Primary Principals' Sabbatical Report

An exploration and review of the use of self-regulated learning as a strategy to create confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

We know through best evidence that quality teaching has a great impact on the effectiveness of student learning at school. (Hattie, 2003) (Ministry of Education, 2012) A drive nationally for collaboration and transparency in how teachers teach can be readily seen in the design and construction of new schools and learning spaces. (Ministry of Education, 2008) Increasingly, it is an expectation that teachers work in teams on a day to day basis to improve student progress and achievement.

Over the past two years property development at Hanmer Springs School has seen the addition of new classrooms and classroom renovations designed to support our expectations and guidelines for best teaching and learning. Embedded in these are concepts referring to student agency, self-management, goal setting and **self-regulation.**

Teaching practice has been developed and refined in single cell classrooms. New learning spaces have been designed to compliment and enhance teaching and learning practice, be fit for purpose with a variety of areas and furniture types to accommodate comfortable, adaptable and flexible use, transparency and day to day collaboration by teachers and students.

To maximise the potential of new and improved ways of teaching and learning it is important teachers are supported to extend, learn and develop techniques to support their students to become self-regulated with the capabilities to take the driving seat of their own learning.

Purpose

The purpose of the sabbatical is to:

- review and research the concept of self-regulation and its impact on student learning

- review the skills, techniques and strategies schools could employ to enable their students to develop as self-regulated learners

- inquire into and review how effectively Hanmer Springs School supports learners to be self-regulated and how this could be improved

- inquire into self-regulation strategies, techniques, successes and barriers through school visits.

Background

> *"And the key realization here is that teachers do not create learning – and as soon as you say it, of course it is obvious. But almost everybody in the system functions as if teachers create learning. Teachers do not create learning, learners create learning, teachers create the conditions in which students learn."*
> (Wiliam, 2006, p. 3)

Although the focus of this sabbatical is on the self-regulated learning of students it is clear that the conditions for capable self-regulated learners is dependent on the effectiveness of school wide shared pedagogical understanding and quality of teaching.

Michael Absolum's notion of 'Learning- focussed relationships' (Absolum, 2006) brings a wider perspective to self-regulated learning and the conditions which can enable it. Absolum strengthens the case for strong and effective learning relationships between students and teachers.

> *"Learning focused relationships are about using the considerable potential in the relationship between teacher and student to maximise the student's engagement with learning; about enabling the student to play a meaningful role in deciding what to learn and how to learn it; and about enabling the student to become a confident, resilient, active, self regulating learner."* (Absolum, 2006, p. 43)

Self-regulated learning underpins the beliefs and practices identified in the expectations and guidelines for learning at Hanmer Springs School. There is an opportunity to further support students' ownership of learning through specific school wide strategies, teaching techniques and reflective practice.

At Hanmer Springs School we build learning focused relationships underpinned by our beliefs that children learn best when:

- there is integration of new learning with what they already understand
- they know <u>what</u> they are learning, <u>why</u> they are learning it and <u>how</u> they will be able to use it.
- there is time to reflect on their progress, celebrate achievement and create next steps
- they are involved in authentic learning experiences
- they can stand back and reflect on their work objectively
- they make connections across learning areas in authentic contexts
- they transfer new learning a number of times and in a variety of tasks and contexts
- they are involved in shared activities and collaboration with others
- teachers and children and whānau are involved in a learning partnership
- they feel accepted and enjoy positive relationships in a supportive environment
- they have a sense of belonging and a connection to their teacher, peers, school and community.

For effective learning teachers will:

Ensure clarity for children about what is to be learnt by:
- creating and sharing learning intentions focused on learning not tasks
- co-constructing success criteria with learners
- making learning intentions and success criteria visible and easily accessible by learners
- writing learning intentions and success criteria in child friendly language.
- using displays, assessment tools and exemplars so children can identify next steps

Use Assessment for learning by
- using regular formative assessment to determine progress and next steps
- sharing progress and assessment information with children

Provide opportunities for children to actively reflect on learning by
- consistently and regularly talking about learning with children
- using thinking tools, graphic organisers, digital tools and eportfolio to enable reflective conversations about learning.
- use digital technologies to enhance opportunities for authentic feedback

Promoting further learning by
- providing regular and personalised feedback about learning
- modelling learning and providing opportunities for learning in multiple modes
- creating environments and learning activities to engage learners
- provide displays, prompts and scaffolds to make learning and progress visible.

(Hanmer Springs School, 2013)

Literature Review and Reflection

The following literature reviews discuss and highlight the teaching and learning practices which build capacity for students to become self regulated.

Dylan Wiliam – Assessment for Learning: Why, What and How

Wiliam, D. (2006). *Assessment for Learning: Why, What and How.* Retrieved from
        dylanwiliam.org: http://www.dylanwiliam.org/Dylan_Wiliams_website/Papers.html

Wiliam stresses that investing in the quality of teaching practices and reducing the variability between more and less effective teachers is key for schools who are serious about raising student achievement.

Wiliam focusses on a wide view of success of student learning student learning rather than results from national assessments or tests. He stresses that evaluation of teachers and their teaching should be on how much their students learn and that there is an increase in pressure on teachers for improved student results through national assessments. Wiliam indicates that although inherently we know that we can't do anyone's learning for them, teachers under pressure for accountability through national standardised assessments revert to 'telling' rather than more effective approaches to learning.

Creating students who are engaged in learning and who are able to keep on track through self-regulation are features Wiliam's identifies in the most effective learning environments. He refers to these as pedagogies of engagement and pedagogies of contingency.

Pedagogies of Engagement

Wiliam refers to 'high nutrition' environments where student involvement and participation is compulsory and where there is demand for thinking. Teachers need to have techniques which ensure all children are obliged to participate and are unable to become invisible in the classroom.

Wiliam refers to Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow and that motivation is an outcome rather than a cause of achievement. Wiliam eludes to the situation in many classrooms where there is boredom because competence is high and challenge is low and also alienation or apathy when competence is low and challenge is high.

Wiliam argues that we need to look at motivation as an outcome rather than a cause of achievement.

Pedagogies of Contingency

Wiliam refers to pedagogies of contingency as the effect assessment should have on learning and teachers adjusting their teaching through assessment to best meet learning needs of students.

Wiliam describes assessment for learning formative assessment is can be encompassed through one of the following:

- clarifying and understanding learning intentions and success criteria
- engineering effective classroom discussion, questions wand tasks that elicit evidence of learning
- providing feedback that moves learners forward
- activating students as instructional resources for each other
- activating students as owners of their own learning.

Techniques for formative assessment must be relevant to teachers' practice for application in the classroom. Formative assessment is not for negotiation but rather to be developed as a deep pedagogical shared understanding. Teachers need input and shared ownership. What works in one situation or context might not work in another.

Techniques for Formative Assessment

Eliciting evidence of achievement – ensuring all students are obliged to participate and that evidence of their learning can be gathered.

Providing feedback to move learners forward - Wiliam's stresses that all assessment should be for the purpose of moving students on. Find what the gaps are and work to support and help learners gain necessary understanding to fill them.

Sharing learning intentions – exemplars and annotated examples of work and giving opportunities for students to design their own assessments is more effective than lists of success criteria.

Students as owners of their own learning – Wiliam gave the example of students having green and orange discs to indicate a level of understanding which can be directly asked for to gauge next steps and what is needed from the teacher and student to help the learning move forward.

Activating students as instructional resources for one another – Providing a system for students to use with each other which can become internalized where peers check and support the learning of each other in relation to shared learning intentions and success criteria.

Wiliam makes the point to distinguish between strategies and techniques. The strategies are always important and underpin the teaching and learning but techniques used need to be chosen carefully and fit the subject, the students and the context allowing opportunity for individual teachers to make best choices to suit their learners.

Wiliam's discusses the point that the nature of the expertise needed by teachers cannot be communicated by telling them. We may have the words to describe something but only after time to practice and reflect can we really internalize new actions.

Ministry of Education – Learning Focused Relationships

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Learning focused relationships.* Retrieved from http://assessment.tki.org.nz/: http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-in-the-classroom/Assessment-for-learning-in-practice/Learning-focused-relationships

Learning focussed classrooms include students who are active and motivated, they seek feedback and are able to reflect on their learning.

Absolum (Absolum, 2006) discusses that what gets focussed on flourishes with the examples of teachers who may be focussed on control, caring for students or creating busy tasks. Either of these are not conducive to learning focussed relationships.

Control relationships for learning are described as compliance and behaviour focussed with prominent reward systems and many messages about what is important which may not be about self-regulation.

Caring relationships are described as focussed on feelings and self-esteem with concessions for student backgrounds which may not be within the context of the bigger picture of learning.

Activity focussed relationships are described as a focus on doing, with messages about finishing work, working hard and quantity. Although there is a focus on finding activities to engage, intended learning may be unclear to students and teachers. Learning may happen randomly and by accident.

Self-regulated learning is embedded in the wider view of learning focussed relationships.

Zumbrunn; Tadlock; Roberts – Encouraging Self Regulated Learning in the Classroom

Zumbrunn, S., Tadlock, J., & Roberts, E. (2011). *Encouraging Self Regulated Learning in the Classroom.* Retrieved from self-regulation.ca: http://www.self-regulation.ca/uploads/5/6/2/6/56264915/encouraging_self_regulated_learning_in_the_classroom.pdf

The definition of Self-Regulated learning in this review was *"A process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviours and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences."* (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011, p. 4)

One model describes three phases
- Forethought and Planning where a learning task is analysed and goals set.
- Performance Monitoring Phase where strategies to make progress and monitor effectiveness and motivation are employed
- Reflection and performance where performance is evaluated and response managed.

It was identified that few students naturally do self-regulated learning well but that the factors which influence self-regulated learning can make a difference to learning habits, engagement, willingness to volunteer in learning environments, ability to manipulate learning

environments to meet needs, ability to seek out advice and participate in positive learning climates.

The review identified self-regulated learning as being a framework of factors with motivation critical. There are a number of strategies for students and teachers.

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies for Students

<u>Goal Setting</u>
Goal setting was described from as simple to detailed often with short term goals being used to reach long term aspirations

<u>Planning</u>
Planning to help students self-regulate and engage in a task. This was explained as occurring over three stages including setting goals, deciding on strategies, time and resources needed.

<u>Self-Motivation</u>
Motivation in the absence of external rewards or incentives to promote autonomous learning using one or more strategies to keep learning on track. It was stressed that through effective motivation students are more able to persevere through challenging tasks and find learning more satisfying.

<u>Attention Control</u>
Eliminating distracting thoughts and stimuli and finding appropriate environments to support learning.

<u>Flexible Use of Strategies</u>
Ability to use multiple strategies and adjust as required. It was identified that many primary school students do not have a repertoire of strategies to use and that through modelling and scaffolding how to use strategies, teachers can help student build these.

<u>Self-Monitoring</u>
Ability to take on the monitoring of own progress towards learning goals including goal setting, planning, self-motivation, attention control and strategy use.

<u>Help Seeking</u>
Students making use of and seeking out help from others but with the goal of making themselves more autonomous. This is not about students not necessarily doing everything on their own. Teachers support by ensuring the feedback they give is easy to understand and act on.

<u>Self-Evaluation</u>
Students are more able to become self-regulated learners when they can evaluate their own learning regardless of teacher assessments. Teachers can support student self-evaluation by assisting students to self-monitor goals and make changes to goals and strategies based on learning needs.

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies for Teachers

Direct Instruction and Modelling
Explaining and demonstrating different strategies to students including how they are used and the skills involved.

Guided and Independent Practice
Student become responsible for the SRL strategy during guided practice and conferencing with the teacher may support goal setting and monitoring. Students are doing the thinking about their own learning.

Social Support and Feedback
Ensuring students are given feedback from teachers and that systems are in place for sharing of peer feedback.

Reflective Practice
Teachers modifying and adapting teacher practice and style to accommodate student learning. This is achieved through school wide focus on reflection, prototyping and evaluation.

The review provided some challenges to promote self-regulated learning, namely ensuring lessons are developed to prepare students to engage with srl strategies, providing time for both teachers and students to engage with self-regulated learning, resourcing and making school wide level changes as appropriate, organising and aligning curriculum to support the development of self-regulated learning, and being cognisant of students background and how they may approach self-regulated learning or improved student learning.

Black; Harrison; Lee; Marshall; Wiliam – Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2004). *Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom.* Retrieved from http://assessment.tki.org.nz/: http://datause.cse.ucla.edu/DOCS/pb_wor_2004.pdf

A summary report on a follow up project to help teachers change their practice and students to manage their behaviour so that there is a shared responsibility for student learning.

Three questions were answered in the original 'inside the blackbox' research which answered:
Is their evidence that improving formative assessment raises standards?
Is there evidence that there is room for improvement?
Is there evidence about how to improve formative assessment?

The article highlighted a number of findings for how change could happen in schools to improve formative assessment and shared responsibility for learning. These can be summarised as:

- Teachers planning for and organising classroom discussion and dialogue in ways which allow for 'wait time' and a deeper level of thinking;

- Collaboration between teachers to develop and share their thinking for structure of learning experiences and especially around asking good questions;

- Teachers planning for and building in time in their planning to create the best questions which promote further thinking;

- Ensuring that questions are put for the purpose of information the teacher may need for further planning of student learning or to raise for the student what they need to think about;

- Providing rich follow up activities to extend understanding;

- Include oral tasks to elicit understanding as well and written;

- Allow students opportunities to respond to comments;

- Develop self-assessment practices so students think and reflect on their learning relation to their goals;

- Peer assessment and modelling of this;

- Feedback should identify what has been done and what could be improved;

- Feedback should cause thinking to take place;

- Systems to elicit class understanding such as the traffic lights;

- Guidance and modelling for how to behave in groups teaching the skills of listening and taking turns;

- Transparency of any rubrics or criteria through easy to understand exemplars;

- Organise learning environments so that thinking is public and that students are expected to be reflective and thinkers about learning;

- Collaboration between teachers and students;

- Stressing to students that learning is not about the right answers but more about their readiness to express and discuss their understandings;

- Students as learners rather than passive recipients;

- Adjusting the 'classroom contract' to support collaboration between teachers and students;

- Supporting teachers who fear loss of control;

- Avoid the making of wholesale change but rather small steps in collaboration with others;

- Allowing time for teachers to reflect on the changes in their own practice.

Bird; Lyn – Powerful Reflection Activities that Empower Teachers to Change

Bird, L. (2013, June). Powerful Reflection Activities That Empower Teachers To Change. *NZ Principal*.

Bird reinforces teacher reflection as a more effective way to change teaching practice than traditional performance indicators and appraisal systems to measure teacher quality. This is a view also raised by Wiliam (Wiliam, Assessment for Learning: Why, What and How., 2006), Black; Harrison; Lee; Marshall; Wiliam (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004) and Zumbrunn; Tadlock; Roberts (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011).

Bird's model of a reflective practitioner is grounded in beliefs that teacher intrinsic motivation and empowerment is gained through involvement and ownership over goals and next steps as self-directed learners in their own right. With intrinsic motivation teachers are more able and willing to take on challenging personal goals.

Bird discussed the practice of using exemplars, models and rubrics with children to help them develop skills of self-regulation and highlights some similar tools to assist teachers to evaluate and improve their practice.

Effective Pedagogy Rubrics for teachers to use as a measure of themselves as either an apprentice, practitioner or expert could be used for teachers to set goals and next steps based on areas of agreed schoolwide pedagogy, school goals or curriculum principles. The rubrics provide a level of shared accountability and provide a transparent view of practice that may be expected across the school.

Bird refers to 'Cognitive Conflict' where teachers are challenged by reflective questioning designed to trigger a conflict between expected pedagogy and current practice. By promoting higher order critical thinking and conversation about teacher practice the opportunity for teachers to sit outside their comfort zone enables the sharing of different perspectives and mindsets.

Through a culture of teacher inquiry and reflective practice there is an opportunity for teachers to have more ownership over their professional learning and development focussed on improving the learning of children.

Findings

Through school visits and discussion with school leaders and students, current and practical insights into self regulated learning were gained. Conversation focused on school strategies and teacher techniques which support self-regulation and the successes and barriers to achieving this.

Main findings from the visits reinforced the need for a school wide strategy and systems to promote teacher realisation and ownership of the 'why' of self-regulated learning. Teacher professional reflection and conversation was important to facilitate staff learning and application of new teaching techniques supporting self-regulation. There is a continuum of where teachers sit in their understanding of self-management versus self-regulated learning. A number of techniques were being applied to support self-regulation including solo taxonomy, inquiry, goal setting, co-constructing learning and success, use of exemplars, effective questioning, quality of formative feedback, student voice and leadership, no wait time and responsibility for learning as a school wide focus. Specific teacher strategies were varied and included deliberate acts of teaching around self-regulated learning which referenced 'the learning pit' and 'power of yet' and growth mindsets. Student 'licences' were used for some students and it was generally acknowledged that there was a range of student responses to self-regulated learning with the need for teachers to adapt and modify as appropriate. The importance of careful communication with families was acknowledged to support them in their understanding of why students need to develop their capacities to support greater responsibility and ownership of their learning.

Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts make the point that although schools may provide effective strategies and techniques to instill self regulated in students, the students themselves may be influenced by their social identity and family beliefs about success at school. (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011) It is clear that communication and engagement with families is a critical step to enable students to take greater responsibility for their own learning through self regulation.

Professional readings have highlighted the benefit of self-regulated learning in the wider context of quality teaching practice, reflection and assessment for learning. The importance of teacher ownership was stressed and along with this the need for schools to provide effective support and systems for profession reflection, critique and discussion. Techniques and strategies to enable self-regulated learning need to apply to a variety of context for teachers to meet varied learning environments, needs and settings. Quality teaching through effective assessment for learning to support and enable students to own their learning is something school leaders should not see as negotiable. Clarity of school wide understandings about effective teaching and learning is important and school professional learning and evaluation should clearly link to this.

Implications

Effective teacher practices to enable students as self-regulated learners need ongoing focus. It is important that schools have a strategy which underpin teaching and learning at school and that this is 'non-negotiable' and well embedded into school induction processes. The figure below from Wiliams, 2014 is model of formative assessment and also shows the roles teachers, peers, and learners take in relation to self-regulated learning. Teachers support the activation of students as owners of their own learning by engineering effective conditions for learning.

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is now	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions and success criteria	Engineering effective discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learning forward
Peer		Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Learner		Activating students as owners of their own learning	

(Wiliam, Formative assessment and contingency in the regulation of learning process, 2014)

Specific teacher techniques to support self-regulated learning need to be relevant to the complexities of different contexts. Professional development for teachers should focus on the skills and techniques needed to support students learning. Schools need to be aware of the implications of staff turnover and the need to revisit school beliefs about effective teaching and learning. Teachers need the opportunity to reflect on their own practice in relation to school wide pedagogy and professional development and be involved in professional conversation, critique and dialogue. The most effective teachers are able to come to their own realisation about the conditions for effective learning and internalise this into their own practice. (Wiliam, 2006)

Does Hanmer Springs School provide enough opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and how does the school support teachers to look at their own teaching and student achievement information to establish their own goals for improvement? How rigourous are current teacher goals and how are they directly linked to changes in classroom practice?

There are a number of considerations to be taken into account to support Manaakitanga and respect and sincerity towards Māori beliefs and Māori learners. Self regulated learning can strengthen relationships between students, families, teachers and wider communities. Ako and Wananga supports learning alongside each other and close connections and dialogue beteen school and whanāu. Tuakana teina highlights the importance of guiding and helping one another and especially the opportunities created through 'activating students as instructional resources for one another' (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011) Whanaungatanga supports reciporocal relationships and partnership in learning. Tangatawhenuatanga stresses that contexts for learning needing to affirm language, identity and culture of Maori learners and whānau.

Recommendations

Although Hanmer Springs School has incorporated concepts of 'learner focussed relationships' (Absolum, 2006) into its expectations and guidelines for best teaching practice, there is further opportunity to improve students' motivation, engagement and involvement in their own personalised learning goals and apply techniques to further support student ownership of learning and self-regulation. A key recommendation is to unpack and review with staff the specific techniques and strategies identified in this paper and establish an improved framework for effective practice with clear priorities for professional development and reflection.

Bird, L supports the view and importance of reflective practice and describes a number of professional activities to empower teachers and improve practices. (Bird, 2013) There is significant value in professional learning circles to support teacher professional development and reflection. School leadership should review teacher reflection, professional development and appraisal to ensure these promote critical thinking and intrinsic ownership of changes to teaching practice.

The cultural competencies for teachers identified through Tātaiako need to be more present in learning conversations between students, teachers, whānau and the wider community.

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