

Sabbatical paper 2008

I wish to thank the Titahi Bay School Board of Trustees for their support in allowing me to have to do some research and also have time to recharge my batteries. I also wish to thank the schools I visited in the Wellington region and the Principals of those schools for answering a questionnaire and having discussions with me. All the Principals are members of the PPLC groups I belong to. We have continued our groups when our time was up working with the NZPF/ Leadership Centre. I found the Sabbatical experience rewarding and encourage all principals to engage in discussions relating to their work and of course take a sabbatical.

My focus was looking at professional development models that schools are using to change teacher practice in the classroom to improve student achievement. Engaging teachers in discussion about why they teach the way they do and how they move students forward based on data brings about change. The classroom becomes demystified when teachers observe one another and get feedback and feed forward ideas. Another pair of eyes can be very powerful in bringing about change in a supportive environment

My goal was to visit a number of schools and discuss what they are doing to change teacher practice at the classroom level and how effective they have been and what evidence they could show that a difference was being made. I emailed a questionnaire to the Principals of 5 schools so I could collect information on what they did and it also was also used as the focus for our conversations.

Before visiting schools I did a literature review, focusing on studies undertaken in New Zealand schools, working with teachers on pedagogy and practice theories.

Over the last few years the emphasis on teacher professional development and learning has moved on from one off courses, or professional development through staff meetings (often at the end of a day of full on teaching) to introducing the curriculum and the pedagogy of teaching as part of an in- class development plan. Professional development and learning is based on teacher needs and student achievement data. This approach is advocated in the latest Best Evidence synthesis publication “Teacher Professional Learning and Development” (2007).

H.Timperley et al, outline a Teacher inquiry and knowledge –building cycle to promote valued learning outcomes (BES 2007).

Step 1 What are the students learning needs? What do they already know? What source of evidence have we used? What do they need to learn and do? How do we build on what they already know and do?

Step 2 What are our own learning needs? How have we contributed to existing student outcomes? What do we *already know* that we can use to promote valued outcomes? What do we *need to learn to do* to promote valued outcomes? What sources of evidence / knowledge can we utilize?

Teachers then work through a design of tasks and experiences and teaching actions.

Step 3 What has been the impact of our changed actions? How effective has what we have learned and done been in promoting our students learning and wellbeing?

The cycle then begins again.

The work by Ian Hattie, Russell Bishop and other researchers, advocate it is at the classroom level working with teachers' and reflecting on their practice is where disparity of student achievement, particularly of Maori/ Pacific Island students will be addressed. Along with observing teacher practice, conversations need to be held on why teachers do what they do- that is what values and beliefs drive their decisions. It is easy to make first order change (re arrange desks, groups etc) and believe you are now effective but continue to teach and treat students the way you always have. It is second order change we want. This occurs when teachers change a part or in some cases completely the way they teach and or treat students. This is bought about because they have changed their values and beliefs about learning and teaching to some degree.

Research on the Black Boxes of teaching and learning (Teacher Professional Learning and Development 2007,) makes some interesting observations. A lot of effort has been focused on understanding the 'black box' between acts of teaching and what students learn. How students interpret and use available information determines what they learn. The report makes the point that there is little known how teachers interpret the understandings and utilize the particular skills made available through professional learning opportunities and the impact on their teaching practice. How teachers change their practice impacts on students outcomes. The challenge is to unpack the black box between professional learning opportunities and teacher outcomes that impact positively on student outcomes (p7.) It's a question of understanding teachers' values and beliefs about teaching and learning and using

research and best evidence to challenge them and bring about second order change (a change in how teachers teach and treat students).

To develop new understandings and skills requires cycles of one or more of the following (p8 BES2007)

- 1 Cueing and retrieving prior knowledge which leads to prior knowledge being consolidated and/ or examined.
- 2 Becoming aware of new information/skills and integrating them into current values and beliefs systems and seeing new knowledge adopted or adapted
- 3 Creating dissonance with current values and beliefs with current values and beliefs repositioned or reconstructed.

When visiting schools I was interested in process or models used to engage teacher's values and beliefs while doing in- class visits and what data was shared with them for reflection. Was a narrative approach used, a set template used or were teacher's videoed? I was also interested in who undertook the observations and what training they received. Were they seen as credible? Also did the students have a voice in the process?

Three of the schools I visited based their in-class supervision models on a literacy focus as a result of extensive professional development and learning in that area.

An article by Lorrae Ward et al (2005) on Effective Literacy produced for the Ministry of Education outlined criteria for effective leadership and management for effective literacy programmes in schools (p:4) based on their literature review.

The points made cover what I think are vital for improving student achievement in all aspects of curriculum.

There must be a clearly articulated vision for literacy which is promoted and supported. There must be clear and measurable outcomes used for the planning of literacy which indicate high expectations and are understood and shared. Student data is used to monitor and improve teaching and learning. Provisions are made for ongoing professional learning for teachers, including time to share and discuss classroom literacy practices. Knowledge of best practices, in relation to literacy teaching and learning, is disseminated and used in planning and reflection on current practices. Management supports teacher leadership in the area of leadership. The programme is monitored and evaluated and used for the overall improvement of the programme. Monitoring includes classroom observations and feedback to staff. Management is actively involved in the implementation of literacy programme. Student and teacher achievement is recognized and achievement is seen as a norm. Teachers and students are constantly challenged to do better. Improvement is the norm of the school cultures. The wider community, particularly parents, is involved in literacy programmes. Finally the effective delivery of literacy is integrated into the schools norms and practices in such a way that it is sustainable regardless of changes in personnel or circumstances.

In Helen Timperley's and Gwenneth Phillips paper *Changing and Sustaining Teacher Expectations* (2003), the point is made that high expectations are now accepted correlates of effective schooling (Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000). They state teacher expectations are made up of beliefs and actions based on these beliefs. Teacher's beliefs about students' potential academic achievement shape how they will plan and

teach them. Teachers with low expectations make decisions that are likely to include non-challenging and non-academic curricula and instructional methods with teachers teaching less to student's instead of more (Delpit, 1995). When expectations are high, teachers are more likely to assume that they can and will provide any programme and resources required to meet the needs of the student's to achieve. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy not only believe that their students are capable of mastering curricula objectives, but also that they are capable of motivating and instructing students successfully.

Timperley and Phillips write about the construct of self regulated learning .This is about holding high expectations of students, monitoring the student's progress towards realizing those expectations and adjusting teaching methods when existing actions do not result in desired outcomes. Actions are based on feedback. Goals are central to this approach because they drive what is intended and determine the monitoring and feedback that are the catalyst for self regulation. The choices teachers make in response to situations where students fail to reach their expected goals is crucial to the ways in which teacher expectations impact on their actions. One action is not to change and blame the students, another action is to lower standards and in turn their own expectations, or a third action is, the teacher diagnosed the problem of poor performance in the lack of fit between traditional classrooms and contemporary students. These teachers found new ways to teach and engage students.

When visiting schools and looking at their model and processes to engage teachers after in- class visits and reflecting on the evidence I wanted to know what reaction/

action resulted from these meetings and what monitoring/evidence was gathered to see if a difference was being made to teacher and student achievement.

Teacher's beliefs won't necessarily change as a result of feedback alone. A more powerful way to change beliefs is to present information that is discrepant with those beliefs. This ties in with the BES report (2007) and which is covered above with cueing prior knowledge and creating dissonance. Timperley and Phillips write about Children's achievement and presenting salient information that is discrepant with existing beliefs about children's capabilities so that the teachers set higher order goals and expectations. Teacher's self efficacy is challenged on the impact beliefs have on teaching and learning so that teachers can focus on the teaching and learning relationships and finally they write about new domain knowledge under the headings of theory of the task –where teachers attend to and monitor cues appropriate to sophisticated understanding of the task and how to teach the task so that teachers have the skills to help students reach new goals and expectations.

Hardgraves, (1998) makes the point that teaching and learning to teach is also about “emotional practices”. He states expectations to change practice may touch on raw nerves because they are likely to impinge on teacher's feelings of professional identity and competence.

When visiting schools I wanted to find out if their model/process was used in a supportive way or as part of the performance management system where all teachers are expected to have an in- class visit as part of the attestation process. Also I was interested how they dealt with teachers who found it hard when their values and beliefs were challenged to create dissonance.

In a paper by Helen Timperley, Irene Fung Aaron Wilson and Heather Barrar “Professional learning and development: a Best Evidence Synthesis of Impact on Student Outcomes” (2006) they state the features of a professional learning environment. They are :

Explicit and shared focus and goals

Teachers personal theories are engaged rather than bypassed

Some form of expertise external to the group is utilized

Sufficient time that is focused on promoting opportunities to learn is essential

A range of theoretical tools/principles that integrate teaching, learning, assessment.

Inquiry skills into student’s thinking in particular the difficulties they are experiencing

Multiple opportunities to learn through a range of activities

Presentation of theoretical principles accompanied by activities that translate principles into practice.

They also state as necessary but not sufficient, participation in professional learning communities.

When visiting schools I wanted to discuss their professional learning meetings (staff/syndicate meetings) and see if they were focused on points covered above. Did they have a professional learning community and to what extent was it effective in bringing about change and a growth in student achievement.

Visit to five schools

A questionnaire containing 16 questions was sent out for principals/lead teachers to have input before I arrived for an interview. All schools wrote things down which guided our discussion. I am not going to go through each school individually but relate the thoughts and actions coming through from the questions discussed.

Models being used by schools to improve teacher practice and raise student achievement.

Question 1-What in- class supervision model/system do you use at your school?

All the schools based their actions on evidence gathered by testing and in class observations. Student achievement data was analysed, teachers planned, professional development was undertaken followed by in class observations and then the cycle started again.

Three of the five schools had formal in class supervision models based on a Literacy professional development project carried out in previous years. The focus of in class observations at these 3 schools were on the 5 key elements of an effective literacy programme.

The 5 areas where evidence was gathered were 1- The learning intentions, 2 - links to prior knowledge (both content and process) 3 - Teachers responses to children's ideas, 4 - opportunities to think about comprehending through reading and 5- catering for diverse needs.

The other 2 schools did not have a formal model as such but used student achievement data to plan for change and collegial in- class observations were undertaken looking at an agreed focus.

All schools gave feedback and feed forward in a supportive way. A narrative approach was used in schools to gather data for these meetings.

In essence each school had an agreed focus with at least 2 in- class observations during the year with narrative feedback done by trained observers with reflective dialogue straight afterwards. Any gaps seen across the school saw professional development learning was put in place at a school, syndicate or individual level. In all schools, outside facilitators had been used at some time to provide research evidence, which was shared by staff. Principals also provided readings to their staff. I sighted evidence of this when principals showed me the paperwork created on their learning journey.

Question 2 - How was it developed with staff?

Two of the 5 schools were part of a cluster professional development project being carried out in the area. All teachers were told in these schools that this model was going to be used .Teachers were apprehensive at first as they had limited understanding of what was going on, but as the key elements of an effective literacy programme were unpacked at a series of staff meetings and ownership developed and staff started to buy in.

One of the schools also told staff this was the model being used and once again by unpacking the model, staff bought in after a time.

The other 2 schools used a collegial approach by sharing student data and planning together. The focus on in- class visits was based on agreed areas.

In all schools professional development and learning was instrumental to ensure effective systems for in- class visits.

All schools look for like mind teachers who have high expectations of students and are willing to question their practice to continually improve. Schools that have had stable staff over time are in a better position to move student achievement levels.

Those schools that have bigger staff turnover realize the importance of a good induction programme to bring new teachers up to speed.

Question 3 – What role did you as Principal play in its current form and what role do you play as leader? Did you use lead teachers for observations?

All Principals played a leading role setting up models or systems and are currently involved by doing classroom observations and feedback, sitting in with individual teachers when getting feedback or sharing information at senior management meetings. All receive feedback on visits. As stated previously, the Principals using outside facilitators were part of the professional development programme.

In all schools lead teachers played a big part in observing and giving feedback. This was seen as a distributive leadership approach by Principals. Also a number of Principals had not taught full time in a classroom for a number of years and knew they had to train how to do classroom observations and give feedback if they were to be seen as credible by their staff.

Principals were part of learning conversations at senior management level where decisions about Professional development, support or resources were discussed. One Principal collected all the goals written with teacher, student and caregivers to look for trends and patterns across the school.

All Principals had high expectations of their staff and used student achievement data as a driving force when holding learning and teaching conversations with teachers.

Question 4 –How effective is your feedback/feed forward? Do you use a narrative or video approach? Are students involved? Do they articulate what is happening in the classroom?

All schools used an evidence based approach to giving feedback and feed forward.

A narrative approach was commonly used to give feedback to the teacher. They had a chance to read feedback and reflect on the data gathered as a starting point to their observation meeting. Feedback was done as soon as possible after the observation.

One school has 2 observers in the room to give a balanced feedback. The 3 schools that had a literacy focus with the 5 key elements of an effective literacy programme said the feedback was effective because the 5 areas had been unpacked by staff and observers noted if all the indicators, some of the indicators on the way up or down or if none of the indicators were being used.

In the other schools the focus was on student achievement and planning to effect change. Feedback was effective, as once again it was measured against student data, next learning steps and what was happening in the classroom to achieve it. Once again hard evidence was accumulated and used.

In 2 schools, teachers were given a scenario to evaluate and given suggestions for next teaching steps .The facilitator at these 2 schools up skilled teachers so they could evaluate their data and make decisions on where to next. This was very powerful as teachers took responsibility for their decisions and were starting to have meaningful conversations with their observer. In these 2 schools teachers were graphed on how they were delivering their literacy programme based on the 5 key elements. They had access to their data if they wanted it .This data, collated without teacher names, was presented twice annually to the board.

All schools involved students observing in classes .They were asked what they were learning, did they understand what they were meant to do and was the work interesting or boring. This was a powerful way again to use an evidence based approach when discussing learning and teaching with teachers. At this stage schools are working on getting students to articulate their thoughts to a much deeper level. As teachers get better at articulating their practice it is hoped so will students.

All Principals used data gathered in the second part of the year to see how effective the feedback and feed forward had been since the first observation. They also monitored syndicate meeting notes to see if issues discovered were being addressed, as it was at these meetings where teachers got support. All schools used a supportive team approach to moving teachers forward.

No school is using a video approach in place of a written narrative approach.

Question 5 – How reflective are the feedback conversations? How do observers deal with the hard conversations?

Evidence collected is the basis for the feedback conversations in all schools. Teachers are given the opportunity to read the notes and reflect on how they think the lesson went. All schools used a supportive approach at these meetings as the reflection was not seen as part of a performance standards review. As all schools had trained up the observers and teachers had been part of the process either voluntarily or by decree, then hard conversations were held if necessary as, evidence would be showing their was a need for action. In 2 schools if teachers disagreed then another observer was arranged to give feed back and at the next meeting all 3 would meet. Trust and honesty were cornerstones to the approach taken at these meetings. Strengths were recognized.

Once again there were high expectations of staff performance and student achievement and Principals and lead teachers realized they were doing no one any favours by being nice and not confronting issues. Teacher's colleagues also became more critical of those not pulling their weight and were letting teachers know their feelings. Because these schools are now sharing school wide data at staff and syndicate meetings, teachers began to realize if per say the new entrant teacher is not doing the job effectively then the students they get the following year will be that much harder to motivate and teach.

As one Principal stated, “the sooner we identify teacher learning needs and put professional development in place the sooner progress can be made. We can't hide behind excuses made by teachers; we can't accept a deficit model of teaching and learning”.

Question 6 – How difficult is it to change teacher’s perceptions of themselves so they see a need to change how they go about things in a particular context?

All schools use an evidence base approach using narrative feedback and using student data and student feedback in their process. All Principals stated feedback and next learning steps were not part of the performance management system. Honesty and trust was built over time with credible people giving advice. In 2 of the schools they have been working on detailed analysis of teacher practice for 3 plus years and now the hard work is paying off. All Principals I spoke to knew teachers wanted to do their very best and make sure their students achieved. Having teachers trained in doing observations and using them to give feedback made it possible for teachers to take risks and try new ideas in a supportive environment. Staff and syndicate meetings were also used to share and discuss good practice.

Three schools held many staff meetings unpacking the literacy programme –what will it look like? sound like? and feel like? documents were developed in some of the schools. There were no surprises as everyone had ownership and access to professional development and support.

Student data is out in the open so teachers can work together to lift achievement.

One Principal said some teachers moved more quickly than others. This could be because they lacked theory knowledge or that they needed to work on their practice. Resourcing was made available to these teachers to move them forward.

In 2 schools teachers values and beliefs were challenged as they unpacked expectations. They are working on second order change as a way to lift performance. Once again there was a process in place that staff had been taken through to have

ownership. In both these schools the Principals and lead teachers were very experienced and would not accept a deficit mentality approach by teachers.

Once again video is an option that could be explored in these schools to enable teachers to reflect on their practice and try different ways of doing things in a way that empowers them. Their reflections and the dvd could be shared with a credible teacher.

Question 7 – How do you overcome teacher resistance?

All schools had worked through a process to bring teachers onboard which had help to stop teacher resistance. School wide data was used to inform all teachers where the strengths and weaknesses were across the school and plans put in place to effect change. In class observation and feedback was valued by teachers. Rigorous conversations take place at syndicate and staff meetings (I saw evidence with staff/syndicate minutes I read). All stated having hard evidence meant teachers had to acknowledge, even though they were doing well in some areas that they needed to change in others. Colleague pressure built in these schools as teachers could see which classes were doing better than others. Teachers didn't want to pick up the pieces the following year as it would mean they were behind the eight ball. Teachers who found the going tough tended to look for positions in other schools. Two of the schools who had been working in a cluster model, use the local college data fed back to them to celebrate their achievements, as they see this as a reflection on their teaching.

It also came clear that all schools used quality outside facilitators to work with their staff. This enabled Principals to be part of the learning process and send the signal

that this was important and worthwhile. Good professional development played a big part in overcoming teacher resistance to change.

Question 8 – What part does student achievement play in your model/process to influence change?

All schools use data as the central platform to inform teaching and learning decisions. The data was shared with the staff so there were no surprises. Success is celebrated and actions put in place for improvement. Teacher practice and student learning go hand in hand. Syndicates use the data to monitor target students in some of the schools and when in-class observations take place these students are monitored and feed back given to teachers.

Question 9 – How do you analyse data to make sure the teaching and learning in classes matches what students need to learn to make progress?

All schools analyse their data and look for patterns at year levels and class levels. This data is shared with the staff and at staff meetings, plans are worked out with next learning steps for students and any professional learning needs for teachers. Most tests used (STAR, asTTle, nzcer-spelling maths) have systems in place which shows patterns and what needs to be taught next and TKI website has places you can access for resources for students and teachers. Students are tracked at syndicate meetings and when observations take place planning, students work, and assessment are mapped.

Principals and lead teachers in the schools I visited had used credible outside facilitators at some stage to analyse school wide data and feed back to them.

Question 10 – Has ATOL and the numeracy projects made a difference to the way you do classroom observations?

Three of the 5 schools who undertook the ATOL project said it had a positive effect on how classroom observations were undertaken. Teachers were aware they would need to show certain evidence and that students would be asked questions about what they thought the learning intentions for the lesson were. A narrative approach was developed which they use currently.

The other two schools were part of a cluster wide literacy development project which has had a successful impact in their schools. I have mentioned previously the work they were doing.

All Principals felt the numeracy project hadn't had as big an impact in their classroom observation methods. The main reason being only part of the staff were involved each year and this meant a split professional development process which lessened the time staff had together to buy in together what was happening. Some of these schools are beginning to revisit numeracy, but with a whole school approach which in turn may change the way they observe numeracy being taught in classes.

Question 11 – Do teachers observe one another and share readings to back up best practice?

In all schools a number of teachers observe one another with lead teachers taking on a bigger role. Schools see the need to grow leaders and train teachers to do classroom observations. All schools realize the teacher doing the observations must be credible if teachers are going to reflect honestly on their teaching and make changes. In some schools 2 teachers do the observations so a deeper conversation can take place as 1 observer might not pick up something the observer has noticed. In these schools, when visiting other schools, 2 teachers go. In the majority of schools readings are shared. These normally come from outside facilitators, through lead teachers or from the Principal. Readings are linked to the focus areas in the school. Lead teachers in 2 schools meet as a cluster group to discuss issues and benchmark literacy work.

Question 12 - Do teachers see the person observing them/ giving feedback as credible? (Have curriculum knowledge in the area being observed)

All schools use credible teachers to make observations. Lead teachers do most of the observations and they have been initially trained by outside facilitators. Credibility has been built up over time. Also Principals strongly support their lead teachers. Lead teachers are training other teachers in their schools to widen leadership density in case staff with these responsibilities leave.

Question 13 – Has the focus of your staff and syndicate meetings changed as a result of the data gathered on teacher practice and student achievement to address gaps found?

In all schools the main focus at syndicate and staff meetings has changed to focus on student achievement and the progress students are making and what needs to be done

to move them forward. Target students are discussed and decisions made, on resources needed and professional learning needs. Meetings are aimed at building up teacher knowledge. The notion is to problem solve together. In some of the schools there is a conscious effort by lead teachers to model staff meetings on good practice that should be happening in rooms. Feedback at these meetings is also encouraged from staff. This establishes a culture of reflection which is helping conversations held after in class observations. Teachers are being asked to share their values and beliefs about teaching.

Minutes I looked at in schools show clear evidence that meetings focused on teaching and learning. Administrative issues were kept to a minimum by using email and other means of communication. It is clear that in- class observations is part of a professional development cycle in these schools with staff and syndicate meetings used to enhance teacher effectiveness to meet student needs.

Question 14 - How do you know your in class supervision model is making a difference to student achievement?

Student achievement growth is the measure made to see if in- class observations are making a difference. In all schools the senior management team meets regularly to monitor progress. In- class observations are seen as part of a bigger picture and therefore part of the reason for growth, not the sole reason for growth.

Question 15 – As Principal, how are you upskilling yourself to meet the demands of the new curriculum and lead your school into a new future?

All Principals are part of a Principal professional learning community group that meets each term. Readings are shared on agreed leadership areas and what is happening in each school is shared. Also advice when asked for is given. The reason I chose to visit 5 schools that had a Principal in my PPLC groups was to work towards these Principals visiting each others schools as a critical friend. This would mean a productive network of Principals supporting one another to bring in the new curriculum.

Two Principals are part of a school wide cluster initiative with a focus on leadership.

All Principals are part of any professional development happening in the school so they are part of the learning conversations taking place.

All Principals are aware they can't take the school forward by themselves and therefore they are looking at developing leaders. Lead teachers are used in a distributive leadership approach in all schools.

Principals see themselves as a facilitator of change setting a strategic direction and supporting and resourcing lead teachers to do much of the hands on work with the curriculum in classrooms and at meetings.

Question 16 With staff turn over, how do you see the school sustaining the work you are doing to lift student achievement? Do you see teachers becoming self monitoring by using DVD as a means for teachers to reflect on their practice and sharing reflections with lead teachers?

All schools are working on distributive leadership so if someone leaves there is someone to step up. In one school the staff has been very stable for a number of years. Young staff are inspired by how more experienced can achieve the biggest improvements in student achievement levels. This Principal counts himself lucky to not see an issue here.

All schools have documentation and this is used to induct new staff and bring them up to speed. The focus still remains on student achievement and though there may be a dip as new teachers come to grips with things, there is an expectation students will achieve. High expectations are modeled by existing staff.

There are issues with finding time to do in- class observations with regards to time and money. Some schools are using their CRT time to do this. At this stage none of the schools use a DVD approach to gathering data but are interested in exploring the idea further. They could see the merit of teachers taking control of monitoring their own practice but needed to see how it would fit in with existing systems in place.

Conclusions.

1) It soon became evident that in all the schools I visited in- class observations were not a stand alone process. In all schools they followed a similar teacher inquiry and knowledge building cycle outlined in the latest BES report which I cover at the beginning of my report. Students learning needs were at the centre of all decision making. Data was analysed and shared with all staff and meetings held to work out next learning steps and from there, teachers planned either as a syndicate or as a staff.

Staff at these schools looked at their learning needs as they realized when looking at the gaps that the same old same old was not going to work.

2) The values and beliefs of teachers were shared as they looked at good practice models that could be used to improve their teaching. Readings were used to engage teachers thinking on teaching and learning. Teacher talk was encouraged and fostered at staff, syndicate and individual levels

Brian Annan, Mei Lai and Viviane Robinson article “Teacher talk to improve teacher practices” (2003), outlines a model of learning talk. At the bottom of the continuum it is non school talk that teachers are involved with followed by school talk(not teaching activities) to teacher practice talk(non learning talk) to the ultimate stage of learning talk. This where there is analytical talk, critical talk, challenging talk takes place.

In-class observations and meaning feed back is only going to be effective and bring about change if teachers work at the ultimate level of the model outlined above.

3) Outside facilitators can play a big role when introducing change at a school. The literacy professional development carried out in the 5 schools was a success as credible facilitators had been used. They knew the area they were engaging staff in. They could analyse school data, look at ways to address the gaps and extend pupils and they knew what professional development was needed for staff growth. They had done a lot of research in their area of expertise and could provide readings to up skill and when needed, challenge staff. They observed teachers in their rooms and gave impartial feedback.

4) Credible Lead teachers made a difference. Experienced teachers, respected by the facilitator and their staff, bought most teachers on board. They were trained by the

facilitator. Hard evidence was used from classroom observations along with classroom data and student feedback when meeting with teachers. Honest conversations need to be encouraged, as giving low level feedback and excusing areas of need are doing students a disservice as well as teachers.

5) Sustainability is an issue in most schools with continual changes in staff; progress goes on hold at different levels of the school as new staff are inducted into the school. Values and beliefs need to be revisited as well as previous decisions made in different curriculum areas. If this doesn't happen then schools can stop moving forward and dips in student achievement levels can occur as a result. Good practices must be modeled continuously.

6) Students need to be involved in goal setting so they are part of the learning process. In- class visits become more powerful when observers can engage with students about their learning, what they are doing well and what they see as their next learning steps. This is a powerful tool for effective feedback to a teacher. It can affirm the work of a teacher and give renewed energy to an already hard working teacher. Parents as well can play a vital role in supporting their children by being involved in the goal setting process. Email contact is one way to keep parents informed; another way is setting up portfolios whereby students, teachers and parents can feedback to each other. Students having problems in the class can use their parents to ask for help if they don't feel confident enough to seek help.

7) Narrative feedback is one effective way to gather data in teachers classrooms. Observers must be trained to make sure it is value free so that conversations are held questions can be asked, which relate to a teachers values and beliefs. Questioning is

very important using a narrative approach and professional development would be needed to become skilled in this.

8) Teachers need time to meet regularly to look at data, good practice models and share what they are doing to lift student achievement in their rooms. If one teacher is having success at moving a group of students, other teachers who are not having as much success can discuss teaching and learning and visit that room to see that teacher in action. It is vital the data is analysed correctly, as for example you wish to improve students comprehension working on word recognition skills won't bring about improvement. Teachers need to know the next steps needed to move students forward.

9) Principals need to be part of the learning conversations in schools. They need to know what is happening in classrooms and be able, with their senior management teams, provide support and resources to enable teachers to grow. They must be honest to teachers when things are not going well. They have a moral purpose to do this. If the achievement tail is to be shortened, they cannot accept deficit theories by others as the reason why students are not achieving. With the implementation of the new curriculum, Principals will be able to renew their passion for teaching and learning. They will need to build leadership density in their schools, as no one person can lead a school alone. Also, Principals need to network so they can benchmark their schools and get support and advice from other colleagues. This cuts down the stress of the job.

10) It would be good for clusters of schools to have researchers involved with them. The South Auckland schools benefited hugely from the work Mai Lai and others did in their schools. These researchers were able to unpack teachers values and beliefs and analyse school data and dig deep to find solutions. They worked in classrooms and challenged teacher's beliefs, values and teaching practice. It took them a number

of years to bring about change and we must accept this when working in our schools. Deep meaningful change takes time, but in the end it is worthwhile as the changes become embedded in the culture of the school.

11) Videoing, using DVDs is an area to be explored. This is a powerful tool for teachers to use in their classrooms .They can use DVD evidence to reflect on their teaching and share with a lead teacher. It is more powerful than a narrative approach as everything is captured and can be analysed .The teacher can analyse his/her teaching against indicators (e.g. 5 key elements of a good literacy programme) in a secure non threatening environment before meeting with lead teacher who would have access to the same video/DVD data. It would be interesting to know of any findings the numeracy project has research. Every school on the project was funded for a video cameras to use in their schools while undergoing ENP. There was no evidence in the schools I visited that all teachers were being videoed taking numeracy lessons for feedback.

The schools I visited showed me evidence that they are making a difference to student achievement using analysed data, joint planning, professional development and learning, along with in- class observations. The low achievers and the gifted and talented are being focused on as well as all other students. I challenge all Principals to continue to look at ways to demystify what happens in classrooms by continuing to have teachers observe each other using DVD to gather data, to give feedback to challenge teachers values and beliefs and teaching practice. By doing so it will ensure our schools are in good shape to improve student achievement.

Sabbatical feedback to BOT

My focus was in class supervision models/methods used in schools to improve teacher practice and in turn raise student achievement. Thank you to the BOT/and Kerry for your support.

All the below had a positive effect on teacher performance and raising student achievement.

Focus on teaching and learning (school, syndicate and individual levels). A strong literacy and Numeracy focus.

Professional learning communities being developed-successful change comes from within.

Shared vision/ownership.

Principal is part of the learning journey.

High expectations- having teachers who believe they can make a difference to their student's achievement levels and are motivated to do so. No excuses for students not making progress.

The BES evidence model re teacher inquiry and knowledge- building cycle to promote valued student outcomes is a good model.

In -class observations are part of the cycle. It is not a stand alone process.

Use best evidence (theory and practice) when feeding back to teachers - test data, teacher observation feedback, student feed back, work of students, planning.

Correct analysis of data.

ATOL –process used in schools – teachers unpacking what effective practice looks like, sounds like, and feels like.

Narrative feedback of in- class observation visits given ASAP after visit to teachers.

Credible teachers / facilitators giving other teachers feedback and feed forward.

Second order change promoted -teachers values and beliefs about teaching and learning shared, discussed and challenged where necessary (using data, best evidence, etc). Hard conversations were held when needed.

Professional development based on teacher and student learning needs.

Building leadership density/capability/sustainability within schools.

Parents/teachers and students all involved in learning journey.

Thoughts for action, continued action at Titahi Bay School.

Ted to get more involved in teaching and learning conversations by modeling with Kerry at meetings and in conversations with teachers about their programmes. We want analytical talk, critical talk and challenging talk taking place.

Look at BES model as one we use /relate to at our school to improve teacher practice and improve student achievement.

Continue the ATOL work from term1 to unpack what effective teaching looks like, sounds like and feels like. This would then be used to benchmark where teachers are at and what professional development is needed to improve their practice and in turn improve student achievement.

Build leadership density.

Sharon T working with Kerry and myself on the teaching and learning happening in our school and taking action where needed at school, syndicate or individual levels. Also we will work together on implementing the new curriculum -particularly our integrated curriculum and inquiry models to be used.

Continue to train teachers how to carry out effective in- class observations and give honest, meaningful feedback that will bring about change. We need to keep exploring the best ways to give feedback to teachers. Video can play a powerful part in this if introduced carefully and with professional development

Continue the reculturing of our school in light of staff changes. Look at “Successful Change comes from within” handout as a possible way to look at the culture of our school and to unpack what a professional learning community will look, sound and feel like at our school. We need ownership by the staff. There would be clear expectations put in place that would be monitored and success celebrated.

We need to work on sustainability and capability so when teachers leave, the work carries on. Kerry has begun in term 1 to use teachers to lead areas within the school and give them PD to ensure they are successful in their roles. This needs to continue. We also need to continue to document our expectations and plans/policies so we have benchmark documents that are continually updated.

As part of ATOL we need to continue to work on our students having a voice about their learning journey. They need to articulate what they are doing well and what their next learning steps are and how the teacher is facilitating this.

Syndicate leaders, teachers along with Kerry and myself need to keep looking at our data from tests, in- class observations and student’s work to ensure we have high standards evident in our school at a teacher practice level and student achievement levels. We should expect students to succeed. We want teachers at our school who have high expectations.

Look at teacher doing an action research project in a curriculum area-possibly a literacy focus.

