

# **Sabbatical Report**

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Term 3 2011

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- The time given and the willingness shown to share information by the Principals of the following schools: Cromwell College, Darfield High School, East Otago High School, Ellesmere College, Geraldine High School, Kaikoura High School, Mackenzie College, Mount Aspiring College, Opihi College, Queen Charlotte College and Westland High School. In a number of those schools I also met with other staff, including members of Senior Leadership teams, Deans, and Gateway and STAR coordinators, and again I am grateful for the sharing of their expertise, knowledge and time.
- Tim Tucker, Deputy Principal at Nelson College, for his time and sharing of his professional study paper, : “Collaborative Practice through Mentoring at Nelson College.”
- The GBHS Board of Trustees for their support of my initial application and the considerable support provided for the research programme undertaken.
- The Senior Management Team at GBHS: Stuart Machin (Acting Principal) and Derek Compton, and former secondary school principal and current educational researcher Patty Towl, who was co-opted onto the management team for the term.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of the school visits had two clearly defined strands, one focused on senior course structures and the other on teacher appraisal and development. However the opportunity to talk to school leaders around these opened discussion into other areas; this is a forum that is not often pursued for many reasons, time and workload constraints being just two of those commonly given. However Michael Fullan has clearly shown that “lateral capacity building” is hugely important: “Tending to the internal culture is not enough. Principals who cultivate stand-alone collaborative schools undercut the chances for continuity because system context is always more powerful than that of a single school.” (P19 Fullan, M). The New Zealand secondary school network is small enough that this can apply across the country as well as within regional boundaries.

The schools were deliberately chosen as Year 7-13 schools, as I believe that they generally share some very important characteristics:

- They tend to have a rural or semi-rural locality, either on the edge of, or within, a small town. The size of such a community can place significant restrictions on employment opportunities, both for school leavers and for partners of prospective school employees.

- There is often significant distance to tertiary providers and to various other agencies, both government and non-government.
- Funding pressures are often considerable. The size of the community limits the amount of locally raised funding; the school size means that operation grants are ineffective in meeting needs and staffing entitlements are highly inflexible.
- There is a perceived need to maintain or even increase roll numbers, with a clear understanding of the importance of providing a traditional 'academic' base of subjects in order to retain the very top academic students.
- Staffing tends to be very stable: most of the schools feature a staff profile with a considerable number of long-term teachers, whose skills and experience are invaluable, and who make significant contributions to the development of schools' present cultures. However subject specialisation, coupled with the longevity within the school, means that opportunities to review curriculum needs and make changes to subjects offered can be rare.

The schools visited generally had a great deal of pride in what they did and in being able to at least match their larger urban counterparts in terms of outcomes: developing great people who will have every chance of success when they leave school. It was also obvious that there was a sense of: *Hutia te rito o te harakeke. Ke he te komako e ko? Ki mau ki hau he aha te mia nui. He aha te mia nui o te ao? Maku e ki atu. He tangata, he tangata he tangata.* In other words, a sense of the importance of relationships being the key to effective teaching and learning programmes.

While providing much for us to consider when reviewing our curriculum, the school visits were able to give considerable validation for what we already do at Golden Bay High School.

Prior to planning my sabbatical, I became aware of the mentoring process that had been developed at Nelson College to support teacher appraisal and development. The visit to Nelson College provided an opportunity for an in-depth look at the process, while visiting other schools primarily provided information about where on the continuum of teacher appraisal and learning they sat:

Appraisal is about compliance ←-----→Appraisal is about learning

## **PURPOSE**

1. To explore course structures at senior school levels (Years 12 and 13), including use of Gateway and STAR funding resources, in Year 7-13 schools.
2. To carry out research into an inquiry approach to teacher professional learning that enables teacher appraisal and development cycles to link effectively into student learning.

## BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

1. Golden Bay High School has always provided courses that meet the needs of students who intend to move on to tertiary education. However a number of barriers exist to providing a sufficient range of courses to cater for the needs of ever-growing numbers of students who seek less academic pathways. The barriers include subject specialisation of existing staff; restrictions placed by the current model of determining staffing entitlement and operations grant resourcing; and our timetable structure, which makes provision of workplace learning for Gateway students problematic.

Gateway has been in the school since 2005 and has been successful in motivating learners and supporting credit achievement, especially at NCEA Levels 2 and 3. After six years, a review of Gateway processes in our school would be very timely.

STAR funding focuses on providing opportunities for as many students as possible to experience taster programmes through polytech courses, something we have seen as important given our isolation from main centres of population. Consequently, there has been limited funding to develop and support an increasing range of subjects in Years 12 and 13.

Achievement data around NCEA shows that at NCEA Levels 1 and 3 GBHS is consistently above, and in most years significantly so, average achievement levels both for all secondary schools nationally, and for schools within our decile range. At Level 2, the achievement levels are not so consistent, as evidenced by 2009 results, where we had an outstanding high end of achievement but a tail of non-achievement that was significantly longer than our expectations.

The research is intended to examine any innovations that may impact on these factors by supporting learning programmes that meet the needs of all of our senior students: innovations in timetabling, teacher employment, Gateway implementation and use of STAR funding. This will then feed into the improvement of both overall student achievement and consequent further improvement of school leaver qualifications.

2. Current teacher appraisal processes make very little reference to student learning. I believe that appraisal as adult learning should focus on improvement of the quality of teaching with direct links to improving student learning. I would like to see appraisal used as an opportunity to inquire into, and strengthen, the positive impact of teaching on student learning.

*“Teaching Effectiveness is determined by the quality of inquiry into the relationship between teacher actions and student learning.*

- *Effective teaching is the continual interrogation of the relationship between inquiry and action to enhance student achievement*
- *Such a model does not prescribe or checklist attitudes or actions. It simply prescribes inquiry, action and the search for improvement.”* (Dr. Graeme Aitkin, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland -source unknown)

My aim is to examine what other schools may be doing in this regard and to establish what best practice might look like for Golden Bay High School.

## **Part 1: Course Structures**

### **FINDINGS**

Eleven schools provided the following data.

#### **1. Background**

The schools ranged from decile 4 through to decile 10 (four schools decile 8, four either 4 or 5).

Roll range: 200 → 755; median roll 380, mean 434.

Year 11 roll range: 27 → 118; median 66, mean 67.

Year 12 roll range: 26 → 98; median 50, mean 56.

Year 13 roll range: 15 → 116; median 54, mean 51.

The apparent anomaly at Year 13 can be attributed to Outdoor Pursuits academy programmes in two schools, which significantly increase numbers in Year 13 for those schools.

#### **2. Timetable structures**

- One school runs 50-minute periods, the remainder have one-hour periods.
- Two schools run six-day cycles, the remainder have five-day cycles; rationale for the six-day cycle includes avoiding the 'Friday last period syndrome' and ensuring that weekly activities such as assembly, itinerant music lessons, etc., don't cut across the same lessons each week.
- Five schools run some variation on double periods. These are to facilitate Outdoor Pursuits programmes (most common), Aquaculture, Agriculture, or Technology and Home Economics classes. Schools that do not offer double periods feel that one-hour periods give sufficient time for practical lessons, or look at some other form of accommodation.
- Other timetable variations include: an additional period last period Friday, used for Stage Challenge Term 1 and school production Terms 2 and 3 (both of these have whole school involvement), and reverting to five periods Term 4; timetabling Outdoor Pursuits or other practical-based subjects either in the afternoon or immediately prior to lunch to enable extra time to be gained without impacting on other classes; last period Friday as a study period for all senior students (Year 11 up).
- Only one school currently blocks subjects into option lines prior to students making their course selection for the following year.

### 3. Senior Courses

In the following table:

- Where there are no compulsory subjects, the rationale is that now literacy and numeracy requirements can be met through subjects other than English and Maths, there is no need for them to be compulsory.
- Science at Year 11 in some schools may include Agriculture or Horticulture as an option.
- Where schools do not have a policy on minimum class size, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Factors include whether the subject should become embedded into the school curriculum; the current status of the subject within the school; and the need to provide the subject to retain students.

Table 1: Course structures

Number of subjects	Year 11	6 (ten schools); 5 (one school 'do less better')
	Year 12	6 (nine schools); 5 subjects (two schools)
	Year 13	6 (two schools); 5 (nine schools)
Compulsory Subjects	Year 11	English: nine schools, plus one recommending
		Maths: nine schools
		Science: six schools; plus three recommending
		Life Skills: one school
	Year 12	English: eight schools
		Maths: four schools
Minimum class size	Two schools specified 5 students; one specified 7 students; one specified 8 -10 students; one specified 12 students at Year 12.	
Alternative provision of subject	Multi-level classes run by most schools; subject provided but with reduced allocation of teacher time e.g. 2/4 periods per week; external providers – e.g. Correspondence School or Video conferencing, sometimes with teacher time being provided for one or two hours per week.	

The following table summarises subjects on offer at the schools visited. In some cases, a subject may be available only on the basis of the minimum class size arrangements shown above.

- Alternative English covers all variations on a regular programme, including media studies (one school offers this as a separate subject in Year 13; where it is offered elsewhere, it is incorporated into a modified English course); drama as part of English; Communication Skills; variations on a less academic programme.
- Alternative Maths covers a range of programmes designed for students who will not progress to a higher level of Maths
- Computing refers to Digital Technologies, Information and Communications Technology, Text and Information Management.
- Core generics refers to where a school offers a stand-alone work-skills-based programme, referred to as Transition or Trades in some schools. Many schools run such a course incorporated into Gateway learning programmes.
- Outdoor Education includes the range of programmes in this field, variously referred to as Outdoor Pursuits, Outdoors Leadership or Sport and Recreation, and including the schools that run an Outdoor Pursuits academy.
- One-off courses not recorded on the table: Café Culture (Level 3); Aquaculture (Years 12 and 13).

- Visual Arts includes the range of programmes, excluding Photography, that make up this field
- Agriculture/Horticulture courses are generally separate subjects, although one school offers a combined Ag/Hort course

Table 2: Subjects offered at Years 12 and 13

Subject	Offered at Yr 12	Offered at Yr 13	Subject	Offered at Yr 12	Offered at Yr 13
English	11	11	Japanese/Spanish/French	7	7
Alternative English	4	5	Physical Education	10	10
Maths	11	11 Calc	Health	2	2
Stats and Modelling		8	Outdoors Education	6	6
Alternative Maths	8	1	Visual Arts	11	11
Biology	11	11	Photography	3	7
Chemistry	11	11	Drama	6	4
Physics	11	11	Music	6	4
Agriculture/Horticulture	7	5	Computing	9	8
Accounting	7	4	Graphics	10	8
Business Studies	3	3	Design Technology	4	5
Economics	9	9	Engineering	5	5
Geography	11	11	Building	8	5
History	11	10	Textiles technology	3	3
Classical Studies	2	5	Home Economics	5	2
Tourism	6	5	Hospitality	6	7
Te Reo Maori	3	3	Core generics	2	2

A core of subjects remains common to all schools: English, Mathematics, three sciences, Humanities (including Economics/Business Studies) and Visual Arts. These are seen as essential to providing a broad academic base and to retaining the top academic students in the school. In addition, Physical Education, often alongside an Outdoor Pursuits programme, remains an important part of the provision for the well-being of students in the senior school as well as providing the foundation for an ever-evolving career pathway.

Technology Education, in all its guises, is more difficult to analyse and to find patterns. Currently there appears to be a predominance of achievement standards offered.

There is a move towards students defining career pathways more clearly, which would result in more direction towards groups of subjects that support specific paths. The development of hospitality programmes and the increasing use of Agriculture/Horticulture and Tourism as school-based subjects are signs of this. Well-developed academy programmes are set up in Outdoor Pursuits at Mount Aspiring College and Cromwell College, and Queen Charlotte College has its highly successful Aquaculture programme. The advent of Trades academies is likely to have an impact on senior school course structures; at this point, most schools are beginning discussions with key players – polytech or lead schools.

Neither SPEC nor ASDAN feature in the schools visited, except to support student learning in special needs education. ASDAN, with its provision of credit inclusion at NCEA Level 1, is the preferred option where such a course is under consideration.

One school is looking at this as a possible context for providing students with a literacy and numeracy pathway.

Very little non-entitlement staffing is used to support courses. Where teachers are employed outside of the school's entitlement, the funding sources are STAR, Outdoor Pursuits academy income, international student fees and in two cases, a very small amount through the school's operations grant.

#### **4. Gateway/STAR**

All schools visited offer Gateway programmes; the number of places ranges from 12 to 25, although Queen Charlotte College sits outside that range as all of its Aquaculture students are involved in Gateway. In all schools it is aimed predominantly at Year 12, with the programme extended into Year 13 and a small number of placements considered from Year 11.

Nine out of the eleven schools allow Gateway to sit as a subject in its own right and the students therefore have an option line timetabled as Gateway. This is almost invariably used to catch up on work missed from other subjects while out in the work place, to work on the associated unit standards and to work towards unit standards that many schools make compulsory for Gateway, specifically Health and Safety, CVs and in some cases Employment Skills.

There is consistency around the use of STAR funding in all eleven of the schools:

- Provision of short courses through polytechnics.
- Staffing for a range of courses: Horticulture, Agriculture, Hospitality, Engineering, Building, Tourism, Outdoor Pursuits.
- Funding to support courses such as those listed above.
- Student visits to tertiary institutions.
- Employment of administrative support staff.

#### **5. External Course Providers**

- Video conferencing: eight schools currently work within a regional-based network, with one other school working to join next year. This is the preferred distance-learning model for the schools involved, although one of the schools not currently involved cited cost and under-use in their school as the reason for withdrawing.
- Correspondence School: used by all schools but seen as the last resort for providing extension to the curriculum. Used extensively for special needs students and to provide courses for students in Alternative Education programmes.
- Regional polytechnics: used under STAR funding mainly to provide short courses, although several schools use specific institutions to provide year long learning, e.g. Agriculture through Telford.
- Open Polytechnic: used by two schools

In most schools, students are supervised either by being placed at the back of other timetabled classes, in a single supervised class or, in some instances, in combination with students enrolled in video-conferencing classes.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR GOLDEN BAY HIGH SCHOOL

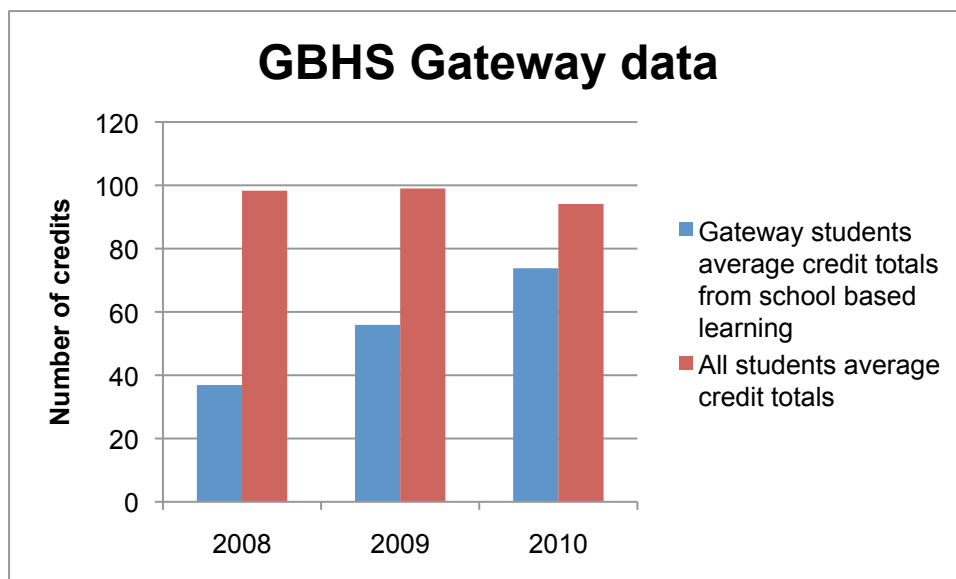
The research into the organisation of senior school curricula provides much food for thought and raises a number of ideas that could be adapted for use in better meeting the needs of GBHS students. Importantly, though, the findings raise a number of questions that we need to consider and they certainly provide data to inform discussion around the questions. Significant changes are occurring as a consequence of the NZQA curriculum-alignment process:

- Literacy and numeracy requirements for NCEA Level 1.
- Removal of unit standards from curriculum aligned subjects.
- University Entrance requirements.

When set alongside implications arising out of the Government's Youth Guarantee policy, this creates considerable urgency to address the following questions and discussion points:

1. Do we expect our students at Year 11 to take too many subjects? Our Year 11 students take seven subjects in total, of which English, Maths and PE are compulsory, and Science strongly recommended. Credit accumulation is not an issue for us at Level 1. Should we adopt the philosophy of 'do less better'?
2. Does the ten-day timetable cycle meet our needs? It is intended to provide greater flexibility but does its complexity counter this?
3. Is video conferencing an option for us to extend our range of options? The cost of participating in a network would need to be compared to the cost of placing a teacher in front of the class for an additional subject or two. Does our ICT infrastructure and connectivity support such a move?
4. Should we be providing more direct supervision for students on distance-learning programmes? Data showing a lack of achievement in comparison to school-based learning suggests we should be doing this.
5. Should Gateway be timetabled as a subject in its own right? It currently isn't, which means we expect students who are often less capable in academic terms to carry an extra load and, in addition, catch up on lessons missed through work placement with little in the way of support to do that. Data for the past three years highlights the gap between achievement of Gateway students and overall school achievement across all three levels of NCEA:





6. Can we make better use of STAR funding? Is providing taster course opportunities to Year 10 students more effective at meeting student needs than using some funding to extend the range of programmes on offer in the senior school?
  
7. Technology is a learning area where there appears to be a range of pathway options schools can follow. Linked closely to this is the development of Trades academies. There is a need for smaller schools such as ours to be involved in discussions on Trades academies at a regional level. This is an area where we have struggled to provide breadth and it is timely to re-examine barriers and to look at possible solutions.
  
8. The place of SPEC or ASDAN. We have offered both to senior students in the past; some schools are looking at these programmes as possibly providing a context for students to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications in addition to supporting the development of key competencies.
  
9. Career pathways. Most schools are now seeing Year 10 as being critical in developing learning pathways for students. Key features in these schools are strong parent/student/teacher conferencing, supported goal-setting, and the development of a learning plan that takes the student to the end of his/her schooling years with options for post-secondary schooling clearly stated.

## Part 2: Teacher Appraisal and Development

### FINDINGS

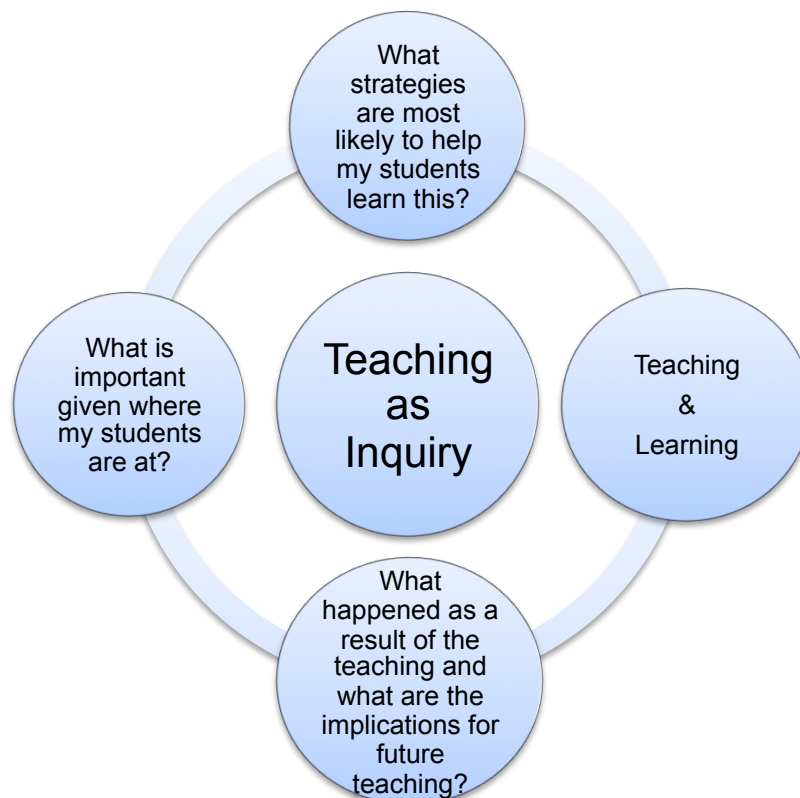
The obvious starting point is the *New Zealand Curriculum* document since its principal function is to “set the direction for student learning.” (P6 Ministry of Education)

In discussing effective pedagogy, the *Curriculum* document uses the extensive and well-documented evidence that says “students learn best when teachers:

- Create a supportive learning environment
- Encourage reflective thought and action
- Enhance the relevance of new learning
- Facilitate shared learning
- Make connections to prior learning and experience
- Provide sufficient opportunities to learn
- Inquire into the teaching-learning relationship” (p34 Ministry of Education)

The experience of appraisal processes both at GBHS and in many of the schools visited, coupled with documented research presented through the Best Evidence Syntheses (BES), would suggest that while appraisal policy links to national policy it doesn’t necessarily address the above points. There is, however, further important direction provided by the *Curriculum* document:

“Since any teaching strategy works differently in different contexts for different students, effective pedagogy requires that teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on students.” (P35 Ministry of Education)



The preceding chart (adapted from the *New Zealand Curriculum*, p35) provides a framework for teacher development. Further research, both recent as well as more dated, provides some general agreement around critical factors.

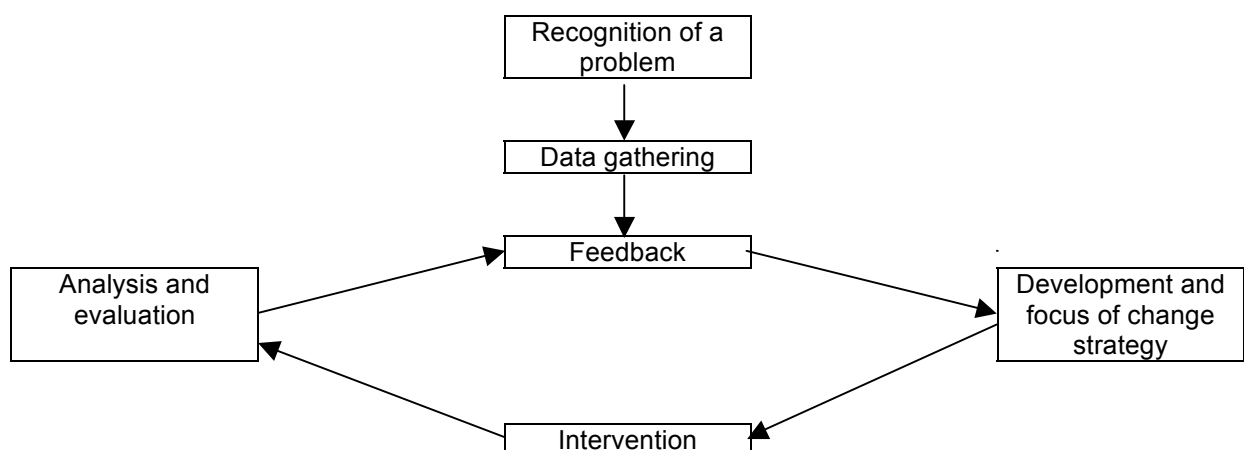
Goal-setting is undoubtedly a feature of more traditional, compliance-oriented appraisal processes, but there are some conditions that enable goal-setting to become more effective at linking to student learning:

- “Goals do not motivate unless they are seen to be important. They gain importance by being linked to wider philosophical and moral purposes. ...it was a leader’s driving moral or philosophical purpose that, along with relevant evidence, enabled them [teachers] to recognise a discrepancy between current and desired achievement and led them to discuss this discrepancy with others.”
- “Goals are clear and unambiguous. Goals are clearer when they include a target and a timeframe.”
- “Goal-setting –for both teacher and student learning – is part of a cycle of evidence-based assessment, analysis and determination of next steps.”  
(pp 106-109 Robinson, V et. al.)

Goal-setting must be seen to be important, it must be clear and it must be appropriate.

Stewart and Prebble, in their work around the “Reflective Principal”, looked at both school-wide and individual goal-setting as integral to appraisal processes, within the context of a school development process. Their basic premise is that “at its simplest level, School Development is a set of strategies to help a school community to think and act collectively and collaboratively.” (p 55 Stewart, D and Prebble, T)

Their six-step problem solving process predates the *New Zealand Curriculum* ‘Teaching as Inquiry’ model and adds significantly to it:



(p 57 Stewart, D and Prebble, T)

This approach shows that data-gathering is a vital link in the process; this is the connection that leads into the “Teaching as Inquiry” approach to teacher development.

Again, the BES around school leadership provides solid evidence of this. Some of the most relevant evidence to this study is provided through a survey of appraisal processes in seventeen Auckland schools. The following table (adapted from pp216-219 Robinson, V, et. al.) shows clearly that while the schools were meeting national policy, the effect of their processes on student learning was at best minimal.

<b>APPRAISAL GOALS</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	<b>Schools based Appraisal Policies</b>
Stated goal is “to improve the quality of teaching and therefore learning”	Most (70%) of intention statements in school policies referred to the improvement of teaching. 15% referred to student learning.
<b>STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING APPRAISAL GOALS</b>	
<b>National Policy</b>	<b>Schools-based Policies</b>
Evaluate against national professional standards and role responsibilities P.S. include 24 performance indicators Indicators describe preferred aspects of teaching style None of the P.I. requires inquiry into the teaching / achievement relationship	Average school included 46 indicators Only 3% of P.I. promoted inquiry into student learning 1/11 teachers reported discussing student learning in their appraisal 4.5% of teachers’ appraisal goals were about student learning Majority of topics discussed during appraisal were about aspects of teaching not connected to student learning and achievement

“The evidence reviewed above shows that appraisal, as practised in these schools, was not being used for data-based inquiry into student learning. By focusing primarily on teacher behaviour and not exploring its impact on student learning, appraisal was not fulfilling its potential to foster student success.” (p 217 Robinson, V, et. al.). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the current appraisal policies and processes at Golden Bay High School and at the majority of schools visited during the sabbatical.

### **Schools Visited**

(The Nelson College process is not included in the following general description.)

One of the questions asked of schools was: *Which statement **best** describes your school’s appraisal process?*

- a) *Appraisal is about COMPLIANCE – either “we have to do it, so let’s get it over and done with” and / or “let’s sort out those who are not performing”. OR*
- b) *Appraisal is about LEARNING - we engage in the process because we believe it contributes to our growth as a professional, and it will enhance our ability to help students learn.*

If appraisal processes could be placed on a continuum,

COMPLIANCE based ←————→ LEARNING based

then only one school would appear significantly to the right of centre and one school would lie well towards the left, with the remaining nine schools grouped just left of centre. The majority of schools are either interested in, or already investigating moving towards, some type of inquiry-based learning process as part of their teacher appraisal and development cycles. Other points raised by discussions around appraisal are listed below:

- Three levels of goal-setting feature in most school processes: individual, department or learning area based and school-wide development based. Linkages between the three levels were not often explicit, or even implicit in some cases.
- One school had an active mentoring process in place to support goal-setting and achievement.
- Explicit use of data as part of an inquiry-based approach to teacher development was present in just one school.
- A number of schools were actively pursuing the idea of the ‘four-minute walk-through’ as supporting teacher development.
- Two schools set aside regular morning professional development sessions to support working towards school-wide goals. The majority of schools used after school meeting time to do this, but more of the schools are looking at ways of overcoming barriers to introducing morning school development.
- The new Teacher Registration Criteria (TRC) have generally found favour with Principals. There are two reasons for this: the focus of the criteria is on relationships, and the resources developed by the Teachers’ Council to support the introduction of the criteria use reflective questions to focus on each.
- There is some confusion around the place of Professional Standards (PS); most schools are attempting to work appraisal against the PS into appraisal against the TRC, but there is also a perception in a couple of schools that the TRC have superseded the PS.

While the TRC appear to provide more scope around teacher appraisal, the criticisms around the lack of data-based inquiry in teacher development are still valid, with key indicators remaining couched in terms of teacher behaviour rather than student learning outcomes.

### **What Does the Literature Suggest as a Way Forward?**

The BES iterations around leadership and teacher professional learning and development are an ideal starting point.

Critical is the development of a community that is working consistently to improve student success. “Collaborative opportunities for professional learning are most likely to deliver benefits for students when they are characterised by:

- An intense focus on the relationship between teaching and learning;
- Collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and well being.” (p120 Robinson, V, et al)

The Teacher Registration Criteria are certainly focused on learner well-being and success, but as an appraisal tool without the collaborative environment, they stand little chance of moving the school forward. “Strong academic focus is not about excessive emphasis on test results or pressure on teachers and/or students to raise scores unaided. It is more about in-depth, collaborative analysis of the relationship between how teachers teach and what students learn.” (p120 Robinson, V, et al)

Introducing an inquiry-based, collaborative approach to teacher development is strongly suggested: “Reducing disparities in achievement requires teachers to teach differently. Figuring out what works better is a complex business and teachers will often find they need to supplement their existing knowledge and expertise. Those who work together to solve teaching problems have more resources available to them than those who work alone.” (p 125 Robinson, V, et al)

Policy development, performance indicators and appraisal templates are all seen as key appraisal tools if there is to be a focus on promoting inquiry. Potential for this is strongest when:

- “Policy focuses on the improvement of teaching and learning.”
- “By asking which students are succeeding, indicators require the appraiser to investigate student outcomes.”
- “Templates prompt appraisers to focus on the teaching-learning relationship and to record and consider student learning data.”

(p 219 Robinson, V, et al)

The collaborative approach to teacher learning and development is not new. Stewart and Prebble developed the idea of Quality Learning Circles (QLCs) to support their ‘Teaching as Inquiry’ model for school development. “Quality Learning Circles become the basic units of individual professional development within the school. They should meet regularly, preferably once a week, for at least half an hour. Their purpose will be to allow teachers to study and discuss their professional practice with a group of colleagues in a supportive environment. Quality Learning Circles are simply a structured opportunity for teachers to reflect on their professional practice and that of their colleagues..... typically they will follow a three phase sequence of steps: firstly, the members of the group will discuss a selected theme, and talk about their own interpretation of that theme in their classroom teaching; secondly, they will get an opportunity to observe other members of the group demonstrating their interpretation of that theme in their teaching; and finally, the group will discuss and reflect on what they have seen and discovered in their own as well as colleagues’ teaching. Through this process teachers will be able to construct new meaning and understanding to apply to their own classroom practice.” (p 135 Stewart & Prebble)

Nelson College has, over the past four years, set up a collaborative approach to school and teacher development through a mentoring process. Led by Deputy Principal Tim Tucker, the process was outlined to the Top of the South Regional Secondary Principals earlier this year and then examined more closely during the course of this sabbatical. The process is a distillation of some of the very best evidence provided via the BES and has elements that bear close resemblance to the QLCs of Stewart and Prebble.

### Key Features of the Nelson College approach

- “A clear vision for the school which offered a consistent approach to professional development.”
- The use of guest experts to provide a rationale and to develop skills for mentoring.
- Trialling through a pilot group of staff.
- Rich feedback from the trial, leading to development of a version to be offered to all staff.
- Mentoring focus initially on training mentors/mentees, but peer mentoring quickly becoming the dominant model.
- All professional development initiatives linked explicitly to mentoring
- Progress reviews provide supportive feedback: “All groups reported positive attributes as discussion about teaching and learning, deprivitisation of practice, working outside of departments as well as within departments, the ongoing and supported nature of the work and being able to admit to shortfalls.”
- Time and the need to acquire more skills were identified as concerns.
- All mentoring work is recorded and collated by individuals. Templates have been developed to facilitate this. Evidence also recorded to inform Teacher Registration Criteria and Professional Standards. Folders are handed in and read by senior manager.
- Identification of the factors essential for best practice and that need to be incorporated fully:
  - “The use of data to inform action;
  - The school is committed to the achievement of all students using common assessment as foundation;
  - That no excuses to collaboration are accepted;
  - That a well organised school-wide structure be designed to accommodate training, skills practice and development (especially communication) and time resource needs.”
- Time provided 8.25-9.05am every Thursday; time spent with peers or collaborative group, or department collaborative time, or whole staff on shared themes.
- “Collaboration must be voluntary, any mentoring must be voluntary and participants need to have influence on the system. The high level of participation at Nelson College also serves as some indication of the perceived worth of the current mentoring programme.” (Only one staff member does not participate currently.)
- “The use of mentoring as a vehicle has allowed for a considerable degree of alignment in professional development. It is a reality that staff are participating in ongoing school-wide pedagogical development. The acknowledgement of active participants and support from the management team for the programme has allowed for a subtle change in organisational culture, which has reduced the effectiveness of cliques, made the staff feel more whole and allowed for a more democratic approach.”

(pp 5-43, Tucker, T,)

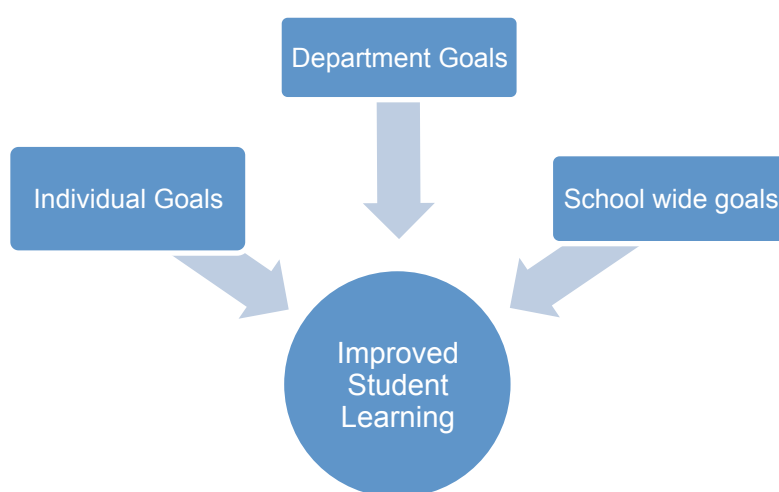
### **IMPLICATIONS FOR GOLDEN BAY HIGH SCHOOL**

On reflection, what does appraisal look like at GBHS?

<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Goal-setting and achievement</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Checklists and tick boxes	Work towards one or two goals that are often unrelated to school goals.	Policy is aligned with theory in national policy (no less than 52 indicators!)
Teacher behaviour focus		
Standards and Teacher Registration Criteria focus		Appraisal is not used as an opportunity to inquire into and strengthen the positive impact of teaching on student learning
		.
Hierarchical responsibility for judgements and signing off the process		Accountability perception further reduces the chance of any impact on student learning

The integration of the Teacher Registration Criteria into the process has encouraged a shift towards greater reflection and a focus on relationships. However, it has created a very complex process and a significant workload for the three senior managers who undertake all of the teacher appraisals. The evidence required is largely about teacher behaviours. Professional development is inconsistent and often unrelated to either personal or school-wide goals. Collaboration is extremely limited.

Michael Fullan, in talking about collaborative learning communities, says “Successful professional development is likely to occur in schools and classroom settings, rather than off site, and it is likely to involve work with individual teachers or small groups around observation of actual teaching.” (p 37 Fullan, M,) I believe we need to be looking at processes that support a more consistent, school-based approach to professional learning, one that links both individual and community goals to student learning.





## Questions for Us to Consider

1. How do we set up a process incorporating teacher appraisal and development that links directly to student learning outcomes?
2. What needs to occur to develop an environment that encourages risk taking i.e. one where people are prepared to talk about what didn't work as well as promote good practice?
3. How do we maintain such an environment in a collaborative context and yet still have reference to Teacher Registration Criteria and/or Professional Standards, without compromising collaboration?

Key questions from the BES are also part of this consideration: (see P220 Robinson, et al)

1. Do our school's appraisal policy and performance indicators require appraisers and teachers to use evidence about student learning as a basis for appraisal?
2. What are our appraisal goals based on? Do they arise out of an inquiry cycle in which evidence is analysed and student needs discussed?
3. What professional development is needed to help teachers learn the skills required e.g. around mentoring, data use and analysis?

I believe that the Nelson College model has the potential to be adapted to suit our needs. It should provide the focus for our initial discussions, both with Board and with staff. Development of a process that incorporates the key features listed in this report should be a critical part of school wide-development in 2012.

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