; or the location referred to has a system or history similar to the New Zealand context. Criteria for literature in this review include research that has identified elements of success or

reasons for the failure of appraisal strategies. For purposes of simplicity, the terms ‘principal’ and ‘appraiser’ are used interchangeably and relate to the person facilitating the appraisal process.

*AUSTRALIA:*

Johnson and Shields (2007) investigated inclusion of the New South Wales Teachers’ Federation (NSWTF) in the Teacher Efficiency Agreement (TEA) in the negotiation of Teacher Standards. These negotiations for teacher standards in New South Wales (NSW) occurred around the same time Professional Standards were being introduced in New Zealand. The introduction of the TEA in NSW was similar in purpose to New Zealand’s Professional Standards in that they were both an attempt to address apparent substandard teaching practice and maintain high quality teaching. The effects of this initiative, again similar to those of the introduction of Professionals Standards in New Zealand, were experienced by many teachers who became suspicious of the process and saw appraisal as a compliance based check list that had no impact whatsoever on teaching and learning (Fitzgerald et al., 2003; Johnson & Shields, 2007).

The Gratten Institute, an independent ‘think-tank’ focused on independent, rigorous and practical research regarding Australian public policy published a comprehensive document in April 2011 proposing an overhaul of the teacher appraisal system in Australian Schools. Their research (Jensen & Reichl, 2011) into teacher appraisal showed:

- More effective teachers are the key to producing higher performing students.
- Teacher appraisal and feedback that are directly linked to improved student performance can increase teacher effectiveness.
- An overwhelming majority of teachers currently believe that appraisals are undertaken purely to meet administrative requirements and that teacher appraisal does not currently improve teaching.
- Under performance by teachers is currently not addressed in the majority of cases.

Without describing what an effective teacher does, or how an effective teacher is measured, the report notes that “a student with an excellent teacher will achieve in half a year what a student with a less effective teacher will learn in a full year” (Jensen & Reichl, 2011, p. 6).

While Jensen and Reichl argue that each school needs to define what makes an effective teacher in a specific education setting, they do not identify the attributes of an 'effective teacher'. However, by allowing schools to characterise an effective teacher, they recognise that different school environments and cultures value, and place emphasis on, different aspects of education. Encouraging a level of autonomy within schools works some way towards decentralising the appraisal process. Importantly, while appraisal remains a mandatory requirement, the report offers boundaries and guidelines for how the process could be implemented to be effective and meaningful for both teachers and students alike.

Jensen and Reichl (2011) identify eight methods of assessment to be carried out within appraisal, and stipulate that a school must select at least four of these methods to ensure a varied yet methodical approach to assessing teachers. Student learning and outcomes are at the core of their proposal, with teaching methods being evaluated solely on how they impact within these areas. The appraisal methods include student voice, self-reflection, observation, 360-degree feedback including parents, student achievement, peer observation and feedback, and external observation and feedback.

#### *GREAT BRITAIN:*

There is a similarity between the trajectories of New Zealand and Great Britain with their respective appraisal process implementation. In 1986 it became obligatory in Great Britain for teachers to participate in an appraisal process. This process is linked to the investigations of schools by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) investigation of schools. It is a similar process to that of the Education Review Office (ERO) process in New Zealand schools. Bartlett (2000) found that the majority of teachers in Great Britain saw mandated appraisal as a threat to their autonomy in the classroom, and consequently resisted the process, they continue to view it negatively. In an attempt at openness with all stakeholders, the confidentiality between appraiser and appraisee was replaced with more transparency. This has resulted in teachers being more concerned with 'putting on a good show' rather than seeking professional advice and guidance on issues that may be perceived as raising questions of their competency (Bartlett, 2000). Bartlett claims the rationale for introducing obligatory appraisal and standards in Great Britain was to create a vehicle for dismissing teachers who do not

reach the standards. The official aims of appraisal in Great Britain, as established in 1991, failed to include student achievement. Instead, the aims focused on planning for professional development and to assist those responsible for decisions about management of teachers (Statutory Instruments, NO 1151 1991, p. 2, cited in Bartlett, 2000).

In her overview of appraisal from the late 1980s to 2000, Bartlett alerts us to the ways in which Governments may influence what happens in schools for their own political agenda. In Bartlett's views, decisions were not necessarily based upon the need to meet the learning needs of students. Indeed, some decisions explicitly, were at odds with the recommendations of teaching professionals.

*PORTUGAL:*

The Teacher Career Statute (TCS), which included mandatory guidelines for teacher appraisal, was issued in Portugal in 2007 in an attempt to renew and invigorate appraisal. One of the purposes of the policy was to manoeuvre the appraisal process away from the view of appraisal being a formality that must be endured (Flores, 2010). To address this issue, one of the explicitly stated goals of the policy was to use the appraisal process as a tool to improve the quality of teaching by aiding the growth and development of teachers. The new policy also addressed issues concerning student achievement by way of raising standards of teaching, therefore improving the quality of student learning. In order for these goals to be achieved, Flores placed strong emphasis on mutual understanding of appraisal by both the appraiser and the appraisee. Flores also highlighted the oxymoronic situation of an appraisal system that is essentially decentralised from government in the midst of the highly centralised and bureaucratic education system.

Flores (2010) demonstrated how a complete overhaul of the appraisal process, based on sound reasoning and research, failed to implement successfully. In this teaching environment, where the existing system was initially based on a bureaucratic procedure that did not evaluate teaching; where the majority of teachers readily agreed that a new appraisal system was necessary; and where the majority of teachers agreed with the goals of the new law, one would reasonably expect teachers to willingly embrace the updated TCS. However this did not happen. The failure of teachers to accept the



guidelines in the TCS was, as Flores explains, due more to the implementation process of the policy, rather than the content of the new policy. The biggest failing within the implementation process was the exclusion of teachers. Specifically, during the creation of the policy, teachers were not consulted nor were they consulted at the completion of the policy. The exclusion of teachers' voices resulted in a lack of teacher ownership for the process (Flores, 2010). As Flores suggests, teachers need to take ownership if the implementation is to be successful. Furthermore, there was insufficient time allocated to trialling the process and a lack of opportunity to modify the proposed policy. Consultation with teachers would have ensured the radical changes proposed would resolve the issues that had been identified regarding appraisal. Flores (2010) suggests the resistance and controversy that ensued could have been avoided if the Portuguese Government had adopted the basic principles of change management. That is, the argument was for wide participation of the stakeholders building up to, and including, the change. Flores emphasised the necessity of what she refers to as the three C's of quality teacher appraisal: Communication; Collaboration; and Commitment. In the preparation of the implementation of the TCS document, the Portuguese Government failed to engage in adequate communication or collaboration with teachers, even though as the main stakeholders, teachers would be directly affected by the policy. As a result teachers showed a lack of commitment to the policy.

#### *ISRAEL:*

Based on research undertaken of the Israeli school systems, Yariv (2009) has identified two key factors that he believes must be present in an effective appraisal process. These two factors are the relationship between the appraiser and the appraisee, and the training of the appraiser. Yariv argues that productive relationships are imperative to an effective appraisal process. Training of appraisers ensures consistency within the process, alleviates frustration of appraisers with weaker teachers, and ensures weaker teachers are supported to improve practice (Yariv, 2009).

Yariv found that teachers who were identified by their principals as performing 'below average', self-identified as 'very good'. Many principals in the study admitted to not knowing how to broach the topic of poor performance with the respective teachers. Consequently, Yariv concluded that teachers believed that if nothing was said, then everything must be fine, and continued along their path of teaching practice.

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Yariv's study showed that principals had positive relationships with 'high performing' teachers and much less positive relationships that deteriorated over time with 'poor performing' teachers. While Yariv is not suggesting that teachers underperform if they do not get along with principals, he has identified that a principal's perceptions of an underperforming teacher results in a change of manner when working with them. Principals may be more directive and authoritative with a 'poor performing' teacher and, in turn, the teacher will show little motivation and loyalty to the school or the principal, all of which creates the potential for a cycle of negativity that encroaches on the teachers attitude and performance.

Yariv took great care to avoid casting blame on either party. His point was to raise awareness that in this relationship both parties in the appraisal process need support. Principals need training in how to have effective discussions over problematic issues, whilst teachers need 'just in time' positive feedback and reflection to help change teaching practice when necessary.

Yariv (2009) argues that constructive feedback is more likely to be accepted willingly if the following conditions are present:

- The person offering the feedback is reliable.
- A positive relationship between the appraiser and the teacher.
- The process is fair in that the principal listens to what the teacher has to say, and applies consistent standards when providing feedback.

A future challenge lies in training principals in this area where poor relationships are already forged and perceptions of practice and intent by both parties are already made.

The two key points relevant to New Zealand appraisal in this study are: that the appraiser needs guidance on how to effectively appraise; and positive relationships between the appraiser and teacher are critical in enabling the most effective appraisal process to occur.

*CANADA:*

Larsen (2009) explored appraisal practices and attitudes in Canadian schools. In the study, only a minority of teachers viewed the appraisal process as a positive experience that enhanced their performance. For the vast majority appraisal was a factor contributing to stress, anxiety and feelings of self-doubt (Larsen, 2009). The appraisal process was also found to be a major contributor to negative relationships between colleagues, principals and students. It is Larsen's findings on the unintentional effects that are relevant to the New Zealand implementation of appraisal. Larsen (2009) puts the Canadian appraisal situation into perspective by looking at other Western countries around the world that have implemented appraisal systems within their schools, including New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America, and Great Britain. It is maintained that by understanding teachers' perspectives and attitudes about existing policy and practice, new policies influenced by this knowledge will not only result in the achievement of goals being met but also the support of teachers.

The current appraisal process was implemented in Canadian schools in 2002. Findings resonate with similar studies in New Zealand and offer insights into how negative feelings can arise as a direct result of the appraisal process. In particular, ill feeling was aroused between colleagues where hitherto there had been positive professional relationships. Frustration was expressed in the following contexts:

- Being evaluated by individuals who had little or no experience in their subject matter or level of teaching;
- Feeling the appraisal system was a vehicle to 'be got at';
- Losing autonomy for setting goals and classroom practice;
- Teacher performance appraisal being used to 'punish' teachers or to bully them into undertaking extra curricula activities;
- A barrier was created between hierarchical levels as teachers supported each other 'against' the appraisers; and,
- Presence of the appraiser negatively affected teaching and/or student behaviour.

(Larsen, 2009)

It was also noted that teachers would save their 'best' lesson, or create special lessons for appraisal day, with some teachers even admitting to teaching a trial run of the lesson before being observed to ensure it was "bullet proof" (p. 22). As such, lessons observed

did not necessarily represent the day-to-day teaching practice of an individual teacher. Larsen (2009) concluded that for most teachers in the study, the teacher performance appraisal process was considered unfair, inconsistent and too stressful to be of any use. Since Larsen's report was published there have been some changes to the nationwide process that have addressed some of the above issues. However, a single evaluation tool continues to be used – that of observation - upon which decisions and policies are made.

In Larsen's recommendations, it is important to note a belief that evaluation and professional growth need to be separate from each other and that Canadian schools need to develop more effective strategies for addressing the issue of ineffective teachers.

#### *ZIMBABWE:*

Ngwenya's (2008) research related to an inaugural appraisal system introduced in 2002 and seems to have already identified key ideas of what makes for a successful process. Ngwenya conducted his research from the perspective of teachers' attitudes and concluded the least trusted model is the top down model where one person is passing judgement on another. This model tends to be the most common method of teacher appraisal in western countries. His research also indicated that apart from supervisory practices that are judgemental, teachers also resent being supervised by those they perceive as unskilled in their specific area. Such a conclusion may also be drawn from research into the systems in Canada, New Zealand and Portugal (Flores 2010; Larsen 2009; Piggot-Irvine 2002). Ngwenya concludes in his research that money, as an incentive, does not motivate teachers. Rather, they are motivated by challenge that develops their pedagogical skills to enhance classroom practice. (See also Jensen & Reichl, 2011).

Ngwenya argues that teachers do not resent staff supervision if it is undertaken in a professional, transparent and accountable manner and which caters for their individual professional development needs.

The developmental focus of performance management takes into account teachers' current performance enabling them to seek advice and guidance from their mentor without fear of the information being held against them. Therefore, the teacher appraisal

process in Zimbabwe, as identified by Ngwenya, is based solely on the personalised professional development process.

*What does this mean for New Zealand context?*

The issues surrounding teacher performance appraisal are not unique to New Zealand. It is a telling point that research in 1992 in Great Britain raised the same issues (see Humphries, 1992). These issues have not been resolved today. The issues concern: *who* should do it; *why* should it be done; and *how* it should be done. For teacher performance appraisal to improve in New Zealand and be regarded as an integral component of teacher development we might apply the recurring themes from the literature in order to create a fair, robust and rigorous system for use in New Zealand Schools.

A key message that has come through the reviewed literature, both covertly and overtly, is that if teachers do not agree with the process or feel threatened by the process, regardless of what that process is, the appraisal strategy applied will not succeed. However, even if teachers agree with the goals and agree with the need for such a process in principle, without meaningful teacher consultation the process will not have a lasting impact on teacher practice or student outcomes (Larsen, 2009; Flores, 2010; Jensen & Riechl, 2011; Yariv, 2009). Teachers need to feel a purpose for appraisal and be assured that it will impact on the classroom in the form of enhanced pedagogical practice and student outcomes. Impact on practice and student outcomes give appraisal a valid purpose. Indeed, the purpose of appraisal in New Zealand schools is explicitly stated as ‘to improve student learning outcomes’, even though common practice in schools may suggest otherwise (MoE 1998). Therefore, teachers need to be included in the establishment of a performance management appraisal process, which has student needs at its heart. As McLellan and Ramsey (2007) argue, “...appraisals need to have a sense of ‘localness’. There is plenty of room within which a school can create a system that suits its size, character, and the talents of the people available” (p. 4).

McLellan and Ramsey (2007) also discuss the importance of establishing an appraisal system that does not focus on the ‘poor performing’ teachers in a school. They maintain the appraisers need to be selected very carefully to ensure expertise, mutual respect and the ability to have real impact on teacher performance and student outcomes.

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Appraisers need to know how to facilitate powerful dialogue and how to manage difficult conversations (Geiser, Giani, & O'Guinn, 2010). The research from Zimbabwe and New Zealand, reveals that the process was most successful when time and money were committed to the training of both appraisers and appraisees (McLellan & Ramsey, 2007; Ngwenya, 2008). The allocation of resources helped establish an inherent culture of professional respect within the appraisal process. Training of appraisers also helped to remove the suspicion and unease around the process, when all parties were aware of their respective roles.

If establishing the purpose of appraisal as enhancing student outcomes, then the Professional Standards as a baseline for performance appraisal is incompatible with the desire for growth, improved practice, and improved student outcomes. The concept of performance pay does not fit with, and indeed, is a direct hindrance to, a developmental model of appraisal that encourages a collegial and supportive environment of trust and respect where teachers are emboldened and encouraged to take risks with their programmes to benefit student outcomes.

McLellan and Ramsey (2007) claim that compliance based appraisal processes, as the Professional Standards encourage, degenerate into a perceived imposition with no real purpose. They also state that when phrases like 'feedback' and 'observation' are used in a compliance driven appraisal process, they too, are seen as processes that also relate more to compliance than to support growth, advice and guidance.

All of the above indicators point to the fact that teachers must be actively involved in the process every step of the way. Teachers need to be empowered to take control of their own professional development. If they are not, then appraisal becomes 'symbolic' rather than real (Humphrey, 1992).

Bartlett's (2000) report outlines the effect of Government intervention in schools in the UK and how the quest for more centralised control has demoralised the teaching sector. The goal has been to identify weak and underperforming teachers and create a vehicle for putting in place processes that will help remove these teachers. While it is important that there are systems in place to deal with underperformance, by effectively 'hi-

jacking' the appraisal system and constructing it away from a developmental process towards a compliance issue, problems are created rather than solved.

### **Theoretical grounding for the study**

In this section I review the literature that points to the kinds of environments and dimensions of practice that have been found to influence the success of the appraisal practice.

The concept of communities of practice becomes highly relevant when reflecting on the requirements for an effective appraisal process that is focused on improved classroom practice and student learning outcomes. The notion provides the theoretical grounding for this study.

Wenger and Lave (1991) first coined the phrase 'Communities of Practice' within their study on peripheral participation (cited in Wenger, 2000). The term refers to both intentional and incidental learning as an outcome of community members' participation in learning conversations and groups. Initially the study revolved around the traditional apprenticeship model. In this model the relationship is between a 'student' and a 'master'. As the study progressed, Wagner and Lave found that most of the learning took place beyond this scope and involved more than simply the 'master' and 'student'. Conversations with more advanced apprentices and other workers involved in the same industry are where the greater percentage of the learning occurred for the apprentice. Wagner and Lave identified the learning as occurring within a community of tradesmen, thus, the concept of 'Community of Practice' evolved.

Wenger and Lave identify three characteristics that are crucial to a community of practice:

1. Domain of interest – participants are linked with a shared interest that implies a commitment to that interest and therefore a competence in that interest.
2. The community – members engage in joint activities and discussions and use this to help each other develop their understanding and practice within the domain of interest.

3. The practice – the shared domain of interest goes beyond a simple shared common ground. The members are practitioners in the domain of interest.  
(Wenger, 2006)

Within the community a shared knowledge base is built upon. Problem solving within the domain of interest occurs and a repertoire of resources in the form of stories, experience, and ways of approaching recurring and common problems is established. With regard to education settings, Wenger (2006) argues there are a variety of communities of practice serving different purposes, both formally acknowledged and occurring informally.

While Yariv (2009) identifies the relationship between the appraiser and the appraisee as a key indicator to the success of teacher appraisal, this is likely to be only a surface indicator when the research by Wenger and Lave and the concepts of community of practice are applied to the educational setting. Interactions in a strong community of practice foster relationships based on mutual respect and trust, along similar constructs as the positive mutual relationships described by Yariv. Chaskin (2013) argues, “community hinges on membership in a ‘collectivity’ grounded in common identity, shared norms and concrete interactions and exchanges” (p. 107).

Wenger, Dermott, and Snyder (2002) argue that while there will be a commonality between participants of a community of practice at some level, homogeneity is not a requirement. Diversity and differentiation amongst members will enable richer learning experiences amongst participants as they develop their own specialties, styles and identities within the community. While participants may have common spheres of interest, adopting a unilateral, one-dimensional system of practice is not a precept to a community of practice.

Communities of practice within schools may form naturally due to shared circumstances and common cause. However, Wenger et al. (2002) argue that communities of practice will be more effective if organisations are proactive and systematic about developing and integrating communities into regular practice.



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Organisations can actively nurture an environment in which communities of practice can prosper. While being cognisant of the concept that in a true community of practice participation is voluntary, schools can proactively support the growth of such a community by valuing the inherent learning, making time for participants to meet and by removing any barriers to participation. Wenger et al. (2002) maintain that even without organisational support, communities of practice can flourish, although they may not reach their full potential. Unlike other school-wide initiatives, communities of practice often cannot be planned, directed and organised, but participation can be elicited and fostered.

The appraisal systems described in the “What is happening around the globe” section of this chapter, very much describes the apprentice system of review. In the typical appraisal process, the ‘student’ (the appraisee) meets with their ‘master’ (the appraiser) to set goals; the process is then followed up with observations by the master where the outcomes are discussed with the student. This does not take into account whether or not feelings of respect are reciprocated, if the appraiser and the appraisee have similar philosophies of teaching or if they have shared mutual experiences. It may be possible that the only commonality shared between the two participants of the appraisal process is that they simply work together in the same physical environment.

If a strong community of practice is supported and fostered by management in schools and the three domains as described by Wenger and Lave (1991) are present, this could very easily become the vehicle for an effective appraisal process within schools.

The importance of relationships between appraisers and teachers must be emphasised. As identified specifically in the research of Larsen (2009), Ngwenya (2008), Piggot-Irving (2002), and Yariv (2009) teachers must have respect for the professionalism of the one assigned to appraise them, mentor them or support them. If this crucial element of mutual respect is missing from the appraisal relationship, there is a very slim chance the process will be viewed favourably or be successful.

Buysee, Sparkman, and Wesley (2002) explored the implications of communities of practice and the role of teachers in research on improved educational practice. Within the constructs of research into effective practice, they view communities of practice as a

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vehicle for changing the traditional linear relationships between practitioners and researchers through which information is handed down from researchers to providers. This traditional model of apprenticeship could also apply to the traditionally hierarchical model of appraisal.

In this study, a rich community of practice follows the principles behind Wenger and Lave's description. That is, a positive outcome is achieved through a group of practitioners (teachers) coming together with a common domain of interest (improving practice in order to improve student learning outcomes).

Characteristic to the concept of communities of practice is the concept of reflective practice. This involves on-going reflection between a range of participants from novice to experienced. Reflective practice also refers to the practice of critically examining current and past professional practices with the aim of improving future practice and improving knowledge (Buysee et al., 2002). The concept of 'improvement' is echoed by Piggot-Irvine (2007) within her research on appraisal processes. She claims that appraisal processes should be developed with a genuine intent of 'improvement' being the desired outcome. In this sense, the generalised goal of 'improvement' for an effective leader can be applied to all aspects of student learning, including teacher practice and student outcome. Furthermore, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) also identify the overarching objective of 'improvement' as the key to successful leadership. It follows naturally, that the objective of 'improvement', in teacher practice and in student achievement, is the fundamental goal of appraisal.

One of the characteristics of reflective practice within a community of practice is that reflection is a collaborative process, as opposed to an individualised process. This means that, within the group of practitioners, reflection is shared and the group offers insight into an authentic issue. A study in Malaysian schools by Khalid (2013) looked at teachers' development of communities of practice through reflection groups. This study revealed that teachers working within a supportive community of practice, as advocated by Buysee et al. (2002), are able to develop aspects of teacher effectiveness. Khalid concludes that the informality of the community of practice and collegial reflective activities allowed teachers to make sense of, and implement the more formal professional development undertaken by teachers (Khalid, 2013).

Mackenzie (2007) has argued that schools need to develop a sense of community within the culture of schools and within leadership and teachers, in order to improve teacher morale. High teacher morale benefits students. Mackenzie also argued that teacher morale is linked with professional development opportunities for teachers and the way in which each individual perceives his or her effectiveness as a teacher.

Killeavy and Moloney (2010) maintain that reflective practice and being able to work collaboratively are aspects now viewed as central to professional teaching practitioner development. They argue that it is now “accepted that teachers can improve their effectiveness in the classroom by gaining better understanding of their own individual teaching styles through reflection on practice” (p. 1071).

Linking the concepts of a community of practice to the appraisal process, the likelihood of a positive appraisal experience for both appraiser and appraisee alike may be enhanced by utilising and nurturing a community of practice already established.

### **Leadership**

The role of leadership needs to be considered when looking at the culture of openness and sharing that leads to healthy reflective practice within a school community. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) argue that a leader is instrumental in creating strong communities of practice in schools.

The 2011 Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes Review (Nusche, 2010) acknowledge that the link between the appraisal of teachers and student assessment is likely to vary between schools in accordance to the quality of school leadership. This means that ‘quality’ school leadership will ensure an explicit link between the appraisal process and improving student outcomes. As a corollary, in schools where teachers do not make a link between the appraisal process and student outcomes, school leadership is likely to be less effective than in schools where the link is made. Furthermore, the review also states that “school leaders have a pivotal role in establishing the school conditions for teacher appraisal and the quality and implementation of appraisal procedures” (Nusche, 2010, p. 51).

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The importance of quality leadership is also emphasised by Mackenzie (2007) in her study on teacher and student morale. Mackenzie argues that the morale of teachers impacts on student learning outcomes, and the morale of leadership impacts on teacher morale. In particular, MacKenzie argues that effective leadership impacts positively on teacher morale. She follows this assertion by claiming “if effective leadership has a positive effect upon morale, it is likely that poor leadership could lead to poor morale” (p. 95). When considered together with her earlier point regarding good teacher morale impacting positively on student learning outcomes, the consequence of poor leadership is likely to impact negatively on student learning outcomes.

Piggott-Irvine (2003), whilst advocating for very deliberate acts of a structured appraisal process, also argues that “respect, openness and trust need to be established through honest interactions in all situations – not just that of appraisal but in every interaction at every level of the school” (Piggot Irvine, 2003, p. 177). Thus a culture of respectful community of practice needs to be established – not simply for appraisal purposes but as an embedded ethos of the school.

For honest interactions to occur at ‘every level of the school’ the leadership must ensure that the conditions are supported, encouraged and modelled. Day et al. (2009) make the distinction quite clearly between management and leadership of a school. Management is defined as having the goal of stability, while the measurable goal of effective leadership is ‘improvement’. Ultimately, this ‘improvement’ leads to improved student learning outcomes, which arguably come from improved teaching practices. Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd (2009) identified specific goal setting as a critical element of strong leadership. Robinson et al. also argues that leaders, who understand how to foster self-regulated learning and improvement in students, could use this same understanding to foster teacher learning. Within this concept, Robinson et al. also identifies the types of feedback that are useful for both teacher and student growth. They include process-based feedback, rather than outcome based feedback; and learning goals, rather than performance goals. Leaders who are more involved by working directly with teachers with evaluating teaching and learning, and leaders who are focused on student progress and results to improve teaching practice, are more likely to facilitate evaluations within the appraisal process that teachers describe as useful than leaders who have not created this culture of involvement (Robinson et al., 2009). ‘Involvement’ in this sense includes

participating in staff development programmes, as opposed to simply making professional development available to staff. 'Involvement' also extends to active participation in formal and informal discussions regarding student achievement. The Principal, as such, is viewed not only as the leader, but also as a learner. This dimension of leadership qualities identified by Robinson et al. (2009) impacts directly on the culture of the school. Studies reviewed by Robinson et al. showed that a participating leader is more likely to have a deeper understanding of the curriculum requirements for students and the impact of curriculum requirements on teaching practice. As such, leaders who do participate are more likely to empathise with the challenges teachers face with raising student achievement and are more likely to be able to offer practical and on-going support for initiatives.

Within the context of professional learning and development for teachers, where the ultimate goal of professional development is improved student outcomes, Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung (2008) identify the fundamental priorities of 'Active School Leadership' that are vital for the success of a school leader in terms of growing a collegially proactive community. Active school leadership requires leaders to be active in the following domains of school life:

- Development of a learning culture amongst staff, and were explicitly learners themselves;
- Actively promoting and monitoring alternative visions and targets for student learning;
- Actively organising and engaging in promotion of professional learning opportunities for implementation of new practices in classrooms; and
- Creating conditions for developing the leadership of others.

Robinson et al. (2009) endorsed these qualities of leadership, but included a further quality characterised by "a deep knowledge and understanding at a practical level of curriculum matters" as a crucial component of school leaders, adding that "school leaders can make a critical difference to the quality of schools, and student achievement and well-being" (p. 34).

Halverson, Kelley, & Shaw (2014) reiterate the ideas above as being crucial for quality leadership within a school. They strongly emphasise student learning and building a shared understanding around all aspects of teacher pedagogy. The second focus

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highlighted by Halverson et al. involves monitoring teaching and learning. In the context of appraisal, this implies that when monitoring teaching, the focus is on student learning outcomes. This dimension of quality leadership includes establishing practices and routines whereby teachers are enabled and encouraged to communicate with each other about classroom practice and about students' academic outcomes, which could arguably be viewed as actively supporting the creation and maintenance of communities of practice with student learning and teacher performance as the shared purpose.

Explicit links between communities of practice, effective leadership and relationships within schools were made by Servage (2008), in what she refers to as a "relationally bound community" (p. 63). Within a relationally bound community, teaching practitioners engage in collaborative teacher learning to develop a strong sense of community. Killeavy and Moloney (2010) also state that developing a sense of shared purpose is imperative for the participation levels and commitment of teachers to a community of practice. In this scenario, the common purpose is that of improving student learning outcomes. However, while this common domain is an important aspect of a strong sense of community, an equally important requirement is defined as mutual regard and caring of participants (Lambert 2003, cited in Servage, 2008). Within a relational model of community within schools, positive and mutually respectful relationships are critical for purposeful staff sharing and critically examining practice. As such, members of the community of practice evaluate each other's practice against a shared vision of excellence. Successful evaluation is dependent on a high trust model for open and meaningful critique.

Servage (2008) also argues that when a true 'community' culture is embraced, critical reflection of teaching practice will impact on student outcomes if, and only if, the existing culture values teacher-practice reflection alongside critical reflection of other aspects of school life. A confident leader who has built a culture of mutual trust and respect through transformative leadership practices would encourage and welcome constructive critique on all elements of school life that also impact on student learning outcomes.

The attitude and role of leadership will impact on the effectiveness of a learning community. Servage (2008) argues " ... teacher leaders ... can, I believe, enhance the sustainability and long term effectiveness of a professional learning community by

providing opportunities within its structure for teachers to hold open ended conversations oriented to communicative learning” (p. 63). Therefore, by allocating the resource of time in syndicate and/or staff meetings to enable professional dialogue to occur, there is more likelihood that an effective community of practice will be observed. Similarly, if a community of practice has grown naturally, the allocation of time to spend on professional dialogue will offer the community of practice more opportunities to sustain its momentum.

Servage (2008) maintains that “it is unlikely that individual transformation can be realised in a dysfunctional social setting. For better or worse, the effective states of individuals and climate of the group as a whole, are mutually influential” (p. 63). In the context of appraisal, this means that if there is not a strong sense of community, mutual respect and high trust between colleagues, teachers and appraisers, the teachers’ practice in the classroom is unlikely to change as a result of the appraisal process.

While the absence of a developed sense of reflective practice may be one barrier to teacher growth, another major barrier to teachers’ personal growth is a misalignment between current theory and personal practice (Servage, 2008). A community of practice based on healthy and respectful dialogue and a high trust model is more likely to help teachers identify any discord between theory and practice. Identification of conflict between theory and practice by a group of teachers working in a high trust environment of a strong community of practice will more likely result in authentic transformative teacher change. Servage explains this phenomenon as a result of a shared desire to improve student outcomes based on a shared and developing understanding of best practice.

### **Reflective Practice and Reflexive Praxis: a brief description**

Reflective practice can be described as reflecting on elements following an action, and enables a practitioner to learn from experience (Bolton, 2009). In contrast, *Reflexive praxis* is described by Coughlin and Brannick (2005) as the “analysis of one’s own theoretical and methodological presuppositions” (p. 6). Bolton (2009) simplifies the construct of reflexivity even further by stating “reflexivity is finding strategies to question our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and



habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others” (p. 13). Praxis, in its simplest definition means “theory plus action” (Quinlan, 2012). Quinlan also describes praxis as the ‘unity between theory and practice’. Therefore, *reflexive praxis*, in the context for this study could be interpreted as critical reflection, bound by a theoretical construct. Khan (2012) illustrates the process of reflexive praxis quite simply as an ongoing cycle of theory, action and reflection. Khan argues: “Praxis requires us to be students of our own experience and context. It’s not just about being smart and reflecting. It’s also about building specific behaviours and group norms that promote habits of strategy, debrief and revision” (p. 162). In this study, ‘reflective practice’ is used to describe teachers who are beginning to think about how their actions may influence any given outcome, and are starting to think about how they could change their future actions to influence a better outcome. Reflexive praxis, on the other hand, is used to refer to teachers who are taking the act of reflection to a much deeper, and more critical, level. While teachers engaged in reflexive praxis would still be reflecting on their actions, they would also be challenging their own beliefs and theoretical constructs that led to that initial action. Furthermore, teachers engaging in reflexive praxis are open to professional discussion, debate and new theory that may lead to paradigm shifts within their personal theoretical constructs when planning further action.

## **Conclusion**

Tensions regarding appraisal appear to be comparable in many nations, irrespective of culture or the timing of mandated teacher performance management systems in specific countries. The causes of the tensions may differ, but the results are the same – specifically, the creation of a climate of distrust in the workplace amongst teaching staff, collegial barrier building, and a sense of stress and anxiety experienced by teachers. In many appraisal systems the heart and core of our business, that is, the business of improving learning outcomes for students, seems to have been lost in the myriad of compliance issues and paperwork, and at the very least rates only a brief mention.

To make appraisal meaningful for teachers, students and the school institutions, research has shown that schools need to define the purpose of appraisal. The core of that



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purpose should be to ultimately improve student outcomes. To facilitate a smooth transition to this core purpose, the notion of performance pay in the form of Professional Standards needs to be separated out from the appraisal process and become a distinct activity in its own right. This may possibly result in a compliance checklist endeavour, however it should not be confused with the development of teachers or improving the outcomes of students. In turn, the appraisal process needs to become developmentally focused on the needs of the community and the specific cohort of students placed at the forefront of teacher development and appraisal focus. Until the specific purpose of the appraisal process is defined, schools may be unable to move forward in a way that will affect students and teachers in a positive, consistent and meaningful manner.

Research shows that the quality of leadership in schools has a direct impact on improving student outcomes. The quality of leadership directly impacts on school culture. Teaching practice that embeds goals relating to improved student outcomes can be included in the appraisal process. On the surface, it may appear a challenge exists in how to facilitate a meaningful appraisal experience for those teachers who choose not to participate in communities of practice or reflective practice. It could be argued, however, that if a teacher chose not to participate in meaningful interactions regarding how to make learning meaningful for children, then it is likely that a much larger issue needs to be addressed. However, a leader who is actively involved through professional development and problem solving with teachers regarding curriculum content and how to improve student learning outcomes, the interwoven processes of communities of practice and reflexive praxis are being encouraged, supported and modelled, both explicitly and implicitly.

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## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### Research Question:

**“What are teachers’ and appraisers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teacher appraisal in Dunedin primary schools?”**

#### Specific Aims

- To determine whether or not participants recognise a difference in the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards.
- To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems help improve practice.
- To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal processes lead to improved student learning.
- To determine trends in how participants feel about the appraisal process.

#### General Aims

- To determine the mutuality of both teachers’ and appraisers’ perceptions of the above specific aims.
- To identify the role the individual school settings play in the above specific aims.

#### Rationale

This research took an inductive approach. In an inductive approach, the researcher gathers and analyses data to determine whether or not any patterns emerge that suggest relationships between variables. From these emerging relationships, the researcher may be able to deduce relationships, or theories based on the research question. The key element of the inductive process is that it does not set out to test or prove a theory. Instead, the inductive process attempts to establish patterns and meanings from the

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analysed data. In contrast, the deductive approach to research is focused on testing a theory or a hypothesis with the ultimate aim to confirm, refute or modify that hypothesis (Gray, 2009).

A mixed methodology study with both quantitative and qualitative methods using the 'Explanatory Design' as described by Punch (2009), was undertaken. As a mixed methodology study, the research conceptualises elements from both the interpretive paradigm and elements of the positivist paradigm. Quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire were gathered within Phase One. Phase Two of the research gathered qualitative data from interviews. Phase Three was comprised of a case study, which is another approach in qualitative research. Interpretive traits are represented within Phases Two and Three of the research. Together, the different sources of data provided the means to construct theories from the analysis of the data (Cohen et al., 2000; Grey, 2009).

In the 'Explanatory Design' the qualitative data were used to explain, or build upon, the initial quantitative data set. In this study, the Explanatory Design model was carried out in three phases. The first phase of the research gathered quantitative data from a questionnaire. The second phase in this study (a qualitative phase), was based on a subsample of participants from the first phase. It consisted of interviews based specifically on the perceptions of teachers on the impact of appraisal on their practice and the impact of appraisal on student learning outcomes. The analysis of the interviews was undertaken to identify conditions and practices that teachers believed need to be embedded into appraisal to make appraisal meaningful for teachers. Phase Two was followed by a case study in a school that was identified from both the survey and interview data analysis. These data sources identified a school that was in the early stages of implementing an appraisal strategy and that had a core objective of improving student learning outcomes by improving teacher practice. Together, the analyses of the findings from both Phases One and Two were used to inform the objectives of the case study.

In the first instance, a questionnaire was developed to collect data to provide evidence of teachers' perceptions of appraisal to be made. The questionnaire included teachers' understandings of the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and the Professional

Standards and their perceptions of the appraisal process, its usefulness and evidenced impact on student achievement. When the questionnaire data were collected, the participants were asked to complete a 'permission to contact them' form for Phase Two. This form provided contact details but did not commit the participants to the interview process. Twenty-five participants agreed to be contacted, 14 of whom eventually agreed to be interviewed. This sub-sample of the survey participants was interviewed specifically on their beliefs about the purpose of their appraisal processes in order to deduce reasons for the findings of the survey data. The interview questions built on those in the initial survey with an emphasis on specificity, including examples to illustrate perceptions.

## **Data Collection**

### ***Phase One: Survey Data***

The method of data collection selected for Phase One was a questionnaire. Questionnaires are generally quantitative in design, however elements of qualitative data were also included at the end of each section as participants were presented with the option of adding further comments.

Survey design is an appropriate method for the researcher who is interested in collecting data that relates to a large population (Babbie, 2011). Babbie argues that survey design is an "excellent vehicle" for measuring attitudes and perceptions (p. 270).

While questionnaires are a relatively cost effective way of collecting data, they do have their limitations particularly when, as in this study, the researcher was seeking participant perceptions. There is no guarantee that individual participants will interpret the questionnaire statement in exactly the same way, which means the questions need to be worded in a way to eliminate as much personal interpretation as possible (Babbie, 2011; Bell, 2010).

Participants in this study responded to a questionnaire that included questions using a 5-point Likert Scale. While the Likert Scale is regarded as one of the most useful tools for social researchers in surveys, it also has its limitations. Questions may be raised around

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accuracy of a response to a written statement in the absence of a contextual situation and there is no indication that the intervals between the bipolar opposites are evenly spaced (Kothari, 2006). Kothari also argues there is no guarantee that a respondent will not respond with what they believe is the correct response, as opposed to what they actually think or feel about a statement. However, carefully worded questions and statements, groupings of the questions and statements and anonymity of respondents will work toward alleviating these limitations, particularly when the scores are being compared within a clearly defined group.

### **Instrumentation**

In order to meet the deadlines proposed for this study, a timeframe of three months was set for collecting the initial set of survey responses in Phase One. The goal was to obtain a minimum of 100 participants in the survey data collection phase, with as many cycles of systematic sampling from the identified population as was feasible to be implemented within this timeframe. This ensured that the data were analysed in time to develop questions for the Phase Two interviews and ensured the interviews could be conducted before the end of the school year.

Initial contact with the principals in the Dunedin area was proposed for the Otago Primary Principals Association (OPPA) meeting at the start of 2013. However, due to a variety of reasons, including a change of office bearers, this initial meeting was delayed and I was unable to present my research proposal to Dunedin principals within a timeframe that would enable data to be collected in a timely manner. As this initial delay put data collection behind schedule, I chose to contact individual principals directly. Care was taken to ensure the schools contacted included a range of schools within decile and u-ratings<sup>2</sup>, and included a representative from each primary school category (contributing primary, full primary and intermediate). The contact was initially through an email explaining the research proposal, followed by a phone call inviting participation in the survey data collection (see Appendix One, Survey).

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<sup>2</sup> U-rating is the grading scale based on rolls on students

The principals had the choice of either the questionnaire being dropped off and collected at a prearranged date, or of the questionnaire being part of a staff meeting and being collected as they were completed. All participating schools chose to have the questionnaire delivered at a staff meeting. This involved a brief explanation from me relating to the purpose of the questionnaire and an explanation of the elements of the data I was requesting. In all but the pilot school I left the room while the questionnaire was being completed, which allowed for greater sense of anonymity for participants as they returned the questionnaires to a collection box once they had completed them, as opposed to handing them directly to me. Participants were also encouraged to sit apart from one another during the completion of the questionnaire to avoid the possibility of unduly influencing each other while the surveyor was out of the room.

Background information was collected within the questionnaire using a mix of dichotomous questions and the use of the cumulative or Guttman Scale. Instrumentation also included a Likert sliding scale of teachers' perceptions regarding the appraisal system. Some questions included an optional 'comments' opportunity. The responses within this aspect of the survey were analysed qualitatively within a separate section of the interview data analysis and coded through identified markers to determine trends.

Each of the four specific aims and the two general aims outlined within the research question were addressed in the overall design of the survey.

### **Reliability**

To ensure construct reliability, the survey statements that were rated included some oppositional beliefs and perceptions for a subset of statements. For example:

*'The appraisal process helps me become a better teacher' and 'The appraisal process does not impact on my practice'.*

*'I don't do any extra preparation for my appraisal observations' and 'I am more prepared than usual for my appraisal observations'.*

This subset of oppositional belief statements provide an indication of overall consistency in participants' responses and were purposefully included at varying intervals of the questionnaire rather than consecutively.

Survey design presents all subjects with a standardised format, thus eliminating unreliability in the researcher's observations and interpretations. To ensure internal consistency and reliability in the results the split-half technique has been utilised in some of the survey structure. The questions have been structured and grouped in a way that interchangeability of indicators will provide the same measure in a different format. By presenting each survey at a staff meeting, I was able to explain the questionnaire carefully and respond to any questions from teachers. This helped give consistency, thus building reliability.

The use of electronic survey tools for data collection such as Survey Monkey was discarded as an option for several reasons. My personal experiences as ICT Cluster Facilitator and as ICT Lead Teacher led me to argue that an electronic tool such as this would be a barrier for many teachers. While collection and analysis of data would be simpler using such a tool, schools with unreliable internet access or teachers reluctant to use unfamiliar technologies could be disadvantaged. Using such a tool would also prevent the survey being delivered en masse at a staff meeting, given my experiences first-hand in relation to the unreliability of the Internet at some schools.

### **Internal Validity**

Internal validity can be compromised in survey design if the physical location of where a participant completes the questionnaire is not ideal, for example, completing the questionnaire on a bus on the way to or from work. In addition there can be 'instrument' decay if the participants are tired or rushed (Frankel et al., 2012). The Principals of each school had the choice of allowing teachers to complete the questionnaire in their own time, or administering the questionnaire at a staff meeting and being collected on completion. This latter method was the preferred method of schools. Including the questionnaire in a staff meeting gave the participants dedicated time to complete it, which means they may not feel as tired, rushed or as if it is simply another 'thing' to add to their workloads. Administering the questionnaire at a staff meeting also avoided another potential problem with survey data, which is the low rate of return and non-respondents (Babbie, 2011). However, care was taken to assure participants that participation was voluntary and they had the right to abstain from participation. From

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the potential of 137 participants, only one teacher declined to participate giving the return of surveys a rate of 99.25%.

The questionnaire asked participants to indicate whether they administer appraisals in their schools, are classroom teachers, are management, or a mix of management and classroom teacher. For the data analysis this information was recoded as 'teacher' for those participants who do not carry out appraisals, and 'appraiser' for those participants who carry out appraisals, regardless of other roles.

While the anonymity of each school is critical for the reporting of the analysis of the data, the schools identities needed to be known to analyse the data using markers such as the u-rating, decile rating, gender and years of teaching experience. So while there is a code for each school in the raw data, these codes are not used in the analysis and discussion sections to ensure anonymity for both the individual participants and for each institution that participated.

The data were entered into SPSS by myself and analysed accordingly.

## **Phase Two: Interviews**

The method of data collection for Phase Two of the study was individual interviews. Once the survey data were collected and entered into the SPSS database, the participants who had given permission to be contacted were offered the opportunity to participate in a telephone interview. Fourteen agreed, and interview times were booked based on convenient times for the participants.

The approach was a standardised open-ended interview as described by Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012). Using this approach required that the wording and sequence of questions be predetermined in advance. This meant that all the participants were asked the same questions in the same order. The benefits of this approach are that interviewer influence is minimised and the comparability of responses is increased (Fraenkel et al., 2012). It also means that the data are relatively straightforward to organise. A weakness of this approach is that the predetermined nature of the questions may limit the



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responses of participants. However, in this study questions were open-ended so the potential for limited responses was reduced.

The telephone interview consisted of five targeted questions:

- What do you think the purpose of appraisal should be?
- What do you think needs to happen in an appraisal to make it useful to you and meet this purpose [as outlined in the previous question]?
- In what ways do you think your current appraisal process impacts on the students in your class?
- If the appraisal system were to impact on the students in your class how would we know that? What would we see?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about appraisal that hasn't been covered in these questions or the survey?

Using interviews as a data collection tool allows the researcher to clarify perceptions of participants. Interviews also offer scope for participants to explain what they mean in depth. In this study, the interviews were used to add voice and specificity to the questionnaire from Phase One.

### **Phase Three: Case Study**

At the completion of data analyses from Phases One and Two, a school was identified as a suitable case for further exploration. This school is referred to as School A during the study to ensure anonymity. School A was identified as a school suitable for further investigation from comments made in the questionnaire and from responses to the interview questions in phase two. These comments and responses indicated that School A was in the initial stages of implementing an appraisal process that used 'teaching as inquiry' focused on improving learning outcomes for students as a major component.

A case study is used to develop as full an understanding of an aspect of a specific element of the study as possible (Punch, 2009). The objective of the case study in this research was to gather as much information as possible about School A in regards to appraisal, from a holistic perspective of the school. That meant that there was no attempt to influence or guide School A on its journey, but to simply understand the processes of appraisal and to understand the rationale for decisions regarding appraisal.

In this sense, School A was an instrumental case study that is described by Punch (2009) as “where a particular case is examined to give insight into an issue or to refine a theory” (p. 119).

School A was in the initial stages of implementing a new appraisal strategy that had the core objective of improving student learning outcomes through teachers growing their practice. Data were gathered through the following methods:

- Formal recorded interviews with the Principal;
- Formal recorded interviews with a teacher/appraiser;
- Five follow-up discussions with the Principal;
- Interviews with teachers
- ERO reports from 2011 and 2014;
- The initial survey was repeated within the third year of School A implementing their appraisal strategy.

The multiple methods of gathering data for this case study, support Punch’s (2009) assertions that a case study is not a research strategy as such, but more of a method for gathering data. Thus, a case study may involve the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. In this case, quantitative data were collected through comparative questionnaires, and qualitative data were collected through interviews, discussions and from a comparison of the two ERO reports. A criticism of using case studies in research is that it is difficult to make generalisations from only one case. However, in this study, the findings from School A are supported by the findings from Phases One and Two. In this way, the findings from School A can be offered as a potential strategy for other schools to approach appraisal.

Punch (2009) argues that the study of a particular case offers in-depth understanding that can “conceptualise important features for further research” (p.123). This is particularly pertinent when researching concepts that are traditionally problematic or little is known about the study. Punch also states that case studies are particularly useful when used with a combination of research approaches. Thus, the case study can offer insight into practice that other approaches, implemented as a single research tool, may not. In this case study, School A was used to explore the findings from Phases One and Two of the study.

## **Design Overview**

Figure one summarises the research plan and the implications of each step of the process. Figure two illustrates the research design sequencing.

Overview of the research process

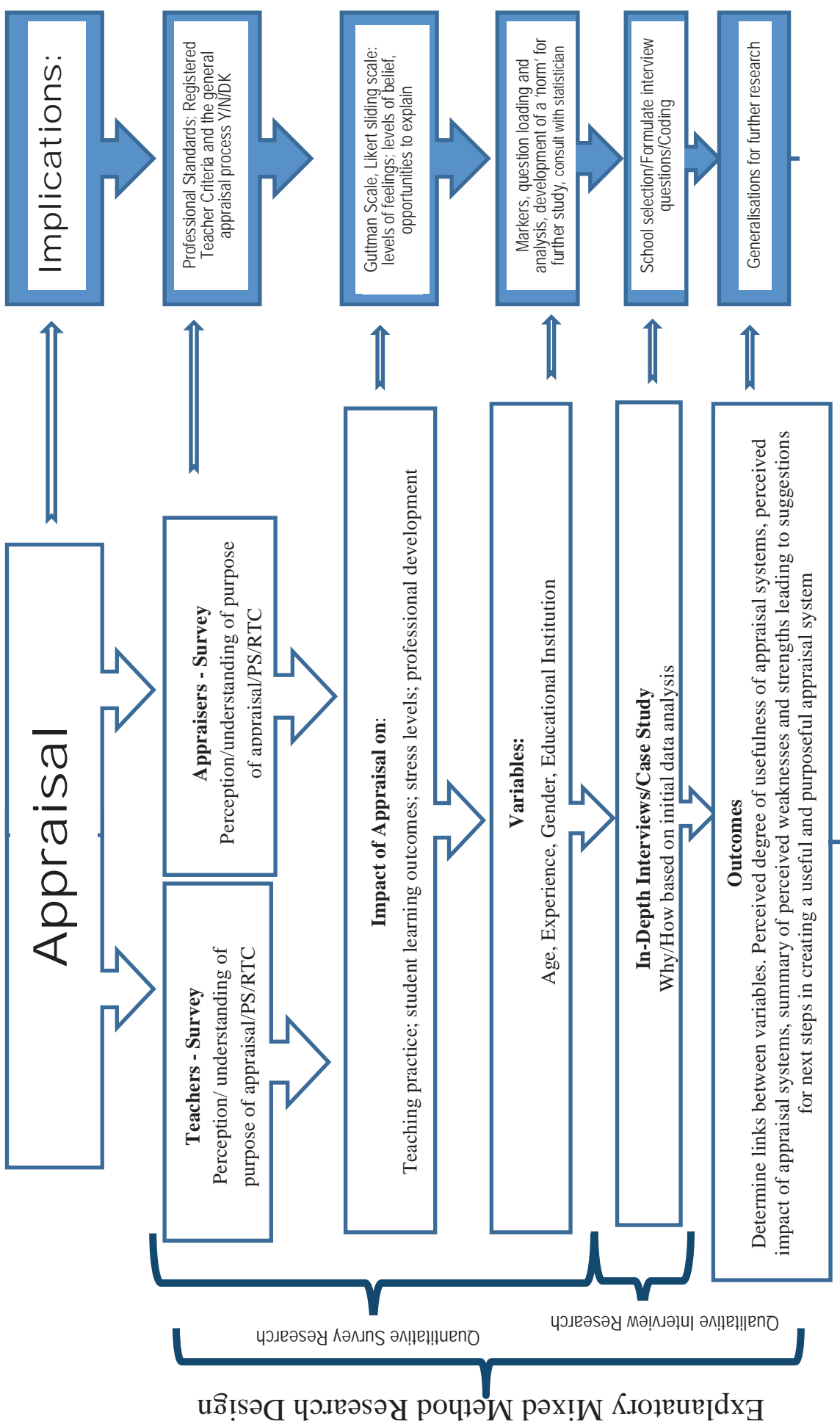


Figure 1: Overview of Research Process

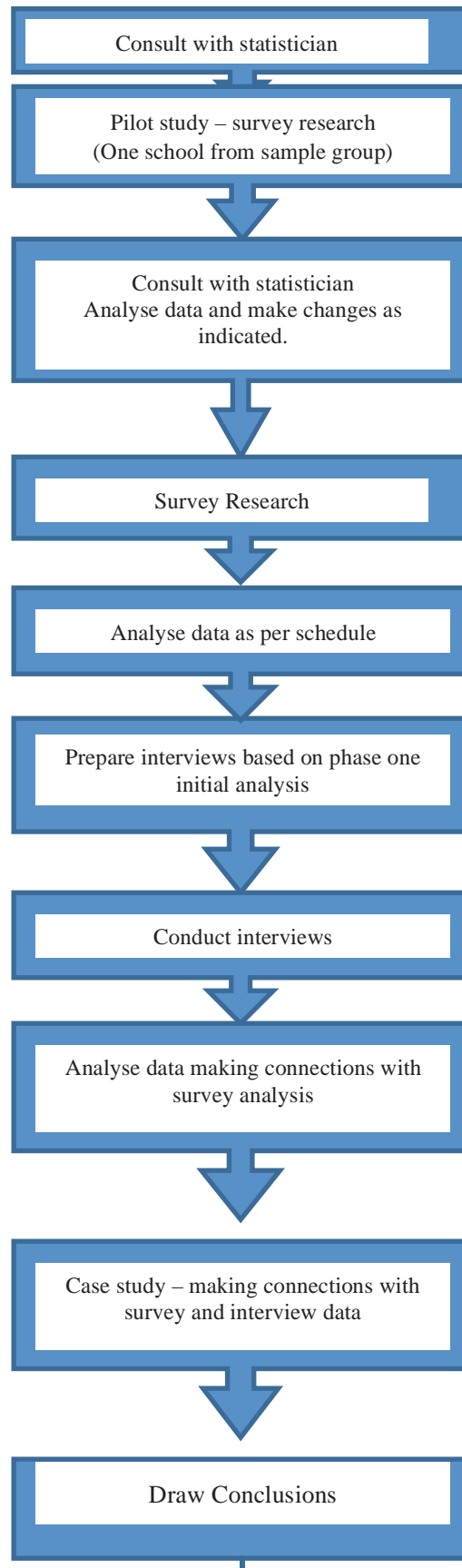
**Research Design Sequencing**

Figure 2: Research Design Sequencing

## Data Analysis

This study combines the general research method of grounded theory with survey research as described by Darkenwald (1980). As such the analysis was undertaken with strict procedures. That is, while Grounded Theory is a flexible research strategy, the data analysis is approached systematically. Initially an inductive approach to the surveys was used to generate codes from the data. At the completion of this phase theories emerged which indicated the focus of the interviews. This process follows the constructs of Grounded Theory as explained by Punch (2009). Grounded Theory is a research strategy that generates theory from the data, that is, the “theory is developed inductively from the data” (p.130).

The survey data were collated using SPSS to enable the collected data to be analysed in accordance with the identified markers. These were as follows; institution, gender, experience teaching, age of participant, u-rating, decile of school and the role of participant within the school. These markers were used to track trends in both the similarities and differences in teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of their appraisal system. When the participant included additional comments, these were included in the qualitative section of the research to enable markers to emerge within qualitative theory. The markers for coding these comments emerged as the analysis progressed (Frankel et al., 2012). Specific comments from the comments section of the survey and the interviews were coded under the following markers:

- Indications of checking the performance of teachers
- Indications of supporting the teacher in his/her practice
- Indications of maintaining the teaching profession
- Other – included any comment that was a statistical outlier

The data analysis included exploring relationships between different sets of survey questions as they relate to the aims of the research. The data collected were analysed using SPSS and correlations were determined using Pearson’s chi-square testing. Before the survey was completed the advice and guidance of a statistician was sought to ensure effective and accurate loading and wording of the survey questions would result in the specific data required. However, at the completion of the initial analysis the following variables in the survey were transformed:

**The Role of the participant** was simplified to two roles instead of the spread of six. The researcher made this decision, as the spread of roles was irrelevant to the research question, namely, to analyse the mutuality of perceptions between the appraiser and the teacher. Frankel et al. (2009) advise that to use correlational statistics effectively for analysis, a minimum of 30 individuals per group is required. By linking the appraisers together, regardless of their other roles within the school, this minimum figure was surpassed with 36 appraisers.

**The Likert Scale** was simplified from a five scale measure to a three scale measure; disagree and strongly disagree were combined, and agree and strongly agree were combined. The decision to reduce the scale from a 5-point scale to a 3-point scale was made for a variety of reasons. During the initial analysis of the data, it became apparent there was no criteria between the scales, which meant the data did not provide evidence for the strength of perception. What could be the reason or logic for ‘strongly disagreeing’ for one participant may be the same reason or logic for a ‘disagreeing’ participant. This lack of clarity in the data indicated to the researcher that there was no benefit in reporting on the individual 5-point scales, and that a more accurate indication of teachers’ perceptions would be obtained by combining the two similar perceptions and reporting accordingly. The transformed frequencies of data are included in the findings chapter.

### **Justification for Research Method**

The mixed methodology of Explanatory Design using survey research followed by in-depth interviews and a case study is an appropriate design for this study given the desired outcome. That is, it allowed for rigorous results from a population that could be used to make generalisations. These generalisations, linked with the case study, meant that suggestions could be formulated regarding effective appraisal strategies.

The information obtained in this study is in the form of individuals’ perspectives and perceptions. It provided an insight into what the participants *think*, rather than what they *do*.

By using survey research in Phase One, the participants were not unduly influenced by the researcher as the questions were constructed following advice from a statistician. Conducting interviews with participants from a subsample of the participant sample in Phase One of the study allowed for more in-depth insight into specific elements crucial to effective appraisal. Thus, the interviews gave ‘voice’ to the survey results.

The initial methods of Data Collection, that is, questionnaires and follow-up interviews provided a context and focus for the case study. The case study offers an insight for how a school might use the findings from phases one and two to help make appraisal meaningful for teachers. Furthermore, by using a mixed methods approach to data gathering, this study not only provides an overview of the perceptions of Dunedin primary school teachers regarding appraisal, but also provides a description of how a school might approach appraisal in order to enhance its usefulness to teachers.

## **Participants**

Primary Schools in the greater Dunedin Area including contributing primary schools, years 1 – 6; Full Primary schools, years 1 – 8; and intermediate schools years 7 – 8 (see Appendix 3 - List of Eligible Schools).

**Sample:** - Probability Systematic Sampling, with an element of Convenience Sampling. There are 2001 schools listed in the Government Data base of schools that cater for varying combinations of year 1 – 8 students ([www.educationcounts.govt.nz](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz)). Sixty of these schools are listed as being in the greater Dunedin Area. The list of these 60 schools was ordered according to the schools U-Rating and type to create a sample that included a range of Dunedin primary schools based on their rolls sizes and included a mix of type, that is, primary, full primary and intermediate schools. This ensured an even spread of school size and type. In the first instance, schools were grouped according to their type; each type was then ordered according to roll size. Systematic Sampling was then used over three months, which was the time frame allocated for data collection. This resulted in 12 Dunedin primary schools being contacted, two of which declined to participate due to other school commitments at the time.

The remaining 10 schools agreed to participate in the study and this resulted in 137 potential participants, one of whom declined to participate. From these participants 25



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teachers agreed to be contacted during Phase Two. Of these 25 teachers, 14 agreed to participate in the interview, which was a recorded telephone interview.

The case study of School A consisted of in-depth interviews with the Principal, a teacher/appraiser, teachers, five further discussions with the Principal, and the initial survey was repeated when School A was into the third year of implementing their appraisal strategies. Furthermore, relevant school documentation was explored, as were the last two Education Review Office reports.

**Ethical issues** – All practical steps were taken to ensure anonymity of participants and schools. Care was taken to ensure individuals were not identifiable in the data analysis or in any reports. Care was also taken to avoid individual schools or cluster groups being specifically identified. In the Discussion chapter of this study statements from participants, that had the potential to identify individuals, were paraphrased. Great care was taken to maintain the intent and integrity of the original comments.

To avoid a potential conflict of interest arising from my previous roles as ICT Facilitator, Teacher and Principal in the Dunedin area each school was provided with the same planned introduction to the questionnaire. I also left the room while the questionnaire was being completed and provided a box for the questionnaires to be returned to before I returned to the room. Furthermore, the schools were randomly assigned a number between 1-10 as their only identifiable feature for the data entry and analysis.

The following, summarised from the Code of Ethics for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2010) have been given due consideration in the interview, the survey design, and in the analysis.

## **Principles**

The survey and interview processes were created in a way that thoughts and perceptions of individuals were respected. All practical precautions were taken to ensure confidentiality was upheld, to ensure any possible harm to individuals, groups or institutions were minimised to a negligible risk. Informed, and most importantly,

voluntary consent was obtained in a manner that ensured there was no misunderstanding or deception as to the use of data, the purpose of the study or how the findings were to be reported. The cover sheet of the survey included a consent form for participants to sign, a summary of the purpose of the study, the steps taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality and the proposed use of the resulting analysis and report (see Appendix 4).

The survey was developed in a way that is sensitive to participating groups and as such did not disadvantage any group by culture, gender or age. While I have an on-going interest in current day appraisal systems, the questions were worded in open, rather than closed form.

I recognised and respected workloads of busy teachers and was mindful not to add stress, additional workload or additional deadlines to participants. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary.

### **Treaty of Waitangi**

This study is not specific to Māori Tikanga. There is no requirement for the local iwi to be consulted. The cultural ethnicity of the participants is not a variable in this study. The significant consideration in this study is the sense of community of the school group of which the participants are members. As such, the school setting became a significant variable in the data analysis.

I was aware that participants may have chosen to respond to the survey using the national language of te reo Māori or may have requested a survey presented in te reo Māori. I planned for the possibility of a participant requesting a survey in te reo Maori by seeking support of a fluent te reo Māori speaker from our local wananga to enable this to occur. Participants were made aware that this was an option, however there were no requests to that effect.

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## Chapter Four

### Findings

In this chapter I provide the results of both the first and second phases of the study, namely the questionnaire and telephone interviews. I also report on the case study undertaken in one school. The major component of the data gathering was through a questionnaire (see Appendix One) with a much smaller component of data gathering being completed with recorded telephone interviews with a subset of 14 teachers from the original 136 participants. The interviews offered explanation for the findings from the first phase survey questionnaire. The data analyses from Phases One and Two identified a school in which appraisal was explicitly linked to improved teaching practice and improved student learning outcomes. The case study data based on this school concludes the findings section.

One hundred and one teachers and 36 appraisers from 10 schools were invited to participate in the survey during an allocated time slot within each school's regularly timetabled staff meetings. For this purpose, 'appraiser' refers to those participants who carry out appraisals, regardless of other roles within the school. 'Teacher' refers to participants who are appraised but do not carry out appraisals on other staff members. One teacher declined to participate which resulted in a 99.25% return rate, which is well above the average for survey questionnaire returns (Babbie, 2011; Fraenkel et al., 2012).

The survey data were collected from Dunedin Primary Schools with a range of decile ratings (3 – 9) and a range of <sup>3</sup>U-Grades (1 – 5). To ensure anonymity of participating schools each school was randomly assigned a number between 1 – 10. This number represents a participating school and is maintained throughout the data analysis.

The presentation of the survey data is divided into four sections that relate to the four specific aims of the study. The general aims are included in each of the four sections. The aims are as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> U-rating –U1<50 pupils; U5 301-500 pupils)

## **Specific Aims**

1. To determine whether or not participants recognise a difference in the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards.
2. To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems help improve practice.
3. To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal processes lead to improved student learning.
4. To determine trends in how participants feel about the appraisal process.

## **General Aims**

- To determine the mutuality of teachers' and appraisers' perceptions of the above specific aims.
- To identify the role the individual school settings play in the above specific aims.

## **Phase One – Survey Data**

### **Section One**

#### *Specific Aim 1*

To determine whether or not participants recognise a difference in the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards.

The first section of the survey was designed to determine participants' beliefs about the purpose of the Registered Teacher Criteria and the purpose of the Professional Standards. This section also investigated whether or not these two frameworks formed the foundation of the schools' appraisal processes.

The following statements required an indication of either 'Yes', 'No' or 'Don't Know'.

- Our appraisal system is based mainly on the Professional Standards
- Our appraisal system is based mainly on the Registered Teacher Criteria

- Our appraisal system is based on a mix of Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria
- Our appraisal system is based on something other than the Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria

Participants were then asked to list what they believed were the purposes of the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards.

The responses for each of the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards frameworks were grouped into the following categories:

- Maintaining the teaching profession with support for teachers
- To benefit the learning outcomes of students
- A system to check teachers are meeting minimum requirements
- Other: this category included any other purpose participants identified
  - Vehicle for collaboration (1.0%)
  - Legal information for registration/police vets (2.9%)
  - Keep teachers up to date with the current curriculum (1.0%)

The first round of data collection was focused on the degree of mutuality between teachers' and appraisers' perceptions.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show the frequencies relating to beliefs about the purposes of Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria for both teachers and appraisers. Statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed no correlation between the roles of participants and their perceptions of purpose.

The combined (teachers' and appraisers') frequencies for the categories of 'maintain teaching profession with support for teachers' and 'framework to check teachers' are similar in the analysis of the 'purpose of Professional Standards' (36% and 36.8% respectively), even though the concepts of supporting teachers and checking teachers are arguably polar opposites. However, the frequencies relating to 'purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria' show that more than double the number of participants believed the purpose was a 'framework to check teachers' (55.1%), than participants who thought it was to 'maintain the teaching profession with support for teachers'

(25.0%). These figures show that considerably more participants see the Registered Teacher Criteria as a checklist rather than a support system.

Table 4.1. Role of participant and purpose of Professional Standards

	Maintain teaching profession with support for teachers	Framework to check teachers are meeting the criteria	Don't Know	Benefit students	Totals
Teachers	33.0%	34.0%	30.9%	2.1%	100%
Appraisers	44.1%	41.2%	14.7%	-	100%
Teachers/ Appraisers Combined Mean Frequencies	36.0%	36.8%	25.7%	1.5%	100%

Table 4.2. Role of participant and purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria

	Maintain teaching profession by supporting teachers	Measure and check what teachers are doing	Other (less than 5% each)	Don't Know	Totals
Teachers	20.6%	55.7%	4.1%	19.6%	100%
Appraisers	41.2%	47.1%	2.9%	8.8 %	100%
Teachers /Appraisers Combined Mean Frequencies	25.0%	55.1%	3.7%	16.2%	100%

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate the frequencies relating to beliefs of participants in relation to individual schools regarding the purpose of Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria. Statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed a significant correlation ( $p=0.000$ ) between individual schools and their beliefs. This means that individual staff members in a specific school are more likely to share similar personal beliefs about the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards. The broad range of frequencies spread across the schools indicates there is little or no consistency across schools in the purpose of Professional Standards and the purpose of the Registered Teacher Criteria within their appraisal processes. This indication of inconsistency is supported by what participants believed constituted the base of their appraisal system (Table 4.5). However, when the foundation of appraisal systems was investigated, the inconsistency of beliefs was found not only across schools, but also amongst the individual staff members. This means that while participants in a specific school shared similar beliefs about the purposes of Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards they did not necessarily share beliefs about what formed the basis of their appraisal system within their specific school.

Table 4.3. Schools and purpose of Professional Standards

	Maintain teaching profession with support for teachers	Framework to check teachers are meeting the criteria	Don't Know	Other	Totals
School 1	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	-	100%
School 2	41.7%	25%	33.3%	-	100%
School 3	9.1%	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%	100%
School 4	33.3%	66%	-	-	100%
School 5	47.4%	36.8%	10.5%-	5.3 %	100%
School 6	22.2%	77.8%	-	-	100%
School 7	33.3%	46.7%	13.3%	6.7%	100%
School 8	23.1%	76.9%	-	-	100%
School 9	22.7%	50%	22.7%	4.6%	100%
School 10	25%	55.2%	16.2%	3.6%	100%



Table 4.4. Schools and the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria

	Maintain teaching profession by supporting teachers	Measure and check what teachers are doing	Other	Don't Know	Totals
School 1	28.6%	57.1%	-%	14.3%	100%
School 2	41.7%	25%	-%	33.3%	100%
School 3	9.1%	45.5%	9.1%	36.4%	100%
School 4	0%	66.7%	33.3%	0%	100%
School 5	47.4%	36.8%	5.3%	10.5%	100%
School 6	22.2%	77.8%	-%	0%	100%
School 7	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	13.3%	100%
School 8	23.1%	76.9%	- %	0%	100%
School 9	22.7%	50%	4.5%	22.8%	100%
School 10	0%	83.3%	%	16.7%	100%

Table 4.5. The basis of schools' appraisal system

Our appraisal system is based mainly on ...	Registered Teacher Criteria <b>or</b> Professional Standards	Mix of registered teacher criteria and Professional Standards	Totals
School 1	7.1%	92.9%	100%
School 2	58.3%	41.7%	100%
School 3	27.3%	72.7%	100%
School 4	0%	100%	100%
School 5	31.6%	68.4%	100%
School 6	22.2%	77.8%	100%
School 7	73.3%	26.7%	100%
School 8	38.5%	61.5%	100%
School 9	38.2%	61.9%	100%
School 10	50%	50.0%	100%
Combined frequencies of all participants	38.1%	61.9%	

## Section Two

### *Specific Aim 2*

To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems help improve practice.

The information for Specific Aim 2 was derived from selected questions from the section of the survey headed "Appraisal Process". This section was based on a 5-point Likert Sliding Scale with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' and 5 representing 'strongly agree'. An initial analysis of the data revealed no information of what constituted a difference between strongly agreeing or agreeing, and between strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with a statement. For conciseness these two points on the scale were

combined, which effectively reduced the scale to a 3-point scale: Disagree/Don't Know/Agree.

The statements selected for 'whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems helping to improve practice' were as follows:

- Helps me become a better teacher;
- Purpose is to help me grow as a teacher;
- Does not impact on my teaching;
- Helps me identify what I need to work on;
- Highlights what I don't do very well; and
- Is aimed at my needs.

Bullet points four and five both explore the concept of teacher weakness. However, bullet point four identifies a positive interpretation to the concept and bullet point five identifies a negative interpretation of teacher weakness.

Table 4.6 illustrates the perceptions of both teachers and appraisers of the impact of appraisal systems on their teaching practice. Seventy percent of teachers believe the purpose of appraisal is to help them become a better teacher, but only 43% believe that appraisal does, in fact, meet this goal. Regardless of role, further analysis showed that only 58% of those participants who believed the purpose of appraisal was to help improve teaching practice thought this goal was met. Statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed no correlation between the roles of participants (teacher or appraiser) and their beliefs about the impact of the appraisal process.

Table 4.6 also shows that 47.3% of participants believed that appraisal helps them to identify what they need to work on, while 30.5% believed it highlighted what they do not do very well. Eighty three percent of those who believed it highlighted what they did not do very well also thought it helped them identify what they needed to work on.

Table 4.6. Participants' and relationships between appraisal and teaching practice

Agree	Helps me become a better teacher	Purpose is to help me grow as a teacher	Impacts on my teaching	Helps me identify what I need to work on	Highlights what I don't do very well	Is aimed at my needs
Teachers	43.3%	70%	42.3%	48.5%	32%	38.5%
Appraisers	32.4%	70.6%	41.2%	44.1%	24.2%	38.2%
Teachers/ Appraisers Combined Mean Frequencies	40.5%	64.1%	42%	47.3%	30.5%	38.5%

Table 4.7 displays the same statements from the "Appraisal Process" section of the survey data as Table 6, but from the perspective of the individual schools.

Table 4.7. Schools and relationships between appraisal and teaching practice

Agree	Helps me become a better teacher	Purpose is to help me grow as a teacher	Impacts on my teaching	Helps me identify what I need to work on	Highlights what I don't do very well	Is aimed at my needs
School 1	64.3%	92.9%	57.1%	64.3%	21.4%	69.2%
School 2	41.7%	58.3%	58.3%	41.7%	58.3%	41.7%
School 3	18.2%	18.2%	45.5. %	27.3%	18.2%	9.1%
School 4	33.3%	66.7%	0%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%
School 5	47.4%	63.2%	36.8%	47.4%	42.1%	42.1%
School 6	44.4%	66.7%	66.7%	44.4%	12.5%	22.2%
School 7	13.3%	46.7%	53.3%	33.3%	13.3%	13.3%
School 8	46.2%	69.2%	53.8%	61.5%	30.8%	38.5%
School 9	50%	86.4%	22.7%	54.5%	40.9%	68.2%
School 10	50%	66.7%	38.9%	61.1%	22.2%	38.9%
Combined Frequencies	42.6%	65.4%	44.1%	49.3%	31.1%	40.7%

As in Table 4.6, statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed that most statements made by participants did not correlate with school setting. This means that staff members in the same school did not necessarily share the same beliefs regarding the relationship between appraisal and improved teaching practice. The exceptions to this were the categories of "the purpose of appraisal is to help me become a better teacher" and "appraisal is aimed at my needs" both of which showed a strong correlation ( $p=0.007$  and  $p=0.024$  respectively) to their school setting. This means that for these two statements, individual staff members within a school shared similar beliefs. There is a broad range of frequencies for each category across the various schools. The differences between the frequencies of "helps me become a better teacher" and "impacts on my teaching" indicates that while some participants perceive that

appraisal does have an impact on their teaching, they also believe it does not necessarily help them become better teachers. Fifty-three percent of participants who believed that appraisal impacted on their teaching also believed that appraisal helps them become a better teacher.

### **Section Three**

#### *Specific Aim 3*

To determine whether or not participants perceive appraisal processes lead to improved student learning.

The information for Specific Aim 3 was derived from selected questions from the section of the survey headed “Appraisal Process”. This section was based on the 5-point Likert Sliding Scales with 1 representing ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 representing ‘strongly agree’. As before, initial analysis revealed no indication of what constituted a difference between strongly agreeing or agreeing, and between strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with a statement. For clarity these two points on the scale were combined, which effectively reduced the scale to a 3-point scale: Disagree/Don’t Know/Agree.

The statements selected for ‘whether or not participants perceive appraisal systems led to improved student learning’ were as follows:

- Students in my class benefit from my appraisal;
- I can show evidence that students in my class benefit from appraisal; and
- The appraisal process has my students’ needs as a priority.

Table 4.8. Role of participant and relationship between appraisal and improved student learning

Agree	Students in my class benefit from my appraisal	I can show evidence students in my class benefit from my appraisal	Appraisal has my students needs as a priority
Teachers	33%	17.5%	25.8%
Appraisers	35.3%	29.4%	44.1%
Participants Combined	33.6%	20.6%	30.5%
Frequencies			

Table 4.8 illustrates the perceptions of participants regarding the impact of their appraisal process on student learning in relation to their role in the school. Approximately a third of both teachers and appraisers believe their students benefit from appraisal, but both teachers and appraisers are less likely to be able to provide evidence of this. Sixty percent of participants who believed students benefitted could show evidence for this. Forty four percent of appraisers thought that appraisal had student needs as a priority, while only 25.8% of teachers thought students' needs were a priority focus. Statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed no correlation between the role of the participant and their beliefs regarding appraisal processes leading to improved student learning.

Table 4.9 includes the same categories as in Table 4.8, but in relation to individual schools.

Table 4.9. Schools and relationship between appraisal and improved student learning

Agree	Students in my class benefit from my appraisal	I can show evidence students in my class benefit from my appraisal	Appraisal has my students needs as a priority
School 1	64.3%	57.1%	64.3%
School 2	50%	25%	25%
School 3	0%	0%	18.2%
School 4	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
School 5	47.4%	21.1%	36.8%
School 6	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%
School 7	6.7%	0%	0%
School 8	15.4%	15.4%	38.5%
School 9	40.9%	22.7%	36.4%
School 10	44.4%	33.3%	38.9%
Combined Frequencies	35.3%	22.8%	31.6%

The data in Table 4.9 are collated and displayed from the perspective of individual schools. Statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) revealed a strong correlation ( $p=0.005$ ) between individual schools and beliefs about appraisal impacting on students. That is, a school's staff members tended to share similar beliefs. There is, however, a wide range of frequencies across schools regarding perceptions of the impact of appraisal processes on student outcomes. This suggests that individual schools may have different perceptions about whether or not appraisal should, in fact, impact on student outcomes.



## Section Four

### *Specific Aim 4*

To determine trends in how participants feel about the appraisal process.

The data for Specific Aim 4 was derived from selected questions from the section of the survey headed “Appraisal Process”. This section was based on the 5-point Likert Sliding Scale with 1 representing ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 representing ‘strongly agree’. As before, initial analysis of data revealed no indication of what constituted a difference between strongly agreeing or agreeing, and between strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with a statement. For clarity, these two points on the scale were combined, which effectively reduced the scale to a 3-point scale: Disagree/Don’t Know/Agree.

The statements selected to identify trends in how participants felt about the appraisal process are as follows:

- Appraisal causes feelings of stress and anxiety;
- Appraisal is empowering;
- I feel threatened by appraisal;
- I am more prepared than normal during appraisal; and
- I model my best teaching during appraisal.

Tables 4.10 and 4.11 display the data relating to the above statements from the perspectives of the participants’ role in the school and from the perspective of individual schools respectively.

Table 4.10. Role of participant and feelings regarding the appraisal process

Agree	Appraisal causes feelings of stress and anxiety	Appraisal is empowering	I feel threatened by appraisal	I am more prepared than normal during appraisal	I model my best teaching during appraisal
Teachers	51.5%	15.6%	20.6%	39.2%	52.6%
Appraisers	44.1%	26.5%	17.6%	47.1%	58.8%

Participants Combined Mean Frequencies	48.5%	21.5%	19.1%	41.2%	55.1%
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Table 4.11. Individual school and feelings regarding the appraisal process

Agree	Appraisal causes feelings of stress and anxiety	Appraisal is empowering	I feel threatened by appraisal	I am more prepared than normal during appraisal	I model my best teaching during appraisal
School 1	35.7%	35.7%	14.3%	35.7%	14.3%
School 2	50%	50%	25%	50%	50%
School 3	36.4%	45.5%	27.3%	45.5%	63.6%
School 4	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%
School 5	57.9%	26.3%	26.3%	26.3%	57.9%
School 6	66.7%	44.4%	11.1%	44.4%	66.7%
School 7	73.3%	40%	33.3%	40%	53.3%
School 8	46.2%	38.5%	15.4%	38.5%	38.5%
School 9	31.8%	40.9%	9.1%	40.9%	63.6%
School 10	50%	55.6%	11.1%	55.6%	72.2%
Combined Frequencies (mean)	48.5%	21.5%	19.1%	41.2%	55.1%

Just under half of the participants believed appraisal created feelings of stress and anxiety, and over half of the participants modelled their best teaching during appraisal observations. Using statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test), a strong correlation ( $p=0.006$ ) was found between participants who felt appraisal created stress and anxiety and those who felt threatened by the appraisal. There is also a significant

correlation ( $p=0.000$ ) between participants who were more prepared than normal and who modelled their best practice. There was no correlation between the role of the participant and the way they felt about appraisal. It is interesting to note that there was very little difference in the frequencies between how appraisers and teachers felt about appraisal. It might be expected that stress experienced around appraisal would have been significantly greater for teachers than appraisers. Similarly, it might have been expected that teachers would have a higher frequency for the survey statement ‘I feel threatened by appraisal’ than appraisers, but again, the difference was negligible.

Tables 4.12 and 4.13 reveal what participants believe about the role of the appraiser, from the perspective of their role and from the perspective of the individual schools. Statements taken from the “Appraisal Process” section of the survey are as follows:

- My appraiser fully understands appraisal;
- My appraiser is constructive with feedback;
- Appraisal strengthens my relationship with my appraiser; and
- The system needs to change.

Table 4.12. Role of participants and the appraiser in relation to the appraiser

	My appraiser fully understands appraisal		My appraiser is constructive with their feedback		Appraisal strengthens my relationship with my appraiser		The system needs to change	
	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD
Teachers	50.5	11.3	63.9	9.3	24.7	23.7	38.5	19.8
Appraisers	52.9	17.6	58.8	11.8	26.5	20.6	41.2	26.5
Participants Combined Frequencies	52.9	12.5	64	9.6	27.9	22.1	39.3	20.7

\*A/SA – agree/strongly agree

\*\*D/SD – disagree/strongly disagree

Table 4.13. Individual Schools and the appraiser

	My appraiser fully understands appraisal		My appraiser is constructive with their feedback		Appraisal strengthens my relationship with my appraiser		The system needs to change	
	% *A/SA	% **D/ SD	% *A/SA	% **D/S D	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD	% *A/ SA	% **D/ SD
School 1	85.7	7.1	78.6	7.1	50	7.1	28.6	57.1
School 2	58.3	8.3	91.7	8.3	50	0	16.7	8.3
School 3	18.2	27.3	91.7	9.1	27.3	45.5	45.5	36.4
School 4	33.3	0	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3
School 5	21.1	15.8	42.1	21	26.3	15.8	36.8	15.8
School 6	55.6	11.1	66.6	0	33.3	11.1	37.5	12.5
School 7	40	13.3	20	6.7	0	40	73.3	0
School 8	53.8	15.4	69.2	15.4	23.1	38.5	38.5	23.1
School 9	72.7	9.1	81.8	4.5	22.7	18.2	50	13.6
School 10	66.7	11.1	72.2	5.6	27.8	22.2	33.3	22.2
Participants Combined Mean Frequencies	52.9	12.5	64	9.6	27.9	22.1	39.3	20.7

\*A/SA – agree/strongly agree

\*\*D/SD – disagree/strongly disagree

Table 4.13 shows that only half of teachers thought their appraisers fully understood the purpose of appraisal. Sixty four percent of teachers believed that their appraiser was constructive with their feedback, but only 24% thought that this strengthened the relationship between appraiser and teacher. Both sets of ‘disagree’ and ‘agree’ data have

been included on this table to illustrate that less than 50% of participants offered their perception of the impact of appraisal on their relationship with the appraiser. Slightly over 50% selected the option of “I don’t know”.

As in earlier Tables, there is a wide range of teacher and appraiser beliefs between schools in their beliefs. For example, 85.7% of participants in School 1 believed their appraiser fully understood the purpose of appraisal, while only 18.2% of participants believed their appraisers fully understood the process in School 3.

### **Survey Comments**

The following comments were recorded by participants on the survey form under the section entitled “Anything else you would like to add about teacher appraisal.”

- Money spent on appraisal could be spent on providing more teachers or teacher aides in the school.
- I work hard all the time I am constantly reflective and change my practice as a result.
- I make changes as an intrinsic need rather than extrinsic motivation for change to meet the needs of the students.
- I don’t know what happens to our appraisal data, does it stay in schools or does it get checked by the ministry?
- I believe appraisal needs to be rigorous, purposeful and challenging but as yet have never experienced this.
- Appraisal must not be time consuming or take too much away from teaching.
- My appraisal process is closely linked to my beginning teacher and monitoring programme, so it is well supported. I assume that after I am registered it will be a smaller part of my teaching.
- Appraisal system well in place and employed at my school. Not used to the best advantage!
- I don’t really have an appraisal or goals set.
- Professional Development in our school needs more follow up to provide clarity.
- I make sure my goals are specifically for students primarily.

- Observations are done during normal teaching time, the times are unknown in advance.
- The purpose of Professional Standards is .... What they should be is another story.
- We discuss our goals when we do the actual appraisal – and usually relate to a mix of school wide and personal goals, but having said that, I am struggling to remember what mine are.
- I don't know if my appraiser understands the purpose of appraisal.
- I think the purpose of Registered Teacher Criteria is to bamboozle and confuse [in my role as teacher] I have had experiences at both ends of the appraisal spectrum [positive and negative].
- I believe change occurs if teachers are reflective and prepared to change.
- Through Inquiry Journals I have more input on control and on goals, but some [of appraisal] is linked to whole school goals.
- The inquiry journals main focus is strategies to change/improve teacher practice and better meets the needs of the students.

These comments, along with the initial data analysis from the survey informed the creation of the questions asked in Phase Two of the data collection, namely, telephone interviews.

There were strong correlations using statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) between participants who felt empowered by the appraisal process and participants who perceived:

- Appraisal celebrated their success; their, and/or their student, needs were a priority;
- Appraisal helped them grow as a teacher;
- Students in the class benefitted from appraisal;
- Their appraiser fully understood the purpose of appraisal;
- Appraisal strengthened their relationships with their appraisers;
- Their appraiser was constructive in their appraisal; and
- Appraisal was a good use of their time.

Participants who felt empowered by the appraisal process agreed with the above statements. However, only 21% of participants perceived that appraisal was empowering (see Tables 4.10 and 4.11). Importantly, statistical analysis techniques (Pearson's chi-square tests) show a strong connection between whether or not teachers and appraisers found appraisal empowering and their school setting.

### **Survey Findings Summary**

Overall, the statistical analysis shows there is little, if any, correlation between the role of the participant and their beliefs and perceptions about appraisal. That is, teachers and appraisers within the same school shared similar beliefs about appraisal. While the perceptions of participants across schools vary significantly, perceptions from within individual schools have revealed similarities. On the other hand, there is little, if any, consistency from one school to another of how appraisal is perceived or the beliefs of purpose, effectiveness and outcome.

Within a school setting teachers and appraisers share similar beliefs. This finding suggests that the culture of the school has a significant impact on individual teachers' beliefs and perceptions of the purpose and effectiveness of appraisal.

### **Phase Two: Interviews:**

Phase Two of the data gathering process took the form of individual recorded telephone interviews with teachers.

Whereas quantitative research as in survey design, can identify relationships and trends, qualitative research can offer "sensitivity to meaning, and to context, and local groundedness" (Punch, 2011, p. 290). Essentially, this phase took an explanatory design, whereby the interview data is used to suggest a rationale for the findings in the survey data. In effect, the interview data played a supportive, secondary role within the study which is based primarily on the survey data.

From the initial survey of 136 participants, 25 participants signed a ‘consent to be contacted’ form. Of these 25 participants 14 were available for interviews. Initial contact was through email and asked the participants to establish a suitable timeframe for the telephone interview. The 14 participants who responded were based in a range of participating schools. Each of the participants interviewed believed themselves to be reflective practitioners, as was indicated by their responses. Within the 14 participants there was a mix of teachers and teacher/appraisers, that is, teachers who also carried out appraisals.

Owing to the fact that these participants were volunteers and were able to easily opt out of the interview process by choosing not to reply to the initial email contact, it is likely each participant was pre-disposed to a strong view of appraisal, either negatively or positively. That is to say, it was expected that extreme views would be advanced by the participants.

Each of the 14 interviews followed the same general format using the following questions:

- What do you think the purpose of appraisal should be?
- What do you think needs to happen in an appraisal to make it useful to you and meet this purpose?
- Do you think your current appraisal process impacts on the students in your class?
- If the appraisal system were to impact on the students in your class how would we know that? What would we see?
- Is there anything else you’d like to say about appraisal that hasn’t been covered in these questions or the survey?

The aim of the interview phase was to give teachers and appraisers an opportunity to explain their beliefs and perceptions beyond the scope of a survey and to give ‘voice’ to some of the areas highlighted in the survey analysis. To meet the aim of ‘explanation and voice’ the comments have been collated into trends for each question. Some comments are paraphrased to ensure anonymity of participants.



## Interview Findings

**Question One:** What do you think the purpose of appraisal should be?

All participants believed appraisal should have an element of teacher growth and should support the continuing growth of the teacher. Most of the participants also thought appraisal should have either a direct or indirect impact on student outcomes. However, 10 out of the 14 interview participants did not think their current systems supported what they believed should be part of an appraisal; two participants believed their systems were starting to have impact on teacher growth and student outcomes, and the remaining 2 participants thought their schools' systems were robust and supported their beliefs about appraisal.

Comments regarding the purpose of appraisal from the telephone interviews are as follows:

*The purpose of appraisal [should be] trying to lift performance of teachers and ultimately impact on students learning, increasing students learning.*

*A system to help teachers improve their practice so teachers have the opportunity to choose goals and be measured against those goals, perhaps be directed to professional development if they are needing more support to reach those goals and to basically improve teaching and outcomes for the kids.*

*Appraisal should be the development [of the teacher] and also of the children, it should also impact on staff professional development as well.*

*I think that the purpose of appraisal should be to support the growth of a teacher so therefore it should acknowledge all of the strengths of a teacher and all the things that are going really well, but I also think it is a good opportunity to find out any next steps for the teacher, anything they can work on to make their performance even better.*

*The purpose of appraisal for me, I like to get feedback on my teaching, so I know where to improve and it enables me to set goals as well but it also gives me a chance to reaffirm what I'm doing well as well I guess it's a reflection time and time to reaffirm things that are going well, as a teacher you don't get a lot of .. I don't want to say praise... but I guess its constructive feedback.*

*I think the purpose of appraisal should be to look and reflect on a person's teaching, where to go from there for next steps, basically full inquiry process looking at what's going well, what needs to be worked on what sort of goals need to be set and what needs to be put in place to allow those goals and next steps to be put in place. Also looking at what has gone well*

*as well and recognizing those I suppose is really important as well and to allow for a really good culture within the school.*

*I've thought a lot about this, and I think, because we are a single cell classroom, and we are on our own basically, we don't get to see a whole lot of other teachers teaching, we do a lot of reading we do a lot of research, we do a lot of thinking, I guess at the end of the day, that it is confirmation for me as a teacher that I am on the right track and I am succeeding in the way I believe I am succeeding. Because we are so alone in our classrooms, it is nice to have confirmation from my principal that I am doing a good job.*

*Should be receiving feedback on how you are doing and the job you are doing, for me, it is teaching and management. It should also help me move forwards in my profession, should give me support and guidance as to my next steps, I'm thinking in terms of management and in terms of teaching, it should help me move my teaching forward in a new direction and to make changes for the better for the children.*

*It should be to evaluate how your progress is going and look for next steps for your teaching. Give people goals to work towards.*

*I think it can be quite intimidating, but for me personally it is to show you what you can do and where you should be going and maybe lead to PD that can be helping you, sort of like, not just done, a piece of paper that you file it, you need to have a purpose and an outcome. So when you do have an appraisal you're not scared of it.*

*A time to reflect on teaching practices, just how you are going, and if you are working on things, how they are going and what sort of further of development and stuff you need for the following year and where you see yourself going.*

**Question Two:** What do you think needs to happen in an appraisal to make it useful to you and meet this purpose?

While the responses to this question were varied, they tended to fall into two distinct categories, (i) the practicalities of the appraisal process and (ii) relationships within the process. In order to ensure anonymity of participants, I have summarised and paraphrased the participants' words, as many of the comments made in this section could possibly identify schools or the participants themselves.

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Practicalities:

- Timing: the usefulness of an appraisal at the end of the year.
- Being aware of expectations: knowing what the appraiser expected, the timeline for appraisal and so forth.
- Teachers being actively involved as opposed to the appraisal hinging solely on an appraisers' viewpoint.
- Receiving quality and constructive feedback from appraisers.
- The person doing the appraisal – who actually does the appraisal should take into consideration your identified goals, and strengths of school personnel relating to your goals.
- Having time to actually make progress with appraisal goals.
- Having teachers who actually want to move forward with their practice – to be reflective.

Relationships: the following terms were used by participants to identify conditions or qualities that need be embedded into effective appraisal; including qualities of the appraiser:

- Trust
- Honesty
- Mutual respect
- Confidentiality
- Safe environment

**Question Three:** Do you think your current appraisal process impacts on the students in your class?

While most participants in the interviews believed that appraisal should impact on the students the reality of this happening was varied. Again, in order to ensure anonymity of participants, in some cases, I have summarised and paraphrased the participants' words.

*If there were no student impact there was no point to the process, so yes, a definite impact on students.*

Three participants were adamant there was no impact of appraisal on student learning outcomes because of inconsistencies in the processes at their schools.

One participant volunteered the appraisal process was starting to impact on students because a recent change in the overall goals of the appraisal process within their school was to lift student performance through targeting teachers strengths and weaknesses.

The remaining participants thought it depended on the focus of goals being set. Teachers could have goals that did not relate at all to students, or in some cases, to their teaching practice.

**Question Four:** If the appraisal system were to impact on the students in your class how would we know that? What would we see?

All participants thought that either indirectly or directly appraisal should have an impact on student learning. If the teacher improves, the flow on effect would be that the students would benefit. This benefit could take the form of student achievement, engagement, class culture and the practices and experiences in the classroom.

**Question Five:** Is there anything else you'd like to say about appraisal that hasn't been covered in these questions or the survey?

This section of the interview gave the participants the opportunity to voice anything they felt was important. The following comments are indicative of the issues the teachers interviewed felt strongly about. Most of the following comments are direct quotes from the participants; however, some comments are paraphrased to ensure anonymity of participants. Care has been taken to ensure the paraphrased comments maintain their integrity and intent.

*Appraisal is sometimes confused with competency, which makes teachers feel threatened.*

*Teacher appraisal can be misused and misinterpreted by many in regards to the teacher criteria and thus focus of the purpose of appraisal was lost.*

*Appraisal can be about teachers looking out for themselves, as they get really anxious about the process*

*Teachers need to feel really comfortable with the person coming through to observe practice, as teachers are so self-conscious.*

*The 'tick box' concept isn't effective; even if you're naturally reflective it's not useful.*

*Appraisals only work if teachers are reflective. If teachers are not reflective they aren't looking into their practice - so appraisal systems won't impact on practice unless teachers are reflective anyway.*

*The appraisal needs to be within a safe environment with confidentiality at the core.*

*Appraisal is often generic – everyone is appraised against the same goal – appraisal should be individualised to the needs of the teacher.*

*We expect children to 'give things a go' that might not work so they can reflect, teachers should be able to work within a safe environment where it's 'ok' to try things that may not work without it reflecting negatively on their appraisal.*

*Reflective people change their practice whether or not they are reviewed or appraised.*

*Because [I] am so self motivated and reflective anyway, appraisal becomes an extra pressure and a tick box 'thing'. The same system is there for everyone, but some [of us] don't need it.*

*Everyone needs to be 'on board' with the purpose – if the purpose isn't to enhance teaching and learning, then why are we doing it?*

*When you are reflective, it's just paperwork, you know you're doing a good job so they are telling you what you already know.*

## **Interview Findings Summary**

The participants in the telephone interviews expressed their views confidently.

The themes identified from the interviews are as follows:

For appraisal to be successful certain conditions need to be in place. These include: confidentiality; a 'safe' environment to take risks; mutual respect with the appraiser.

- Appraisal needs to have an explicit purpose.
- The beliefs behind the purpose of appraisal need to be shared by all concerned.

- If you are a reflective practitioner, you don't need a 'system', if you're not a reflective practitioner a 'system' can turn into a checklist.
- Relationships and respect are imperative for an effective appraisal process.
- A successful appraisal process will impact on student learning – either implicitly or explicitly.
- Appraisal goals and processes need to be individualised.

These findings suggest that a successful and respectful environment within a school would lead to a more effective and useful appraisal process than merely implementing a system for teacher appraisal. The interview findings lend support to the findings from the survey phase of the study whereby the conditions for a successful and empowering appraisal process were identified. This point will be fully explored in the following chapter.

### **Phase Three: Case Study**

At the completion of the analysis of the survey data and telephone data, I identified a school that demonstrated a closer link between appraisal and improved student outcomes than any of the other schools in my study. Furthermore, this school was in the early stages of implementing a new appraisal strategy in order to make appraisal purposeful and effective for both teachers and students. The processes of this school were investigated in more depth to determine the degree to which the critical conditions identified from the findings of the initial data were embedded into practice. As the case study progressed, it became apparent that many of the critical conditions identified from the data, were, in fact, explicitly and overtly key components of their approach to appraisal. It also became clear that the practices in this school were supported by the current literature pertaining to best practice in schools. For the purpose of reporting on the findings, the school identified will be referred to as 'School A'.

## **School A: Case Study**

### *Principal and Teacher Face-to-face Interviews*

I recorded formal face-to-face interviews with both the Principal and a teacher/appraiser from School A during the early implementation phase of their appraisal strategy. Further to the initial recorded interview, I met with the Principal on five other occasions to discuss the development of this approach to appraisal. My aims were to discover the motivation behind the change in appraisal strategies and to understand the current appraisal process operating within the school. I also wanted to detect any underlying beliefs and links to what teachers had identified as the conditions required for effective appraisal during the telephone interviews. Furthermore, the initial survey that was administered in School A five months into the implementation stage was repeated after two and a half years of operation to determine if changes to the appraisal process had altered teachers' perceptions. It should be noted that School A has mostly maintained their teaching personnel, with only one teacher change from the first survey to the second.

At the time of the Principal and teacher/appraiser interviews, School A's strategy for appraisal was at the start of the second year of whole school implementation. Whilst the two interviews were carried out independently, the responses of the participants were consistent.

The following points are a summary of the interviews conducted with the Principal and the teacher/appraiser.

- The previous system of appraisal had been implemented before the current principal took over the role.
- The previous system consisted mainly of 'tick boxes' and a mid year interview with teachers.
- From the perspective of the Principal as the appraiser, teachers weren't engaging in their goals.
- From the perspective of the teacher being appraised, you only looked at your goals before the interview to remind yourself what they were.
- Neither felt the process resulted in change or growth.

The current Principal ‘inherited’ an appraisal system that consisted largely of ‘tick boxes’ that were addressed by pre and post appraisal interviews between the teacher the Principal, and included at least one classroom observation during the annual appraisal cycle.

From the Principal’s perspective, after using this traditional appraisal system for several years, there was no evidence that this process made any changes in either teachers’ practice or student outcomes. During the formal observational phase of appraisal, teachers usually displayed their ‘best’ teaching practice, which may or may not be indicative of their normal practice. This phenomenon was also noted by Barrett (2000) in the United Kingdom where owing to the nature of appraisal observations, teachers were more likely to put on ‘a good show’ than to use the process as an opportunity to seek advice and guidance in an area they would like help with.

From School A teacher/appraiser’s perspective, often the goals set at the start of the appraisal cycle were not considered again until it was time for the second interview toward the end of the cycle. There was no measurable or evidenced impact on practice or on student outcomes. Evidence collected for appraisal relied solely on the observation and recorded information of one person – the appraiser. This meant that appraisal was more likely to be a positive experience if the appraiser agreed with individual teacher’s teaching philosophies and viewed the teacher being appraised as a ‘high performing’ teacher. Within this framework of appraisal, there was no context for innovation and growth and motivation for teachers simply related to their desire for approval from the appraiser.

Based on the lack of evidence of meaningful change, and with the support of the management team, the principal decided to implement a new appraisal process based on ‘teaching as inquiry’. The overarching goal for the first two years of implementing teaching as inquiry was to improve the literacy outcomes for the target learners in the school. In the first year of implementation, teachers were required to keep a reflection or inquiry journal that would be supported by the assessment data coming from the classrooms. The school had previously spent some time on establishing assessment criteria and consistency within classes and across the syndicates. In the first year of using teaching as inquiry as the base of the appraisal process, the recording format and



the context of the teachers' inquiries was very much prescribed by the Principal. Teachers recorded their reflections handwritten in an exercise book that kept an on-going record of their individual inquiries based on their individualised teaching practice and needs in their class, within the context of literacy.

Time was allocated during weekly syndicate meetings for teachers to record in their reflection journals and to discuss their specific inquiries with their syndicate team. In this way a community of practice developed as teachers offered ideas based on their own practical experiences, to support the individual inquiries of each teacher and cohort of students. Even though building strong communities of practice was not an explicit goal of the teaching inquires that formed the basis of appraisal, the growth of rich communities of practice within each syndicate has been a happy by-product of the practice of allocating time within syndicate meetings for discussion about on-going teacher inquiries. Teachers, and students, alike, have benefitted from the resulting discussions and debates as teachers have shared experiences, successes and failures. In the previous model of appraisal at School A, specific discussion into classroom practice by teachers was often with the appraiser twice a year at pre and post appraisal observation interviews.

In the second year of implementation, time continued to be allocated during syndicate meetings, but teachers were given greater freedom over how they recorded their journey of teaching as inquiry. This gave the 'naturally reflective' practitioners greater freedom to use what they were already doing in their practice as evidence of their inquiry, thus integrating the appraisal requirements with already established practice. Some teachers chose to continue with the practice of writing in an exercise book, others set up blogs or digital ways of recording. It was noted by the Principal and syndicate leaders that some teachers for whom deep and meaningful reflection into their practice had previously been difficult, were beginning to think more deeply about their learners and their own teaching practice. This change in thinking about their practice was evidenced throughout the year in discussions at syndicate level; discussion within the appraisal process; teachers' recorded reflections; in their actual teaching practice as observed during casual classroom 'walk-throughs', and more formal observations as part of the appraisal process. Teachers were more likely to try new things in the classroom that related directly to their individual inquiry, and to see a greater purpose in what they

were doing for appraisal as it related directly to their learners. The success of teachers growing in reflexive praxis was largely attributed to the modelling undertaken by other teachers within the syndicate meetings coupled with this aspect of teaching as inquiry being a key focus of the individual appraisal process.

During the third year of implementation, teachers in School A were given more choice for their inquiry focus relating to academic needs of their students. Teachers were also granted a degree of autonomy over how they recorded and researched their inquiries. At the teachers' request, professional development was organised to provide teachers with ideas on how they might gather and record data for their inquiries. Included in the professional development was how to incorporate the reflective practice that most were already engaging in to support their inquiries.

A 'checklist' of MoE mandated requirements for Professional Standards attestation continued to be used, but remained a minor part of the appraisal process. However, some of the elements used in teaching as inquiry were used as evidence for the Professional Standards check-list.

During follow-up interviews with the Principal and the teacher/appraiser, both were able to cite specific examples of teachers developing reflective practice using informal conversations and examples in the inquiry journals as evidence. The language within the conversations and inquiry journals, for these teachers, had transformed from a summary of what happened to the deeper meaning of what this meant for learners, and what it meant for their teaching practice.

### *The Process*

The management team of the school set out to develop an appraisal process that required teachers to reflect actively on their practice. The intent was to provide evidence of improved student outcomes. School A spent the year prior to implementation of teaching as inquiry as the basis of the appraisal process developing shared understandings. In particular, the school developed shared understandings of an effective teacher in the curriculum area of literacy, which was to be the focus of their inquiries for appraisal. The school used a text written by Guy Claxton, 'What's The

Purpose of School' (2008) to inform their shared understanding of teaching philosophies behind the concept of teaching as inquiry. The management team adapted the process of teaching as inquiry from whole school professional development regarding aspects of their literacy programs to form the basis of their appraisal process. As the school developed shared understandings about the teaching of literacy an adapted model of teaching as inquiry was trialled by one syndicate. The following year the model was implemented as a school wide initiative. The model involved teachers creating inquiries into their practice and student outcomes through the use of reflective journals. The inquiries needed to specifically encompass identified student needs, or 'target groups' but, by default, often included the whole class. The overall goal within the inquiry was aligned with a school-wide goal that targeted specific learners, but teachers were encouraged to use the teaching as inquiry method to address any specific needs within their class.

Initially, teachers expressed concern about the time it would take to keep the journals. To address the concern that it would add to teachers' already demanding workload, time was specifically allocated during syndicate meetings to discuss teachers' inquiries and record their on-going reflections. Whilst some teachers showed resistance to the practice of implementing reflection journals to demonstrate evidence of teaching as inquiry, strong leadership resulted in this aspect of appraisal being 'non-negotiable'.

### *Implications of the inquiry process of appraisal*

During syndicate meetings, teachers initiated discussion relevant to their individual inquiries. Teachers were also given time to record their reflections in their journals. This resulted in the development of the following practices:

- Communities of practice developed within the syndicates as teachers offered suggestions to each other to resolve issues.
- Teachers were more willing to trial new initiatives in their classroom.
- Teachers were more willing to discuss success and failures of new initiatives.
- Reflective practice was explicitly modelled for those teachers who did not fully understand the concept.

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The overall result of implementing teaching as inquiry as the basis of the appraisal was that the appraisal process became focused on the business of teaching, and evidence directly linked to improved student outcomes.

After the first year, the Principal's directive that all teachers record reflection in a hand written journal as a standard format, was relaxed to allow teachers to choose the form of their recordings. Some teachers chose to maintain written journals, while others chose to use on-line blogs. The criteria for recording their reflections did not change and most teachers carried the structure established in the prescribed method of recording their reflections over to their method of choice.

During the first year of recording in reflective journals, some of the teachers who had already established other systems of recording reflective practices, continued to record their evidence in the way they always had, as well as the required reflective journals. However, in the second year, most of these teachers tried to incorporate what they typically did in the course of their practice into the reflective journals, which were used as the foundation of their appraisal meetings with their appraiser.

By the third year of implementation of this process, constraints around teachers' inquiries were relaxed even more by allowing teachers to extend their inquiries beyond that of literacy. However, an expectation of some form of research informing the inquiries was strengthened. Moreover, in the third year, staff participated in professional development relevant to the incorporation of existing practice into 'teaching as inquiry process – and by association, into their appraisal.

It should be noted, that while the teachers at School A were gathering information in the form of reflective journals for their appraisals, the Principal was also successfully applying the inquiry method as the basis for her own appraisal. Her appraisal focus also related to student learning outcomes via teachers' reflective practice and evidence gathering in the form of interviews and observations.

The school continued to use a 'check-list' for compliance issues. However, this differentiated from the growth of the teacher and forms only a minor component of the appraisal process. At the time of the research, the management team was considering

how the checklist compliance process could be made more meaningful for teachers in the future.

### **Summary of Appraisal - Case Study: School A**

- Teaching as inquiry forms the basis of the appraisal process.
- The practice is modelled by the leadership team, including the Principal.
- The process is a regular agenda item within syndicate meetings which has led to strengthening communities of practice within each syndicate.
- Reflective journals form the basis of ‘mid-year chats’ (interviews) with the principal as part of the appraisal process.
- The purpose of the appraisal process is explicitly stated as improved student learning outcomes.
- The reflective journals are used to gather data and record reflexive praxis.
- Compliance requirements for appraisal are carried out separately via a ‘check list’ format.
- The essence of the Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria are included in the concept of teaching as inquiry but are not specifically listed.
- Teachers grow from their own starting point. That is, the overall goals are those of the school (e.g. improve writing for an identified target group) but the pathways are individualised to the teacher and the needs of their current class.

### **Comparative Survey Findings**

School A completed the original survey within the first five months of implementing their new approach to appraisal. The survey was completed again 30 months into the process. The table below illustrates the significant difference in teachers’ perceptions as they have continued to grow their shared understanding through their community of practice.

Table 4.14. Survey comparisons from case study school

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Results at 5 Months %</b>	<b>Results at 30 Months %</b>
*Agree/Strongly Agree ** Disagree/Strongly Disagree		
Appraisal helps me become a better teacher *	40	100
Students in my class benefit from my appraisal*	50	100
I can show evidence that my students benefit from appraisal*	30	70
I actively work towards my goals*	30	70
Appraisal is aimed at my needs*	40	100
I can confidently explain the purpose of appraisal*	40	100
Appraisal has my students' needs as a priority*	25	100
Our appraisal system needs to change**	8	100
My appraiser fully understands the purpose of appraisal*	58	100
My appraisal goals are closely linked to professional development*	25	100
Appraisal is a good use of my time*	40	90
I feel threatened by appraisal**	40	100
Appraisal helps me identify what I need to work on*	40	100
Appraisal is empowering*	33	90
Appraisal causes feelings of stress and anxiety**	33	70

The survey was repeated after the school had initiated teaching as inquiry as the basis for appraisal and after it had been in use for two and half years. While there was an overall positive shift in teachers' perceptions, there were significant shifts in the perceptions of teachers within both the practicality and emotion response sections. One hundred percent of teachers agreed with the following statements; whereas previously less than half of the teachers had agreed.

- Appraisal helped them become a better teacher.
- Appraisal benefitted the students in their class.
- Appraisal was linked to professional development.
- Appraisal helps them identify what they needed to work on.
- Teachers can confidently explain the purpose of appraisal.
- Appraisal is aimed at teachers' needs.
- Appraisal has students' needs as a priority.

The number of teachers who found appraisal empowering moved from 33% to 90%. It is also significant to note that originally 8% of teachers disagreed with the statement that 'our appraisal system needs to change' whilst at the second survey, 100% of teachers disagreed.

Further to the ongoing interviews with the Principal of School A, I was granted access to the Education Review Office (ERO) report for the school (ERO, 2014). The success of the 'Teaching as Inquiry' approach is evidenced by generalised comments in their latest ERO report, including the following quotes:

*"The well-established syndicate teams contribute to the collegial atmosphere that exists amongst staff. Teachers willingly share ideas with each other for the benefit of all students" (p. 2).*

*"Teachers are reflecting well on their own learning and next steps in teaching" (p. 4).*

These points follow on from extensive positive feedback regarding the school's cohesion within and across syndicates, and the effective syndicate meetings that are used to discuss classroom practice and student needs. While the report does not acknowledge the link between the syndicate meetings and the appraisal process, the discussions form a clear link between the reflective journals and the appraisal process.

In contrast, the previous ERO report (2011) included a paragraph in the section 'Review and Development' recommendations regarding effective teaching practices not "being evident in some classes", and suggested it was "timely for leaders to review the indicators for best practice and how evident they are in daily practice" (p. 7); and to "develop, implement and monitor explicit expectations for teaching and learning" (p. 7), as well as "[Work on] increasing the rigor of the appraisal process" (p. 9).

## Chapter Conclusion

The findings from the survey suggest that teachers and appraisers within the same school shared similar beliefs about appraisal. While the perceptions of participants between schools vary significantly, it is within the variable of the individual schools that the statistical analyses using Pearson's chi-square tests, show indications of correlation. However, the data suggests that there is little, if any, consistency from one school to another of how appraisal is perceived or the beliefs of purpose, effectiveness and outcome.

The findings suggest that the culture of the school has a significant impact on individual teachers' beliefs and perceptions of the purpose and effectiveness of appraisal.

While fewer than one quarter of the participants in this study felt empowered by appraisal (21%), there were strong correlations using statistical techniques (Pearson's chi-square test) between participants who felt empowered by the appraisal process and participants who perceived:

- Appraisal celebrated their success;
- Their, and/or their student, needs were a priority;
- Appraisal helped them grow as a teacher;
- Students in the class benefitted from appraisal;
- Their appraiser fully understood the purpose of appraisal;
- Appraisal strengthened their relationships with their appraisers;
- Their appraiser was constructive in their appraisal; and
- Appraisal was a good use of their time.

It should be noted that the findings illustrate that those participants who felt empowered by the appraisal process agreed with the above statements.

The interview phase of the study offered an explanation for the survey findings. The telephone interviews illustrated that for appraisal to be successful, certain conditions need to be embedded into the appraisal process. These conditions are:

- A sense of confidentiality;
- A 'safe' environment to take risks;



- 
- Mutual respect with the appraiser;
  - An explicit purpose; and
  - Positive relationships based on trust.

These conditions are closely linked to the conditions experienced by participants who found appraisal empowering and the connected perceptions of appraisal. The interview findings suggest that a collegial environment based on trust and mutual respect has more impact on an effective appraisal process than the system of appraisal being applied.

The case study findings illustrated the positive impact on teachers' perceptions of appraisal when the previously stated conditions are present. School A spent a year establishing shared understandings of an effective teacher before implementing a new appraisal strategy. The process of establishing shared understandings resulted in a renewed sense of collegiality for the teachers and appraisers at School A. As a consequence, the conditions identified by teachers and appraisers earlier in the study were explicitly embedded into the appraisal process. That is, School A embedded a culture of trust and respect, specific purpose, and shared understandings for effective appraisal within an environment of collegiality into their appraisal strategy. These concepts are evidenced by both the ERO reports and the repeated survey data. As a result of the overall findings, the strategies employed by School A are offered as an approach to effective appraisal. This approach is discussed more fully in the next section.

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## Chapter Five

### Analysis and Discussion

This study investigated teacher appraisal perspective of teachers. While teacher perception is only one insight into this area, Schleicher (2011) argues that “the perspective of teachers is crucially important because the best policies and practices will only yield results if they are effectively implemented, and the bottom line is that the quality of a system cannot exceed the quality of teachers and their work” (p. 202). That is, that appraisal as a productive use of teachers’ time, resulting in improved pedagogical practices and raised student outcomes, will partly depend on teachers’ beliefs and understanding of the process. A negative perception of appraisal means the process of appraisal is unlikely to be implemented effectively by teachers. In order to yield positive outcomes from appraisal for teachers, both on pedagogical practice and on student outcomes, it becomes appropriate to not only consider the perceptions of teachers, but to also explore the origins of existing perceptions. The analysis of the data gathered in this study reveals that existing perceptions of appraisal may be influenced by factors such as the quality of leadership, the environment, and relationships.

The data showed that teachers not only disagreed on the specific structure of appraisal to be used, but also on the overall purpose of appraisal. Differences in the perceived purpose of appraisal will have a major impact on the subsequent perceptions of the effectiveness of appraisal, regardless of whether appraisal is based on Registered Teacher Criteria, Professional Standards, or a mix of both. If teachers disagree on the purpose of appraisal and the purpose of the framework upon which appraisal is based, it follows that the perceptions of the impact of appraisal on practice, and, subsequently, student outcomes, will be at variance. The two main purposes of appraisal identified by both teachers and appraisers, irrespective of the frameworks and principles associated with that framework, were arguably polar opposites of each other, simplified as ‘to provide a check on teachers’ or to ‘support teachers in growing their practice’. Teachers who see the purpose of appraisal as a ‘check’ are unlikely to think appraisal has an impact on teaching practice or an impact on teaching, while teachers who see appraisal

as a vehicle for support and growth are more likely to view appraisal as having a positive impact on teaching practice and consequently improved student outcomes.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Review (2011) on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes prepared for the Ministry of Education (MoE) New Zealand, acknowledged that the link between the appraisal of teachers and student outcomes is likely to vary between schools in accordance to the quality of school leadership. That is to say, ‘quality’ school leadership will ensure an explicit link between the appraisal process and improving student outcomes. As a corollary, in schools where teachers do not make a link between the appraisal process and student outcomes, school leadership is likely to be less effective than in schools where the link is made.

The link between perceptions of appraisal and student outcomes is evident in the analysis of school data in the study. These data showed that teachers from the same schools were likely to hold similar perceptions about the impacts of appraisal on student learning outcomes. On the surface, when considering the statements from the OECD Review document, this brings into question the ‘quality of the leadership’ for the participants from schools where appraisal was not seen as impacting on student outcomes. However, on a deeper level, the data suggest that leaders within the schools where participants did not link appraisal with student achievement, may need to evaluate other aspects within the school. In this study, a strong community of practice, effective leadership, a shared purpose and positive relationships were all factors that influenced perceptions of an effective appraisal process. Furthermore, as the case study revealed, these factors need to be integrated before the appraisal process can hope to improve student outcomes. If appraisers and teachers view the appraisal process as a checklist for confirmation of adequate teaching standards, it is unlikely that teaching practice will grow. It is also unlikely that student outcomes will improve as a direct result of the appraisal process.

Teachers’ views of the appraisal process link directly with teachers’ perceptions of the purpose of appraisal. The specific aim of my study “To determine teachers’ and appraisers’ perceptions of the appraisal process” has provided evidence of a close link between perceptions of appraisal and the perceptions of the community in which

teachers worked. The data showed a strong correlation between a school and the perceptions or beliefs of the teachers within that school. That is, teachers within the same school are more likely to share similar views toward the appraisal process. Of concern, was that half of the participants felt that appraisal created feelings of stress and anxiety. It should be noted that there was no significant difference between the role of the participant and the participants' view of appraisal. That is, perceptions of appraisal were similar for both teachers and appraisers within a school. Moreover, the study shows that generally, there is no difference between the perceptions of teachers and appraisers regarding the actual appraisal process within *any* of the survey sections. This was a surprising finding. Anecdotal evidence had revealed that appraisers were more positive than teachers about the appraisal process within their schools. It is possible that the anonymity of the study allowed participants to answer more honestly than a face to face conversation where factors such as loyalty to schools, loyalty to leaders and the perceived need to speak professionally about their schools and colleagues influenced spoken views (Seale, 2012).

Specific responses within the survey, such as “it impacts on my teaching” and “helps me become a better teacher,” also demonstrated a close connection between the school setting and what participants believed regarding the impact of appraisal on their teaching, regardless of their role in the school.

While it was surprising that teachers and appraisers shared similar perceptions, the strong links between the perceptions of teachers and appraisers in relation to their school setting was not. However, the degree of difference between schools was larger than anticipated. It is possible the difference between schools can be explained as teachers perceptions of appraisal is closely linked to the quality of leadership (Hang, 2011; Mckenzie, 2007; Nusche, et al. 2010). The role of leadership in the appraisal process, along with a number of factors are explored in the following sections.

### **Engaging Teachers in Appraisal**

In terms of developing an effective appraisal process, researchers argue that teachers need to be actively engaged and involved in the appraisal process (Chadbourne & Ingvarson, 1997; Flores, 2010; Hunzicker, 2010; Jensen & Reichl, 2011; MacKenzie,

2007; McKenzie 2012; Piggot-Irvine, 2000, 2003; Yariv 2009). What can be debated is the form this engagement takes.

Teachers need to be actively involved in appraisal. In Flores' (2010) study of Portuguese schools, most teachers believed change in the appraisal process was necessary. However, the implementation of the planned change was met with strong teacher resistance. Flores attributed the resistance by teachers to the implementation of the proposed changes as teachers' lack of active involvement in the planning stages prior to the implementation of the changes. Teachers felt appraisal was "against them" and "imposed upon them" (Flores, p. 52), even though they had initially supported the requirement of change to the appraisal process. However, the study did not consider the role of leadership or the culture of the school. Faced with the findings of this study, it could be argued that attributing the failure of the new appraisal initiatives solely to the lack of teacher involvement in the mechanics of the change does not get to the heart of the cause. While the current literature (Chadbourne & Ingvarson, 1997; Flores, 2010; Hunzicker, 2010; Jensen & Reichl, 2011; MacKenzie, 2007; McKenzie 2012; Piggot-Irvine, 2000, 2003; Yariv 2009) suggests teacher involvement in the appraisal process is imperative for success, this study has found that the success or failure of an appraisal process does not hinge entirely on teacher involvement or engagement.

### **Factors That Influence Effective Appraisal**

I anticipated that at the end of the study the findings would support the view that a process of appraisal focused on a common purpose would enable effective appraisal to take place. However, the findings suggest that the *system* of appraisal is not the only factor that determines whether or not teachers and appraisers consider appraisal a constructive and effective process. Teachers' views are likely to be influenced by leadership, and the relational considerations between teachers and appraisers, all of which constitute a community of practice within the school setting. These factors then extrapolate into a shared understanding of effective practice, which, in turn gives appraisal a specific purpose. Leadership, purpose, relationships, reflective practice and community of practice all influence effective appraisal and all of these factors are inextricably linked.

The OECD review outlines current practices of teacher appraisal in New Zealand, and points out that “school leaders have a pivotal role in establishing the school conditions for teacher appraisal and the quality and implementation of teacher appraisal procedures” (Nusche et al., 2010, p. 51). Mackenzie (2007) argues for the importance of school leadership in her study of teacher morale. She asserts that the morale of teachers impacts on student learning outcomes, and that the morale of the leadership team, in turn, impacts on teachers. In particular, MacKenzie argues that effective leadership impacts positively on teacher morale. She follows this assertion by suggesting, “that if effective leadership has a positive effect upon morale, it is likely that poor leadership could lead to poor morale” (p. 95). In relation to my study, in the schools within which the majority of teachers did not feel empowered, or where appraisal did not impact on their practice, the effectiveness of school leaders within the appraisal process needs to be explored further to determine how the leadership role impacts on this perception of an ineffective appraisal process.

Within the context of professional learning and development for teachers, in which the ultimate goal of professional development is improved student outcomes, Timperley et al. (2008) have identified the priorities fundamental to the success of a school leader in terms of growing a collegially proactive community. Active school leadership entails leaders to be active in the following domains of school life:

- Development of a learning culture amongst staff, and to be learners themselves;
- Actively promoting and monitoring alternative visions and targets for student learning;
- Actively organising and engaging in promotion of professional learning opportunities for implementation of new practices in classrooms; and,
- Creating conditions for developing the leadership of others.

Robinson et al. (2009) supported these qualities of leadership, but included a further quality characterised by “a deep knowledge and understanding at a practical level of curriculum matters” as a crucial component of school leaders, adding that “school leaders can make a critical difference to the quality of schools, and student achievement and well-being” (p. 34).

Halverson et al. (2014) endorse the ideas above as being crucial for quality leadership within a school. They strongly emphasise student learning and building a shared understanding around all aspects of teacher pedagogy. The second focus highlighted by Halverson et al. involves monitoring teaching and learning. In the context of appraisal, this implies that when monitoring teaching, the focus is on student learning outcomes. This dimension of quality leadership includes establishing practices and routines whereby teachers are enabled and encouraged to communicate with each other about classroom practice and about students' academic outcomes. This process could arguably be viewed as actively supporting the creation and maintenance of a community of practice in which student learning and teacher performance are the shared purposes.

In the context of growing teacher practice, a community of practice in this research relates to developing the core principles as outlined in Wenger and Lave's conceptual framework (Wenger, 2009). Within this framework, a community of participants from the same domain (in this case, teachers from a school) come together voluntarily with the same purpose (to improve teacher practice, leading to improved student outcomes). Within this community of practice, participants bring their own experiences and learning journeys. Together, participants of the group problem solve current and authentic teaching and learning matters through respectful discussion and debate based on both literature and individuals' experiential histories. Wenger and Lave (2009) found that much of the learning and skill acquisition actually occurred outside of a traditional apprenticeship model. Learning occurred in situations where participants across all hierarchical levels of the same domain came together informally and voluntarily. As the group shared ideas based on a range of experience and knowledge, there was a respectful exchange of ideas as each individual brought different views to the discussion and debate. Genuine and authentic learning occurred during these sessions as a result of shared problems and authentic circumstances.

During the interview phase of my study, the general perception offered by participants was that it was not the 'system' of appraisal or the 'process' of appraisal that made an impact on teaching practice, but the relationships within the school setting between colleagues and between teachers and appraisers. The theme of positive relationships between colleagues proved to be a much more significant factor than anticipated, and it is this point that warrants further consideration.

In her study on teacher morale, MacKenzie (2007) argued the importance of a collegial community of practice. She illustrated this point with explicit links between teacher morale and student achievement. Mackenzie found that developing a strong sense of community within a school enhances teachers' morale, thus leading to higher student achievement. Servage (2008) made explicit links between communities of practice, effective leadership and relationships within schools in what she refers to as a 'relationally bound community' (p. 63). Within a relationally bound community, teaching practitioners engage in collaborative teacher learning to develop a strong sense of community. Killeavy and Moloney (2010) also argue that developing a sense of shared purpose is imperative for active participation and commitment of teachers to a community culture. In this scenario, the common purpose is that of improving student learning outcomes. An equally important requirement is defined as mutual regard and caring of participants (Lambert, 2003, cited in Servage, 2008). Within a relational model of community within schools, positive and mutually respectful relationships are critical for purposeful staff sharing and for the critical examination of practice. As such, members of the community of practice evaluate each other's practice against a shared vision of excellence. Successful evaluation is dependent on a high trust model of open and meaningful critique. The principles of high trust and mutual respect link closely with the elements identified by the participants in my study as being critical to effective appraisal.

Servage also asserts that when a true 'community' culture is embraced, critical reflection of teaching practice will impact on student outcomes if, and only if, the existing culture values teacher-practice reflection alongside critical reflection of other aspects of school life. A confident leader who has built a culture of mutual trust and respect through transformative leadership practices would encourage and welcome constructive critique on all elements of school life that impact on student learning outcomes.

Servage (2008) believes that the attitude of a leader and the role of leadership will impact on the effectiveness of a learning community. She contends: "teacher leaders ... can, I believe, enhance the sustainability and long term effectiveness of a professional learning community by providing opportunities within its structure for teachers to hold open ended conversations oriented to communicative learning" (p. 63). Therefore, by



allocating time in syndicate and/or staff meetings to enable professional dialogue to occur, there is more likelihood that an effective community culture will develop. Similarly, if a community of practice has already developed, the allocation of time to spend on professional dialogue will offer the community of practice more opportunities to sustain its momentum.

The quality of leadership not only influences the link between appraisal and student outcomes, but also the subsequent perceptions of the usefulness of an appraisal process. For an appraisal process to be fully effective, the purpose of appraisal should be explicit. The Registered Teacher Criteria place a strong emphasis on student learning outcomes. However, the Professional Standards for teachers were developed to provide evidence for annual movement along the salary scale. As a consequence of alignment to teachers' promotions and increase in the pay scale, Professional Standards have assumed greater importance in schools. This means, that appraisal has often taken the pathway of mandated MoE requirements as opposed to teacher growth.

The findings of each phase of the study suggest an inconsistency between perceptions of the purpose of Professional Standards and the Registered Teacher Criteria. The inconsistency between beliefs about the purpose of teacher appraisal may be the result of schools' desire over time, to combine the MoE requirements for maintaining Professional Standards and the NZTC requirements for Registered Teacher Criteria. The MoE explicitly outlines elements required to be included in appraisal, and these constitute a mix of growth and accountability factors. In some schools, these two factors are irretrievably intertwined. In contrast, Mackenzie (2007) claims that teacher satisfaction is directly linked to student achievement, which gives further credence to the notion that student achievement, through growth in teacher practice, should be the major focus of an effective appraisal process.

Although this study does not claim to offer an ideal appraisal system, it has created opportunity for discussion on what makes appraisal effective for practitioners. It has also described the conditions required for effective appraisal. Less than one quarter of participants found appraisal 'empowering'. There is a strong link between the participants who found appraisal empowering and their school settings. However, the highest proportion of participants who found appraisal empowering relative to school

setting was just over half of the teachers within one school, with the lowest proportion being around a quarter of teachers in one school. The participants who found appraisal empowering all ranked the following statements from the survey positively:

- Appraisal celebrated their success;
- Appraisal helped them grow as a teacher;
- The needs of the students, and therefore the teacher, were a priority;
- The appraiser fully understood the purpose of appraisal;
- Appraisal strengthened relationships with their appraiser;
- The appraiser was constructive in their feedback; and
- Appraisal was a good use of their time

Of interest is the fact that, in schools where a greater proportion of teachers felt empowered by appraisal, the school leader was responsible for overseeing teacher's appraisals, while the syndicate leaders were responsible for mediating the community culture within syndicate meetings. In one of the larger schools where teacher appraisals were delegated solely to syndicate leaders, the sense of 'empowerment' from appraisal practices by teachers varied between syndicates. This variation supports the argument that the role of the leader contributes to a positive appraisal experience. In the above scenario the leaders of the syndicates had different emphases in relation to the purpose of appraisal.

Furthermore, within the interview phase of my study, the responses of participants also suggest that when evaluating the effectiveness of the appraisal process, relationships between the appraiser and the teacher need consideration. Yariv (2009) also referred to the relational aspect of appraisal in his study. Yariv found that appraisers had a positive relationship based on mutual respect with teachers they considered to be 'high performing'. Conversely, when teachers were perceived to be lower on the performance spectrum, relationships were more directive in nature. The consequence of this was that high performing teachers were encouraged to be more reflective, their opinions valued, and appraisal was a more nurturing process aimed at growth of the teacher. Difficult performance-related discussions with lower performing teachers were avoided by the appraisers, which resulted in these teachers not being aware of the areas in which their performance was perceived to be lacking. As a consequence relationships with appraisers did not develop with mutual respect as the baseline (Yariv, 2009).

The importance of relationships within the appraisal process was further reinforced during the interview phase of my study. Participants believed that certain conditions needed to be in place for effective appraisal to take place.

They were:

- Trust;
- Honesty;
- Mutual respect;
- Confidentiality; and
- A safe environment.

For appraisal to impact positively on the professional growth of teachers, these conditions identified by teachers are a critical consideration when using the appraisal process to facilitate the growth of individual teachers.

The conditions identified by participants provide further evidence that it is not simply the process of appraisal that needs to be evaluated to ensure useful and effective appraisal. Relationships, values and sense of community within each school also play a critical role in appraisal's success. Leaders who make a deliberate and explicit attempt to ensure the resource of time is allocated to develop and maintain an effective learning community may also ensure that the concepts of trust, honesty, mutual respect, confidentiality, and a safe environment are in place as a basis for an effective appraisal process. An explicit allocation of time to develop strong communities also demonstrates the value leaders place on this aspect of school culture. McKenzie (2013) also argues for the criticality of time allocation by leaders when empowering effective reflective practices, and the importance of a high trust model in relation to appraisal. Servage (2008) maintains that "it is unlikely that individual transformation can be realised in a dysfunctional social setting. For better or worse, the effective states of individuals and climate of the group as a whole, are mutually influential" (p. 63). In the context of appraisal, this means that if there is not a strong sense of community, mutual respect and high trust between colleagues, teachers and appraisers, teachers' practice in the classroom is unlikely to change as a result of the appraisal process.

The interview phase of the study raised an important point regarding factors that influence the effectiveness of the appraisal process. Participants spoke of the

importance of being reflective. Many felt that whether teachers did or did not use the appraisal process to improve practice - and by analogy, improve student outcomes - depended on the reflective practice of individuals. If an individual lacked the skills for, or awareness of, reflexive praxis, any appraisal system, regardless of the process, would be unlikely to improve practice for that individual. Conversely, if an individual was reflective, practice would be improved regardless of the system in place. Yariv (2009) supports this argument in his research into mutual respect between teachers and principals. In his study, a greater degree of mutual respect between the teacher and the principal was evident with teachers who were perceived by the principals to be effective, high performing and reflective practitioners and who were aware of their own weaknesses and strengths. The teachers who were not as reflective, and were unaware of their appraiser's beliefs about their performance, experienced a less positive relationship with principals. Yariv found that principals often put any performance-related issues with the less effective teachers into their 'too hard' basket. In this instance, for those teachers who appeared to need the most support in the growth of their practice, appraisal became a checklist for performance rather than a platform for growth (Yariv, 2009).

While the absence of a developed sense of reflective practice may be one barrier to teacher growth, another major barrier to teachers' personal growth is a misalignment between current theory and personal practice (Servage, 2003). A learning community based on healthy and respectful dialogue and a high trust model is more likely to help teachers identify any discord between theory and practice. Identification of conflict between theory and practice by a group of teachers working in a high trust environment will more likely result in authentic transformative teacher change. Servage explains this phenomenon as a result of a shared desire to improve student outcomes based on a shared and developing understanding of best practice.

Yariv's (2009) study highlights how crucial it is for teachers to be cognisant of reflective practice as enabling a successful and effective appraisal process. What is to be done for the teacher who does not have the skills or awareness for meaningful reflective practice to occur? The interview responses shed some light. Several participants discussed the problems of non-reflective colleagues and the issues that arose when appraisal goals were the same for everybody. Some participants felt this was

inappropriate, as each teacher had different strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, school wide goals that were to be addressed by all staff were not necessarily the next learning and growth step for everybody, nor were they relevant for all students. Killeavy and Moloney (2010) argue that reflective practice and collaboration are now viewed as key aspects of professional teaching practitioner development. They argue that it is now “accepted that teachers can improve their effectiveness in the classroom by gaining better understanding of their own individual teaching styles through reflection on practice” (p. 1071). In fact, the process of being able to use personal reflection as the basis for new learning in the teaching profession is considered so important that many pre-service teachers internationally are required to keep reflection journals as part of their assessment requirements for initial teacher education.

However, in spite of claims about the importance and relevance of reflective practice in growing teacher effectiveness in the classroom, Killeavy and Moloney (2010) echo the frustrations of the participants in my study regarding non-reflective colleagues. They argue that teachers “find it difficult to reflect on their own practice” and that it is “difficult to determine whether reflection has actually taken place” (p. 1071). However, for appraisal to be authentic and effective, reflection should be an explicit component of the appraisal practice. Thus relevant professional development should accompany appraisal. By incorporating an explicit component of reflexive praxis into the appraisal process within a learning community, appraisal becomes an authentic vehicle for improving the classroom practice of teachers with the expressed purpose of improved student outcomes.

The interview phase of my study raised the issue of recording information for the appraisal process. An identical method of record keeping by all teachers within a school was believed to be unnecessary. The study showed that actively reflective practitioners could show evidence of their own growth as a teacher and subsequent student outcomes through their own choice of record keeping methods and through their planning in their normal day-to-day practice. The participants generally felt that a prescribed way of presenting their evidence was simply another task they had to complete that did not add value to their teaching, their personal growth or student learning outcomes. Conversely, the interview phase also identified that for some teachers the appraisal process in their school was a good way of ‘stocktaking’ and that having a prescribed method made them

think more deeply about their teaching. They were, however, unable to articulate why this was the case, with most stating they ‘did it [reflection on practice] anyway’. However, while the potential for change is more likely with a reflective practitioner, Servage (2003) points out that even the most critically aware teacher will still have ‘blind spots’ within their practice and will require to be challenged by others within a supportive community of practice to help identify them. Thus, the presence of a strong learning community based on mutual respect can benefit all participants in a group on the continuum of self-awareness. As such, the collaborative setting of a learning community serves as both the context and catalyst for personal transformation within the framework of growing teaching practice, which leads naturally into improved student outcomes (Servage, 2008).

An appraisal process that capitalises on the by-products of a mutually respectful and active community of practice established and nurtured in schools will be able to offer authentic evidence for teacher growth.

### **An Analysis of an Effective Appraisal Process**

The initial findings from the survey data and the analysis of interviews from the study identified critical conditions that needed to be present in order for successful appraisal processes to develop:

- Trust;
- Honesty;
- Mutual respect;
- Confidentiality; and
- A safe environment.

From the associated literature I identified the following conditions as also being critical to successful appraisal:

- A clearly articulated purpose;
- A community of practice within which participants supported and encouraged each other to challenge their practice; and
- A quality leader.

Data from School A suggested these conditions had been embedded into their appraisal process. Furthermore, the development of appraisal at School A can be summarised according to a number of key criteria as identified by Servage (2008). Table 5.1 provides this summary.

Table 5.1. The actions of School A as they relate to the criteria for a rich community of practice

<b>Criteria as outlined by Servage for a rich community of practice to flourish:</b>	<b>Evidenced by actions of School A:</b>
Inquiry based, within authentic contexts	Teaching as inquiry as a base for appraisal process.
Whole staff professional development	Allocation of time and financial resourcing to professional development. The shared understandings for the initial implementation of appraisal was based on intensive whole staff professional development on literacy outcomes for students and relevant teaching practice.
Shared beliefs/norms	Through the professional development process, shared beliefs were established regarding effective teaching practice and achievement of students at different levels of the curriculum. A shared purpose of improving student outcomes in literacy for the appraisal process, was developed during whole staff professional development.
Authentic purposeful context based on the daily practice of teaching	Teaching focused on improving student learning outcomes based on the shared vision of excellence as the focus for appraisal.
Development of a strong sense of community and collegiality	Time was allocated during syndicate meetings for the sole purpose of collaborating on

	individual teacher inquires.
Staff sharing their work and critically examining practice against the shared vision of excellence	Time allocated in syndicate meetings for modelling reflective practice. The expertise of members of the group was valued in a culture of mutual trust and respect.
Minimise/remove the barrier of discord between theory and practice	On-going, 'just-in-time' staff professional development during staff meetings was based on theory and linked to current practice. Teachers subsequently developed a shared vision of what an effective teacher 'looks like' within the context of their school environment and goals.
Leaders supporting the sustainability and long term effectiveness of a learning community by providing opportunities for on-going dialogue	Regular time was allocated during a variety of meetings; timely response to teacher requests for relevant professional development and responding to support for individual teacher needs based on the teaching as inquiry appraisal process.

By carrying out the process outlined above, School A has also followed the recommendations for effective teacher appraisal made by Jensen and Reichl (2011). That is, within their context, each school needs to define an effective teacher and develop shared beliefs of what this might 'look like' before they can begin to aspire to this notion. Allowing schools to develop the criteria for an effective teacher recognises that different school environments and cultures, value and place emphasis on different aspects of education. Encouraging this level of autonomy within schools explicitly works towards decentralising the appraisal process (Jensen & Reichl, 2011).

On the surface, the case study of School A may appear to suggest that the strategy of using teaching as inquiry as a vehicle for effective appraisal is successful. However, this strategy is only successful due to the relational strengths within School A. Without the strong leadership style present, and the communities of practice developing within the school, teaching as inquiry would not have worked as a basis from which the appraisal process could grow.



Teaching as inquiry with a focus on specific student outcomes gives the appraisal process in School A purpose. The need for an authentic purpose for appraisal was identified as an integral component of effective appraisal 43 years ago (Humphries, 1972). In many schools the purpose has yet to be articulated (Bartlett, 2000; Bishop, 2009; Flores, 2010; Jensen & Reichl, 2011; Larsen, 2009; Ngwenya, 2008; Piggott-Irvine, 2002).

The principal of School A acknowledged that a strong collegial environment was evident in the culture of the school prior to linking appraisal to teaching as inquiry. An already established mutual respect and collegiality between teachers and the management team provided solid ground for a strong community of practice to grow. Strong leadership evidenced by active research into new initiatives and active participation in teachers' professional development by the principal provided a strong link between practice and theory. Whilst using teaching as inquiry as a vehicle for appraisal enhanced this environment, it would have been unlikely to be successful without the pre-existing collegial environment. However, the teaching as inquiry approach to appraisal provided purpose and authenticity for developing the skills of reflexive praxis. Importantly, prior to, and during the initial implementation process of using teaching as inquiry, School A invested time and money in professional development helping teachers come to a shared understanding of what good practice looked like in the classroom. This included coming to a shared understanding of what they wanted for their learners in a broad sense. In this way, School A not only met the recommendation by Jensen and Riechl (2011) of establishing the criteria for an effective teacher, but they also addressed the criticality argued by Servage (2008) of full staff professional development for student improvement. Furthermore, the professional development undertaken at School A addressed McLellan and Ramsey's (2000) argument for professional development pertaining to appraisal. The shared understanding underpinning the appraisal process in School A allowed teachers to explicate and act on new initiatives and innovations based on explicit norms, values and aspirations.

The success of the approach to appraisal by School A is evident when comparing the initial and subsequent survey results. The initial survey was completed when School A

was five months into a teaching as inquiry approach to appraisal, and the second survey was completed after 30 months.

There was an overall positive shift in all sections of the survey. However, the biggest shifts were in the sections relating specifically to ‘feelings’ regarding appraisal and the practicalities of appraisal.

In the repeated survey, all teachers could explain the purpose of appraisal, whereas previously less than half could do this. Similarly, all teachers perceived benefits from the appraisal process with regards to their teaching practice, student learning outcomes and their needs as teachers – again, in the initial survey less than half acknowledged the benefits in these areas.

It should be noted that only a very small percentage of teachers were satisfied with the approach to appraisal during the first five months of implementation of inquiry-based appraisal. However, by the second survey *every* teacher disagreed with the statement “our appraisal system needs to change”. This response demonstrates the degree to which teachers embraced the approach of using teacher inquires that related to student learning as the basis of appraisal. Furthermore, while some teachers still experienced feelings of stress around appraisal, this figure has halved, and almost all teachers feel empowered by appraisal.

## **Leadership**

When the teachers in School A were implementing teaching as inquiry as a basis for their appraisals, the Principal also changed her own appraisal focus to use the inquiry model as the basis for her appraisal. The focus for her appraisal was also directly linked to student outcomes within the literacy focus of the school incorporating her role in the school as Literacy Leader. Her primary goal had been to develop consistency across the school in the teaching of literacy and in teachers’ assessment criteria for success. In this manner the Principal was actively participating in the same process, with the same focus and expectations as the teachers in her school.

Both the Principal's and the teachers' appraisal discussions throughout the year used the inquiry journal as a basis for appraisal discussion. These discussions included what had worked, what had not worked and subsequent actions.

Similarly, both the Principal's and the teachers' formal appraisal process included a 'check-list' based on the Ministry of Education's requirements for meeting Professional Standards. In the case of the Principal, evidence for the checklist was gathered by the appraiser in collaboration with the Board of Trustees Chairperson, the Principal herself, and from classroom observations. For the teachers' appraisal, the appraiser gathered evidence during discussions with individual teachers and through formal classroom observations. This element of appraisal is essentially a checklist to fulfil requirements mandated by the MoE, and no attempt is made to 'hide' or disguise its purpose. At the time of the study, School A continued to explore ways of making the checklist component more useful for teachers, but this remained a secondary component of the process. The inquiry journals, coupled with formative and summative assessments of student outcomes, were the primary evidenced based focus of appraisal.

During the case study interviews, both the Principal and the appraiser/teacher spoke of initial resistance by teachers to using a reflection journal as a basis of appraisal. Many teachers saw it as simply another 'thing to do'. However, indicative of the leadership style at the school, this new initiative was non-negotiable. Within the process, however, teachers were free to choose their own inquiry journeys based on their own teaching styles and the needs of the students. As School A entered its third year of implementation, almost all of the teachers had embraced teaching as inquiry as a basis for appraisal, and only a few showed signs of resistance. It is interesting to note that those still showing resistance are a mix of teachers who have been identified by the Principal as being naturally reflective practitioners, and those who continued to actively work on developing the process of reflection. It is also interesting to note that School A continues to allocate funding for the professional development of teachers regarding reflexive praxis and teaching as inquiry. McLellan and Ramsey (2000) highlight the importance of continuing to allocate resources to professional development necessary for an effective appraisal process. When Ministry funding and training were allocated for appraisal processes, schools reported that appraisal had made a difference to schools. However, when the funding and training decreased, so, too, did schools' commitment to

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effective appraisal processes (McLellan & Ramsey, 2007). Therefore, the continuing allocation of funding to the development of the appraisal process demonstrates the commitment of School A to ensure that appraisal is meaningful and purposeful.

Servage (2008) argues that full staff professional development is critical to improved student learning, and that it is at its most effective when the professional development is collaborative and collegial. Furthermore, a culture of authentic collegiality driven by common purpose and shared understandings is fertile ground for a strong community of practice to grow. In the first instance, the Principal and the management team initiated the professional development undertaken by staff. However, as School A entered into the third year of the process, the professional development has been at the request of the teaching staff. At the time of the study, the goal for the year was to develop reflexive praxis even further, and to incorporate aspects of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, that teachers do in the normal course of their work, and include this data set in their personal inquiries. The data will feed naturally into the appraisal process, as their individual inquiries are the basis of their appraisal.

Servage also emphasises that collaborative work undertaken by teachers should involve inquiry and problem solving in authentic contexts of daily practice. The analysis of the case study data shows that in their quest for a meaningful appraisal process, School A has systemically employed all of the criteria, as offered by Servage, imperative to a strong community of practice. Using teaching as inquiry as the core of their appraisal system, based on shared beliefs generated from intensive whole staff professional development on literacy achievement, School A has met all of Servage's criteria to allow a successful community of practice to flourish within a shared and authentic purpose.

Table 2 illustrates the four year process School A has experienced to establish their current appraisal strategy.

Table 5.2. Teaching as Inquiry: Evidence as a basis for appraisal

<p><b>Stage One:</b></p> <p>Whole Staff Professional Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed shared understanding of the criteria for an effective teacher of literacy – specifically writing.</li> <li>• Developed assessment criteria across the curriculum levels for writing that demonstrate a series of progressions, including the language of engaged learners within a child centred environment.</li> <li>• The community of practice was established using the development of shared understandings as the purpose.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Two:</b></p> <p>Implementation of Teaching as Inquiry as a basis of appraisal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescriptive in nature – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Teachers were required to record inquiries in a handwritten journal</li> <li>→ Inquiry theme was the same for all teachers i.e. writing.</li> <li>→ The fundamental purpose of the appraisal process was to improve student learning outcomes, specifically in writing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teachers were encouraged to personalise the inquiry theme of writing to suit their learners and to suit their stage on the growth continuum.</li> <li>• The Community of Practice was supported and nurtured by allocating time during syndicate meetings for discussion and journal recording.</li> <li>• Reflection journals were used as the basis of appraisal discussions.</li> <li>• Most teachers saw teaching as inquiry as part of the appraisal process as extra work.</li> <li>• Professional Standards were incorporated into the appraisal process with a ‘check –list’ and are treated as minor component of the process.</li> </ul> <p>Professional Standards – ‘check list’.</p>

**Stage Three:**

Second year of Implementation of Teaching as Inquiry as a basis of appraisal:

- Inquiry topics were still prescribed – (writing) but teachers were given choice about how they record their reflections i.e. blogs, journals, mind maps etc.
- Teachers were required to provide evidence for results of action.
- Emphasis was placed on new goals being derived from reflection on teacher practice and student academic outcomes.
- It was noticed by appraisers that teachers were starting to deepen their reflections from a simple summary of ‘what happened’ and were beginning to include the impact on practice and subsequent student learning outcomes within reflections.
- It was noticed by appraisers that most teachers were becoming more engaged in the process of teaching as inquiry and were initiating reference to their reflection journals as evidence during their appraisal discussions.
- The community of practice strengthened as teaching as inquiry continued to be a regular agenda item in Syndicate Meetings.

Professional Standards – check list evidenced by content of reflection journals.

**Stage Four:**

Third Year of Implementation of Teaching as Inquiry as a basis of appraisal:

- Teachers were granted autonomy on the main theme of their inquiries, but were requested to maintain a minor literacy thread.
- Teachers identified a need for professional development on evidence based reflective practice and evidence based teaching as inquiry. This demonstrated a growing awareness of the link between appraisal, student outcomes, personal growth and the value of critical reflective practice.
- Most teachers were incorporating regular teaching practice and evidence into their reflection journals and into the appraisal process, providing evidence that reflection and teaching as inquiry were becoming an integral part of daily practice.

Professional Standards – check list evidenced by content of reflection journals.

**Leadership:**

- The Principal participated in all professional development activities with the teachers.
- The Principal initiated the process of her own appraisal following the inquiry model.
- The Principal set her inquiry focus to correlate with the overall focus of teachers, i.e., writing and student outcomes.
- The Principal ensured that the teachers request for additional professional development on how to link ‘evidence based teaching as inquiry’ to daily practice was fulfilled in a timely manner.
- While the Principal provided oversight of all teachers’ appraisal, thus ensuring consistency, syndicate leaders also had a role in the appraisal process, thus ensuring that appraisal is not restricted to the subjective view of one person.
- Through discussion (as opposed to an interview) teachers had the opportunity to link classroom observations to their inquiries.

**Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the links between the findings of the study and the literature relating to concepts that influence appraisal in schools. The overall findings suggested that there are certain conditions that must be embedded into a school before an effective appraisal process can be implemented. The case study of School A provided insight into how one school successfully implemented an effective appraisal strategy by nurturing an existing sense of collegiality into a strong community of practice. This enabled a purposeful context for appraisal that focused on improved student learning outcomes through the growth of the teacher. This approach to appraisal required teachers to engage in critical reflection of their practice, which they were able to do within their supportive community based on shared understandings.

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## Chapter Six

### Implications of Case Study Findings for Schools

The findings in this study suggest that before effective appraisal can occur, certain conditions need to be addressed. In the first instance, if a school wants to design an appraisal process that makes appraisal meaningful for teachers and impacts on student outcomes, positive relationships and shared understandings between leaders and teachers within the school need to be nurtured. The relationships include those between teachers, and relationships between teachers and the management team. In that way an environment of trust and mutual respect is established before a genuinely effective and collaborative appraisal process can be put in place. During the process of building a collaborative environment, communities of practice could be encouraged and valued as an integral aspect of school community.

By valuing and implementing the underlying concepts inherent in the conceptual framework of a community of practice as identified by Wenger et al. (2002), a school would establish most of the conditions identified by participants in this study as being crucial for effective appraisal to occur. The conditions, addressed and experienced by an effective community of practice, namely, trust, mutual respect, honesty, a sense of purpose and an overall sense of collegiality, are by default being valued and reinforced within this process.

Initially, the purpose of establishing a mutually respectful community of practice could be to help teachers and leaders come to a shared understanding of the purpose and ultimate goal of the appraisal process. Once a school decides that the ultimate purpose is to grow teacher practice and thus, enhance student learning, the next obvious step would be to nurture a shared understanding of what a 'growing teacher' looks like. This would help give teachers a sense of ownership of the process. Jensen and Reichl (2011) identify this step as a crucial component of appraisal. The process enables teachers to establish shared understandings about effective teaching and learning, and also helps build collegiality within the staff of a school. In schools where there may be discord in underlying beliefs it is imperative to spend time building collegiality from which a



strong community of practice can grow (Servage, 2008). An initial focus on developing purpose and shared understanding is also key to the proposal within the Gratten Report (Jensen & Reichl, 2011). In that report it is argued that each school needs to define what it believes makes an effective teacher. It is from schools developing their own definition of an effective teacher that growth and goals emerge. The importance of shared understanding is evidenced by School A spending time as a collective group establishing criteria for success and indicators of good teaching practice within their literacy programs before they implemented their appraisal process using the criteria which they established through debate and discussion as a focus for their appraisal process.

When a shared understanding within the community of practice enhances a collegial environment, a purpose for appraisal can be established based on these shared understandings.

In School A the purpose of the appraisal process was to improve targeted student learning outcomes in literacy, specifically writing. The school also agreed that initiatives established for these specific learners would also benefit the rest of the class. The school's specific goals were to raise achievement levels using the established success criteria for each curriculum level; to increase children's enjoyment of writing; for children to be able to talk about their learning; and for children to demonstrate ownership of their learning pathways. Within the umbrella of the school's broad goals, the teachers individualised their own goals to meet the needs of their group of students and to meet their individual growth pathways. The goals were then achieved by their on-going inquiries. While the overall objective was school-wide, the journeys of each teacher were personalised.

Crucial to this step in the process, is that the goals were individualised to teachers' and students' needs, while still meeting the school wide requirement of raising literacy achievement of targeted students. These goals were not static; they were adjusted and added to throughout the year as needs changed. It should also be noted that school wide professional development was undertaken that related directly to the school wide goal of improving literacy outcomes for students. As a result, teachers were given tools and

the precious commodity of time to support them in both developing and achieving their goals.

Therefore, as illustrated by School A, once the community of practice is enhanced, the next step in establishing an effective appraisal process is to allow opportunity for goals to be individualised within the overall school goals to meet teachers' and students' needs. Following on from this is the provision of tools and time to allow the goals to be realised. By establishing purpose, providing tools and valuing the time teachers spend on actualising their goals, the process of goal setting will be more likely to develop meaningfully as opposed to a system whereby the goals are only addressed and recognised at formal appraisal interviews. This process allows for the growth component of appraisal systems, as was the initial intent of the Registered Teacher Criteria and is separate to the accountability element of appraisal, which is the initial intent behind Professional Standards, both of which are MOE requirements.

In the findings chapter, it was noted that approximately half of the teachers experienced feelings of stress and anxiety around appraisal. I would argue that stress would be alleviated by simplifying appraisal into two components; the first being an annual check list created from the Professional Standards whereby teachers identified evidence from their practice as part of their appraisal meetings; and the second being an on-going reflective process as previously outlined in Table 5.2 that related directly to improved student outcomes and teacher growth.

The first component of appraisal would be an evidence based check-list that openly acknowledges certain aspects of appraisal are mandated ultimately by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of accountability and pay progression within the profession. While this component could include school-wide goals that meet the requirements of current government initiatives, such as targeting priority learners, there is no 'hidden agenda' of the purpose. Simply stated, the purpose of this component of appraisal is entirely for pay progression and to meet mandated requirements.

The second component of appraisal could be the personal journey of growth for individual teachers as related to both their individual needs and the needs of their learners. While this second component may provide generalised evidence for the

accountability phase, it is separate and personal for each individual teacher. Within this second phase of appraisal teachers will be able to take risks, identify areas of weakness and seek support and guidance as required without it impacting negatively on the accountability aspect of checking their performance as a teacher. While practice and evidence around the teachers' growth goals may form part of the evidence for the accountability phase of appraisal, the processes are entirely separate, and the purposes of each are very clear.

By using the two phase approach, appraisal becomes less a subjective judgment and more an evidence based process focused on the normal practice of the teacher, co-constructed within non-confrontational communities of practice, and taking the form of discussions, rather than interviews, with the appraiser. The discussions, as part of the appraisal process, would form an opportunity for the teacher to present their evidenced checklist and report on the outcomes of their individual goals and on-going reflections. It would be beneficial, as was the case for School A, if the appraiser undertook a similar process with their own appraisal. Such a practice would allow for an insight into the purpose, structure and design of the process.

In the survey, only half of the participants believed that appraisers fully understood the purpose of appraisal. Building an appraisal system based on shared understandings and goals within a community of practice, that includes an appraiser, would likely change teachers' beliefs about appraisers. Another possible benefit of co-constructing an appraisal process based on the needs of a specific setting might be a higher level of consistency between expectations and discussions of the appraisers in larger schools where more than one individual carries out appraisal of teaching staff.

By initiating two separate phases of appraisal, one on-going and growth oriented, and one a stocktake and checklist aimed at accountability, the appraisal is given an authentic purpose beyond simply meeting MoE requirements. The initial intents of both Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards are also met. This two-phase process also meets the criteria for effective appraisal as set out by McLellan and Ramsey (2007) who argue that "leaders can... make sure that appraisal goes beyond compliance-based documentation and turns into a vehicle for professional conversations carried out with rigour" (p. 3).

These two components of accountability and growth relate specifically to the two separate objectives teachers already perceive appraisal to be – regardless of which framework of Professional Standards or Registered Teacher Criteria teachers and appraisers believe underpins their appraisal process. That is, what is needed is a clear separation of the two objectives of accountability and growth as a teacher, the latter objective naturally flowing into improved student outcomes. By separating the two concepts of accountability and growth, thus ensuring each component is explicit and transparent, teachers will know the purpose of each of the appraisal phases which will impact on the way teachers respond to the two dimensions within the appraisal process. During the personal growth phase of the process teachers may feel more confident to take risks, try new initiatives and to share their successes and failures within a community of practice without fear of this process impacting negatively on an overall judgement of their teaching ability or the fear of being judged and compared to their colleagues.

A two-phased process as outlined, with improved student outcomes at its core, would also undoubtedly increase the numbers of teachers who could present evidence that students benefited from their appraisal. In this study less than one quarter of participants were able to demonstrate that benefit.

Teachers in the study who found appraisal empowering also identified the following:

- Appraisal celebrated their success;
- Students' needs were a priority in appraisal goals;
- Appraisal helped them grow as a teacher;
- Their appraiser fully understood the purpose of appraisal;
- Appraisal strengthened their relationship with their appraiser;
- Their appraiser was constructive in their feedback; and
- Appraisal was a good use of their time.

The appraisal process as outlined above is likely to demonstrate empowerment. An appraiser offering constructive feedback bases feedback on shared understanding of the purpose of appraisal and on sound understanding of the nature of constructive feedback as relates to the purpose of appraisal. It is likely, as argued by McLellan and Ramsey (2007), that on-going training for appraisers is a critical requirement for effective

appraisal to occur. For a school, a purpose for appraisal that teachers can relate to will make appraisal meaningful for teachers.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that relational considerations are a key element to an effective appraisal process. Systems of appraisal can only be effective if the relational considerations such as mutual respect, collegiality, honesty, and trust are firmly embedded in the culture of a school.

One way of developing a strong sense of collegiality and a high trust model is to actively encourage and support the building of communities of practice within the school. To enable effective learning communities to develop and flourish, schools need to provide time and resources in order for teachers to develop shared understandings of the qualities and practice that make an effective teacher. In the first instance, shared understandings of the direction, focus and values of the school community need to be established.

Within growing communities of practice, with shared understandings as a basis upon which to build, teachers can then set their goals based upon school-wide initiatives and subsequently individualised to meet the needs of both the students and the teachers' learning journeys. These goals must be fluid, active, on going and above all, valued as an integral aspect of the teachers' growth and as a vehicle for improved student learning outcomes. The appraisal process, based on these beliefs, is formed around evidenced outcomes. As such, this aspect of the appraisal process is formative in nature.

The accountability phase of appraisal becomes a summative stock-take. While it is conceivable that evidence for this summative aspect may originate from relevant aspects of the formative phase, the two phases of appraisal serve two very distinct purposes.

Leadership, as opposed to management, is a key component to a successful appraisal process. Appraisers need to be fully cognisant of their role. The role of appraisers within a community of practice is the antithesis to that of their role in the apprenticeship model of 'master and student'.

Developing an appraisal process using the conceptual framework of communities of practice will ensure the conditions that teachers perceive need to be present for effective and purposeful appraisal are present.

A crucial dimension within appraisal processes that allows teachers to be active participants in meaningful contexts is the concept of independent reflective practice. Reflexive praxis requires teachers to think beyond what happens in their classroom towards thinking about the meaning and resulting actions, which is then incorporated into the appraisal process.

In conclusion, while there is unlikely to be one ‘best’ system for appraisal, it is also highly unlikely that *any* system will work to its full advantage unless schools have addressed the core conditions for effective appraisal. These are, namely, shared understandings incorporating a sense of collegiality, reflexive praxis; and most importantly, an overt and clearly articulated purpose for appraisal.

Table 3 illustrates a summary of the progressions a school would need to take to ensure the prerequisite conditions will be met while using teaching as inquiry as the basis for appraisal.

#### **Conditions for Effective Appraisal**

- Quality Leadership
- Explicit Purpose
- Reflexive Praxis
- Community of Practice based on:
  - Mutual respect
  - Shared understanding
  - Trust

Table 6.3. Summary of progressions before appraisal can be implemented

<b>Progressions to meet conditions:</b>	<b>Leadership implications:</b>
<p><b>Stage One:</b></p> <p>Co-construct shared understandings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective teaching pedagogy</li> <li>• Student academic outcomes</li> <li>• Reflexive praxis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a school-wide need (e.g strategies for target learners, improved student outcomes for literacy etc.)</li> <li>• Organise and participate in professional development that addresses the identified need</li> <li>• Allocate resources (time and financial) for professional development required to develop shared understandings on the identified theme for professional development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals Stage One:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the conditions needed for a respectful community of practice to grow</li> <li>• Teachers develop their understanding and practical application of reflexive praxis</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Stage Two:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers develop an inquiry into their teaching based on shared understandings of the school wide theme</li> <li>• Teachers follow a prescribed method of inquiry and reflection</li> <li>• The explicit goal of teaching as inquiry is to improve student outcomes through reflexive praxis</li> <li>• Inquiry, while keeping to the prescribed ‘theme’ and model, is adapted to the individual teachers’ needs and the learning needs of their students</li> <li>• Discussion with colleagues about their inquiries is a regular agenda item for syndicate/staff meetings</li> <li>• The reflection journals based on the inquiry form the basis of appraisal discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a model and set criteria for inquiry and reflection for teachers to follow</li> <li>• Actively involve themselves in the process e.g., undertake a personal inquiry into related practice</li> <li>• Allocate time during staff meetings for teachers to develop their inquiries, add to their reflection journals and enter into discussion with colleagues</li> <li>• Use teacher’s inquiry as a basis for appraisal discussion</li> <li>• Elements of each teacher’s inquiry may form evidence for the professional standards checklist.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals Stage Two:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build collegiality through shared community of practice</li> <li>• Teachers critically reflect on practice and take action accordingly</li> <li>• Allocation of resources will ensure teachers continue to develop their inquiries and reflexive praxis</li> <li>• The core of inquiries are improved learning outcomes for students based on shared understandings</li> <li>• Teaching as Inquiry becomes the basis for appraisal discussion</li> <li>• Appraisal is directly linked to teaching practice and student outcomes</li> </ul>	



<p><b>Stage Three:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the <i>process</i> of Stage 2 – what worked; what can be improved;</li> <li>• Reflect on the <i>outcomes</i> of Stage 2             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student learning outcomes</li> <li>- Reflexive praxis</li> <li>- Teaching pedagogy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make decisions for future inquiry criteria/themes based on reflection</li> <li>• Continue to develop and grow shared understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate reflections of Stage 2</li> <li>• Provide professional development identified from reflections</li> <li>• Be open to teacher input</li> <li>• Continue to be an active participant in the process of inquiry</li> <li>• Allocate time during staff meetings for teachers to develop their inquiries, add to their reflection journals and enter into discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals Stage Three:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As communities of practice grow, so too will the concepts of shared understanding</li> <li>• While the underlying theme of teacher inquiries is still prescribed, teachers are able to make decisions about how to record reflections and gather data</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stage Four:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the concepts and practice of communities of practice</li> <li>• Continue to develop reflexive praxis</li> <li>• Continue to link teacher practice to student outcomes</li> <li>• Explicitly revisit shared understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to allocate time during staff meetings for teachers to develop their inquiries, add to their reflection journals and enter into discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goals Stage Four:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed the concepts of community of practice, reflexive praxis, mutual respect, and collegiality into the culture of appraisal</li> <li>• Teachers take responsibility for their individual inquiries, which, are less prescribed and based on teachers’ identified needs</li> </ul>	

Once the concept and maintenance of a rich community of practice is embedded into practice, an annual cycle of appraisal is developed. Figure 6 demonstrates what it may look like. Reflexive praxis, explicit purpose and a strong community of practice are critical components of the process for effective appraisal to occur.

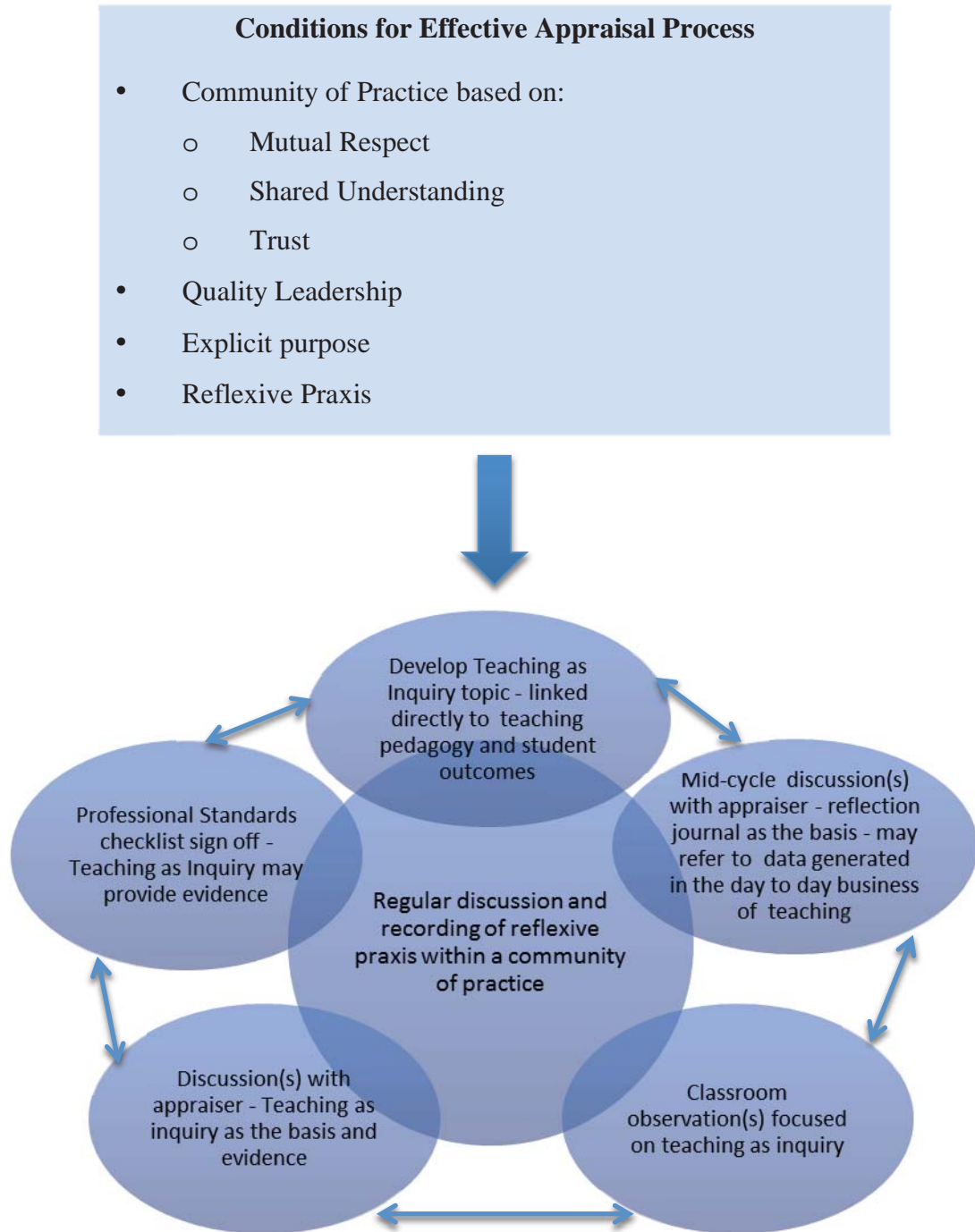


Figure 6. Example of a process for appraisal based on the identified conditions.

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Figure 6 illustrates how an annual appraisal process will be enhanced once the prerequisites for effective appraisal are embedded into practice. During the annual cycle of appraisal, each outside element can occur any number of times, and the order of each element can be negotiated. However, the concepts of community of practice and reflexive praxis are ongoing and embedded within each element. The components that constitute appraisal are a never-ending cycle based on the current learning needs of students and the journey of the teacher. Thus, appraisal gains purpose and loses the stigma of being a stand-alone activity that is another ‘thing’ to be done in the life of the busy teacher.

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## Chapter Seven

### Final Thoughts

This study offers a solid basis for exploring appraisal within present-day New Zealand. An overview of teachers' perceptions of the current mandated appraisal process suggested strategies and conditions conducive to effective appraisal. An explanation has also been offered on the purpose and practical application of the Professional Standards and the Registered Teacher Criteria.

As the Gratten Report explains, "Professional Standards for Teachers are a positive development, as they create a common language and understanding of effective teaching. They describe what we value in an effective teacher" (Jensen & Riechl, 2011, p. 34). However, the authors are emphatic that the Professional Standards are not a tool for appraising teachers. Thus, Professional Standards may feed *from* the appraisal process, but they do not feed *into* it. The case study of School A offers an example of the success of applying this approach to Professional Standards. In this instance, the Professional Standards check-list may use the appraisal documentation as evidence, but they do not form the purpose of appraisal. The appraisal process, in this model, has student learning outcomes, through growing teacher practice, as a core objective.

Furthermore, the changes proposed by Jensen and Riechl (2011) sought to eliminate the negative view teachers have of appraisal by removing the perception it is merely an administrative task. They argued that this is achieved by ensuring the process of appraisal has immediate and obvious impact in the classroom. Again, the study of School A shows the successful application in their school of an appraisal process that has improved student learning outcomes as one of its core objectives, thus achieving the objective of classroom impact to which Jensen and Riechl refer.

One of the key recommendations from this study is for schools to develop shared understandings of what effective teaching looks like in their individual setting. Appraisal and feedback can then be based around these definitions. The notion of schools developing their own definitions of effective teaching is also supported by

McLellan and Ramsey's call for 'localness' within an appraisal system (McLellan & Ramsey, 2007). Aitken (2006) points out that it is not what the teacher does that matters, but it is what is happening for the students that matters. Therefore an integral component of appraisal should be analysing how the students are responding to the teacher and programmes established by the teacher. Thus, the initial emphasis is *off* what the teacher does until such time as students' feedback and achievement are evidenced. At this point the teacher, through a combination of self-reflection, third party observation and reflection within a community of practice, seeks to determine what he or she is doing that may contribute to both the positive and negative outcomes of classroom expectations. From here, the teacher can fully engage in reflexive praxis to ensure changes in practice and/or beliefs are actioned. In this way, appraisal will support the continued development of teacher practice, and student learning outcomes will improve. It is at this point of the appraisal process that the benefits of a respectful community of practice are fully utilised. Meaningful reflections regarding authentic issues can be addressed within a supportive community. The advantages of a school staff having spent time to create shared understandings of effective teaching practices comes to the fore when reflecting on practice within a team of teachers.

## **Limitations**

One of the objectives of this study was to offer a framework for effective appraisal relevant to the New Zealand context. However, the fact that participating schools were all situated in Dunedin, cannot be overlooked. Whilst care was taken to include schools from a range of decile ratings and from a range of roll sizes, schools in the greater Dunedin area offer a somewhat limited range of these variables when compared to schools situated in larger geographical regions. For example, the average size of a school eligible for this study in Dunedin has 150 students; in comparison, the average for the Auckland area is more than double this at 363 students<sup>4</sup>. A context for further study could be to determine if the findings in this study could be replicated in schools within other regions of New Zealand.

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<sup>4</sup> Averages are calculated from data retrieved from  
<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/student.../6028>

Another limitation of this study is that while School A is used as an example of how to establish the community culture, at the time of the study this school had a relatively low staff turnover. This raises a question about whether or not a school with a high staff turnover would be able to embed the conditions required for a relationally bound community that the findings suggest are a prerequisite condition for effective appraisal.

It should be noted that only one version of the questionnaire was prepared for the participants, regardless of their roles in their school. That is, both appraisers and teachers answered the same questionnaire. During the explanation of the study and the questionnaire, participants were instructed to respond from the perspective of a teacher being appraised. However, this raises questions of how principals, who are appraisers but not necessarily teachers, may have interpreted the questions.

The repeated questionnaire at the case study school indicated that the success of their appraisal process was a result of the interventions initiated over a three year period. This indication of success would have been strengthened if the survey had been repeated across all of the participating schools.

### **Further Research**

The immediate implication of this study would be to explore the application of the model for appraisal in schools, both within Dunedin and across different regions within New Zealand. This could include investigating the adaptability of the model to different school cultures and community needs.

In relation to this study, specifically the Case Study of School A, it would be interesting to monitor how this school plans to maintain the concepts of shared understandings of student learning and effective teaching. School A has a relatively stable teacher base, but what will happen when new staff members join the team? How will new teachers become part of a community that has already been established? These concepts could be explored by entering into a second case study that builds on the first, in order to determine how successfully School A addresses these issues.

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In relation to this concept of the maintenance of a relationally bound community, further research based on the role of the Principal in teacher appraisal could be undertaken. That is, research could explain how schools transition shared beliefs and understandings when changes in leadership personnel occur. This would include how schools might instigate a succession plan to prepare for a change in Principal. Aligned with this research into the role of the Principal, it is relevant to explore how important is it that the leader undertakes a similar appraisal process to that of the teachers. For example, in School A, while the Principal did include some school management goals in her appraisal process, her main goals related directly to student achievement within the same curriculum area as the appraisal focus for the teachers. In the context of effective teacher appraisal, it would be valuable to examine the criticality of aligning Principals' goals with those of teachers during an appraisal cycle.

This study also creates a foundation for further research into how the conditions that are identified as being crucial for effective appraisal can be established. School A began their quest for shared understandings with an already established sense of collegiality. If a school did not already have a collegial community base, the quest for shared understandings could be problematic. One way to approach this would be to undertake action research with a school that wanted help in establishing the necessary conditions to enable effective appraisal to occur. For some schools, the quest for shared understandings could be the context that begins the development of a collegially based community.

### **Changing Beliefs**

I embarked upon this study with a hunch based on personal experience. Based on anecdotal data I expected that the findings from the survey would indicate that teachers simply required clearly articulated purpose relating to student outcomes for appraisal to be successful. The initial plan for this study was that the findings would then guide the research toward seeking a purpose driven strategy for appraisal. However, in the very early stages of data analyses it became obvious that my hunch was naïve and simplistic. This realisation forced me to discard my preconceived ideas in their entirety. As a beginning researcher, while this was a valuable lesson, the thought of delving into uncharted waters was both exciting and terrifying. Importantly, the realisation that I

needed to remove my own beliefs from the research helped me listen more carefully to what my participants had to say, and consider more deeply the implications of what they shared.

Fraenkel et al. (2012) describe the qualitative researcher as a “disinterested scientist” (p. 428). That is, the researcher ‘stands apart’ from that which is being studied and puts aside any biases and values that may influence the research. Moreover, using an inductive approach within the constructs of Grounded Theory, it was critical that I remained open to developing new theories from the data.

Being open-minded to new possibilities resulted in the discovery of my key findings of underlying conditions that must be present for effective appraisal to occur. The findings showed that while the actual purpose of appraisal was a cause for confusion, a sense of purpose was indeed important to teachers. However, an absence of fundamental principles of relationally bound concepts, such as trust, shared understandings, reflective practice and a sense of community; significantly reduced teachers’ perceptions of the success of appraisal strategies. Furthermore, other research projects demonstrated that the impact of quality leadership on a successful appraisal process also impacted heavily on a successful appraisal strategy (MacKenzie, 2007; OECD, 2011; Yariv, 2007). When reviewing the literature from others and the findings from this study, it was impossible to identify a singular element that would result in effective appraisal that impacted on student learning outcomes through the growth of the teacher. This led me to Wenger and Lave’s (2007) conceptual framework for Communities of Practice. This conceptual framework encapsulates the ideals expressed by teachers as being critical for effective appraisal. I argue that effective appraisal cannot occur until the principles of community are an integral component of a school’s culture. The key finding of this study is that regardless of systems employed, effective appraisal cannot occur until the culture of the school has achieved the prerequisite conditions identified. That is, teachers will not fully engage in appraisal unless the conditions are fully integrated into the school community. It is only once the sense of community is established, underpinned by relationally bound concepts that a *system* of appraisal can be implemented. Furthermore, whatever system is employed, it must incorporate the values and principles of the shared understandings of the community for whom it relates.





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## Appendices

### Appendix One: Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey on your perceptions of teacher appraisal. All data gathered will be held in strictest confidence and will be used to contribute to a report on Teacher Appraisal in New Zealand, which will provide insight for how to create a performance management system that improves student outcomes and meets the needs of teachers. Neither individuals nor individual schools will be identified in the report. If you have any questions, or would like a copy of the final analysis, please contact Bilinda Offen:

Cell: 021915636

Email: [bilinda.offen@otago.ac.nz](mailto:bilinda.offen@otago.ac.nz)

<b>Teacher Appraisal Background:</b> <i>This section gives background information regarding your perceptions of where your appraisal system has originated. Remember, these are your opinions and there are no right or wrong responses.</i>			
Our appraisal system is based mainly on:	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1. the Professional Standards			
2. the Registered Teacher Criteria			
3. a mix of Professional Standards and Registered Teacher Criteria			
4. something other than the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards			
If yes to Q4 please explain:			
I think the purpose of Professional Standards is:			
I think the purpose of the Registered Teacher Criteria is:			

<b>Professional Development:</b>					
<i>This section explores your perceptions of the basis for professional development decision making in your school.</i>					
<b>Professional Development in our school is based on:</b>					
<i>Circle the number that is the closest to your opinion for each statement using the following scale</i>					
<i>1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3- not sure 4 –agree 5 - strongly agree</i>					
	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
• Government initiated requirements	1	2	3	4	5
• Specific needs of the students in my class	1	2	3	4	5
• Generalised needs of the school	1	2	3	4	5
• My needs as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
• Whatever course is available	1	2	3	4	5
• The results of my appraisal meetings	1	2	3	4	5
• Other <i>Please explain:</i>					



<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <p><i>This section explores the role your professional goals take in the appraisal process.</i></p>										
<p>Goals are included in the Appraisal Process:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please tick the box applies to you</i></p>				<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 40px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><i>Yes</i></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><i>No</i></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><i>Don't know</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>			
<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>								
<p><b>My goals are:</b></p> <p><i>Circle the number that is the closest to your opinion for each statement using the following scale</i></p> <p><i>1 – strongly disagree    2 – disagree    3- not sure    4 –agree    5 - strongly agree</i></p>										
		Strongly disagree			Strongly agree					
• I don't remember what my goals are	1	2	3	4	5					
• Developed in consultation with my appraiser	1	2	3	4	5					
• Developed by myself independently	1	2	3	4	5					
• I have no say in my goals	1	2	3	4	5					
• A mix of school-wide goals and personal goals	1	2	3	4	5					
• Specific to the needs of my students	1	2	3	4	5					
• Generalised to the needs of the school	1	2	3	4	5					
• Related to my needs as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5					
<p>• Other <i>Please explain:</i></p>										

<b>The appraisal process:</b>					
<i>This section explores your perceptions of the purpose and usefulness of your appraisal process. Remember, this is your perception, and there are no right or wrong responses.</i>					
<i>Circle the number that is the closest to your opinion for each statement using the following scale:</i>					
<i>1 – strongly disagree    2 – disagree    3- not sure    4 –agree    5 - strongly agree</i>					
	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
The appraisal process helps me become a better teacher	1	2	3	4	5
The students in my class benefit from my teacher appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
I can show evidence that the appraisal process benefits my students	1	2	3	4	5
I actively work towards my appraisal goals throughout the appraisal cycle	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process is aimed at my needs	1	2	3	4	5
I can confidently explain the purpose of our appraisal system	1	2	3	4	5
I am actively involved in all stages of the appraisal cycle	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process has my students needs as a priority	1	2	3	4	5
The purpose of the appraisal process is to help me grow as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
Appraisal is only necessary for beginning teachers	1	2	3	4	5
We have an appraisal process because it is mandated by Government legislation	1	2	3	4	5
I think our appraisal system needs to change	1	2	3	4	5
I don't do any extra preparation for my appraisal observations	1	2	3	4	5
My appraiser fully understands the purpose behind appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
My appraiser is constructive in his/her feedback	1	2	3	4	5
I look forward to my appraisal cycle	1	2	3	4	5
Our appraisal system meets my needs	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
The appraisal process does not impact on my teaching practice.	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process is closely linked to the Professional Development Programme	1	2	3	4	5
The time the appraisal process takes is a good use of my time	1	2	3	4	5
I feel threatened by the appraisal process	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process helps me identify what I need to work on	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process highlights the things I don't do very well	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process strengthens my relationship with my appraiser	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process is empowering	1	2	3	4	5
The appraisal process celebrates my successes	1	2	3	4	5
Requirements for pay progression are a major purpose of teacher appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
I model my best teaching practice during appraisal observations	1	2	3	4	5
I am more prepared than normal when teaching during appraisal observations	1	2	3	4	5
Appraisal causes feelings of stress and anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Appraisal is unnecessary for experienced teachers	1	2	3	4	5

*Please circle one:*

*Gender: M F*

*Age: 20 - 29 30 – 39 40 - 49 50-59 60+*

*Years Teaching: <2 2-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 20+*

*Role: Tick as applicable*

- I am a classroom teacher*
- My time is split between classroom teaching and management e.g. Team Leader, Syndicate Leader, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal; Teaching Principal*
- My time is mostly spent on management tasks and I do not have my own classroom e.g. Principal, walking Deputy Principal, walking Assistant Principal*
- I carry out appraisals of teaching staff*

*Anything you would like to add about teacher appraisal that is not included in this survey:*

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***Thank you!***

*Please do not write below this line*

*Administration:*

*Date survey collected:*

*Institution Code:*

*U Rating:*

*Decile:*

*School Type – full primary contributing primary intermediate*

*Cluster Group:*

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## Appendix Two: Participant interview consent form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

### *Perceptions of Performance Management*

#### PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Full Name – printed** .....

## **Appendix Three: Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal in Schools**

### **Information sheet**



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

### **Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal in Schools**

#### **INFORMATION SHEET**

#### **Dear Participant**

I am Bilinda Offen and I am undertaking a doctoral study on teachers' perceptions of the impact teacher performance management systems has on teacher practice and student outcomes. I would welcome your participation in the study.

Research from around the world indicates that teachers are generally dissatisfied with appraisal processes. The research also suggests that the perceptions of both appraiser and the appraisee may differ. It has been identified that teachers respond more positively to initiatives that have direct impact on their students and their practice. With these perceptions as the starting position, the goal of this project is to determine what primary teachers think about their teacher appraisal processes and to offer insight into what teachers think are necessary conditions or criteria for a successful appraisal system. It is hoped that a follow up project based on the analysed data of this research will enable an appraisal model that meets the identified needs of teachers to be developed and trialled in selected schools.

This project is broken down into two phases. The attached survey is phase one and will provide insight into the perceptions of both teachers and appraisers, with a comparison of the two perceptions being a component of the analysis.

Phase two consists of interviews with a sub sample of participants from phase one and will offer suggestions to explain the perceptions. During this phase participants will be invited to participate in a telephone interview at a mutually agreeable time.

All actions will be undertaken to ensure both your personal anonymity, and that of your school.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Non-participation will in no way affect your employment. If you choose to participate you will have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question.
- Withdraw from the study at any time.

- Provide information with the understanding that your name will not be used and you will not be identifiable in any material produced from the study.
- Provide the information on the understanding that any information provided will not be used for any other purpose other than this study.
- Access a summary of the finished report when this study is concluded.

I, or my supervisors, will be happy to answer any further queries about the research you might have.

Yours sincerely

Bilinda Offen

Supervisors

Professor Margaret Walshaw, Massey University, ph: (06)356 9099 ext 84404

Dr Sally Hansen, Massey University, ph: (06)356 9099, ext 84307

Te Kunenga  
ki Pūrehuroa

Institute of Education

Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222 (PN900), Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 [www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)

## Appendix Four: Principal follow up letter



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MATĀURANGA

Dear *insert name*

I am Bilinda Offen and I am undertaking a doctoral study on teachers' perceptions of the impact teacher performance management systems has on teacher practice and student outcomes. As discussed during our phone conversation, I would welcome your school's participation in the study.

Research from around the world indicates that teachers are generally dissatisfied with appraisal processes. The research also suggests that the perceptions of both appraiser and the appraisee may differ. It has been identified that teachers respond more positively to initiatives that have direct impact on their students and their practice. With these perceptions as the starting position, the goal of this project is to determine what primary teachers think about their teacher appraisal processes and to offer insight into what teachers think are necessary conditions or criteria for a successful appraisal system. It is hoped that a follow up project based on the analysed data of this research will enable an appraisal model that meets the identified needs of teachers to be developed and trialled in selected schools.

This project is broken down into two phases. The attached survey is phase one and will provide insight into the perceptions of both teachers and appraisers, with a comparison of the two perceptions being a component of the analysis.

Phase two consists of interviews with a sub sample of participants from phase one and will offer suggestions to explain the perceptions. During this phase participants will be invited to participate in a telephone interview at a mutually agreeable time.

All actions will be undertaken to ensure both the personal anonymity of individual participants, and that of your school. Participation is entirely voluntary.

If your teachers choose to participate they will have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question.
- Withdraw from the study at any time.
- Provide information with the understanding that their name will not be used and they will not be identifiable in any material produced from the study.
- Provide the information on the understanding that any information provided will not be used for any other purpose other than this study.
- Access a summary of the finished report when this study is concluded.

I, or my supervisors, will be happy to answer any further queries about the research you might have.

Yours sincerely

Bilinda Offen

Supervisors:

Professor Margaret Walshaw, Massey University, ph: (06)356 9099 ext 84404

Dr Sally Hansen, Massey University, ph: (06)356 9099, ext 84307

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**Appendix Five: Directory of Schools – Dunedin**

607	Big Rock Primary School	03-4811781	03-4811782	office@bigrock.school.nz	David Grant
647	Bathgate Park School	03-4553421	03-4553882		Ian Cormick
648	Carisbrook School	03-4877241	03-4877104		Brendon Sincock
1192	Dunedin Rudolf Steiner School	03-4712163	03-4712164	office@dunedin.steiner.school.nz	Rachel Barrington
1641	Amana Christian School	03-4892113	03-4892115	amana.school@ihug.co.nz	Roslyn King
1657	Silverstream (South) Primary School	03-4898577	03-4898579	office@silverstre.am	Elizabeth Cleverley
3700	Abbotsford School	03-4882642	03-4881119	office@abbotsford.school.nz	Stephanie Madden
3703	Andersons Bay School	03-4544413	03-4543263	hamishm@andybay.ac.nz	Hamish McDonald
3706	Arthur Street School	03-4776524	03-4776987	secretary@arthurst.school.nz	Verity Harlick
3709	Balaclava School	03-4884667	03-4880244	reception@balaclava.school.nz	Sally Direen
3711	Balmacewen Intermediate	03-4667251	03-4667252	office@balmacewen.school.nz	Andrew Hunter
3716	Bradford School	03-4536254	03-4536254	office@bradford.school.nz	Melissa Mitchell-Bain
3718	Broad Bay School	03-4780706	03-4780817	office@broadbay.school.nz	John Goulstone
3719	Brockville School	03-4763717	03-4763717	office@brockville.school.nz	Christopher Cumberland
3727	Concord School	03-4882204	03-4882204	office@concord.school.nz	Steven Turnbull
3731	Dunedin North Intermediate	03-4739027	03-4739611	office@dni.school.nz	Ross Leach
3733	East Taieri School	03-4896737	03-4896737	etaieri@east-taieri.school.nz	Jennifer Horgan
3736	Fairfield School (Dunedin)	03-4882040	03-4884126	office@fairfield.school.nz	Andrew Larson

3740	George Street Normal School	03-4740825	03-4740826	office@georgestreet.school.nz	Roderick Galloway
3742	Grants Braes School	03-4544717	03-4544717	the.office@grantsbraes.school.nz	Christopher Mckinlay
3743	Green Island School	03-4882314	03-4884470	secretary@greenisland.school.nz	Steven Hayward
3745	Halfway Bush School	03-4763207	03-4763207	office@hwb.school.nz	Winifred Cornelissen
3753	Kaikorai School	03-4640065	03-4667236	secretary@kaikorai.school.nz	Simon Clarke
3756	Karitane School	03-4657475	03-4657475	karitaneschool@xtra.co.nz	Nicola Philip
3761	Lee Stream School	03-4891452	03-4891453	lss@leestream.school.nz	Philip Wheeler
3762	Macandrew Bay School	03-4761004	03-4761908	admin@macandrewbay.school.nz	Bernadette Newlands
3768	Maori Hill School	03-4640184	03-4640180	office@maorihill.school.nz	Alistair Campbell
3776	Mornington School	03-4536794	03-4536148	office@mornington.school.nz	Douglas Bragg
3778	Elmgrove School	03-4896252	03-4896352		Jennifer Mcdonald
3779	Musselburgh School	03-4554586	03-4554566	office@musselburgh.school.nz	Deborah Smith
3783	North East Valley Normal School	03-4738246	03-4738277	office@nevn.school.nz	John Mckenzie
3790	Opoho School	03-4738019	03-4738019	opohoschool@xtra.co.nz	Jennifer Clarke
3795	Outram School	03-4861733	03-4862147		Jeremy Marshall
3801	Pine Hill School (Dunedin)	03-4739148	03-4739148	principal@pinehilldunedin.school.nz	Melanie Jewiss
3803	Port Chalmers School	03-4728685	03-4728691	office@portchalmers.school.nz	Vicki Nicolson
3805	Portobello School	03-4780605	03-4780605	office@portobello.school.nz	Shelley Wilde
3807	Purakanui School	03-4821026	03-4821912	office@purakanui.school.nz	Lynne Allen
3808	Ravensbourne School	03-4710410	03-4710419	principal@ravensbourne.school.nz	Megan Odgers

3813	Rotary Park School	03-4545848	03-4542330	office@rotarypark.school.nz	Carmel Casey
3815	Sacred Heart School (Dunedin)	03-4738362	03-4736362	office@sacredheartdn.school.nz	Paul Richardson
3817	Sawyers Bay School	03-4728981	03-4728982	office@sawyersbay.school.nz	Donna Watson
3819	St Bernadette's School (Forbury)	03-4557408	03-4557408	office@stbernadettes.school.nz	Janice Taylor
3820	St Brigids School (Tainui)	03-4543477	03-4543477	office@stbrigidsdn.school.nz	Christopher Hogue
3822	St Francis Xavier School (Morningson)	03-4534446	03-4534443	office@stfrancisxavier.school.nz	Eric Ward
3827	St Joseph's Cathedral School	03-4773416	03-4771280		Michelle Bednarek-Burrow
3828	St Joseph's School (Port Chalmers)	03-4728657	03-4728656	office@sjport.school.nz	Thomas Woodhouse
3829	St Leonard's School (Dunedin)	03-4710501	03-4710507	office@stleonardsdn.school.nz	Jo-Anne Wilson
3830	St Mary's School (Dunedin)	03-4764277	03-4764278	secretary@st-marys.school.nz	Richard Duffy
3832	St Mary's School (Mosgiel)	03-4897716	03-4890991	office@stmarys-mosgiel.school.nz	Michael Brosnahan
3834	St Peter Chanel School (Green Island)	03-4881519	03-4881517	school@stpeterchanel.school.nz	Debra Waldron
3835	St Clair School	03-4558199	03-4554199	office@stclair.school.nz	Richard Newton
3837	Strath Taieri School	03-4643798	03-4643099	office@middlemarch.school.nz	Vicki McIntyre
3839	Tahuna Normal Intermediate	03-4553994	03-4556690	tahuna@tahuna.school.nz	Clifford Hunter
3841	Tainui School	03-4550566	03-4550157	office@tainui.school.nz	Rosalind Mcquillan-Mains
3852	Waikouaiti School	03-4657225	03-4657232	office@waikouaiti.school.nz	Trudy Pankhurst



3857	Waitati School	03-4822888	03-4822888	office@waitati.school.nz	Heidi Hayward
3859	Wakari School	03-4763140	03-4763141	principal@wakari.school.nz	Brent Caldwell
3862	Warrington School	03-4822605			Nathan Parker
4117	Liberton Christian School	03-4737599	03-4737529	admin@libertonchristian.school.nz	Fiona Sizemore