

Principals in Classrooms: A snapshot of the thinking of school principals about making regular classroom visits

Bruce Warren, Sabbatical Report, October 2012

It was in my diary for 11am. I was going to get into Jill's syndicate today. But then Miranda's mother turned up with a complaint and that took ages, the auditor rang with a list of things needed, the Room 3 boys toilet flooded, I had to get a notice out to parents about the cross country postponement and I've still got to get the Board report finished. I'll visit tomorrow.

My experience as a school principal has been that although I want to get into classrooms, something more urgent often gets in the way. I saw a need to learn from colleagues who visit classrooms regularly. I asked the question:

How do principals prioritise their time to make regular classroom visits a reality?

And then

Once in classrooms, what do principals do to make a difference?

An assumption is made that principals visit classrooms to build relational trust, and to help teachers become better teachers. Our intent as professionals is to build instructional leadership therefore this paper does not discuss the rationale for why principals might want to visit classrooms. Principals themselves say it's a good thing.

Methodology

- Online Survey to all APPA principals: 267 responded of approximately 400 emailed.
- Follow up online survey to APPA principals who indicated in the first survey that they visited regularly and were happy to share their learning: 24 responded of 40 emailed.
- Follow up conversations with a number of principals about classroom visits.

Good range of school sizes from U2 to U9 with 84% U4-6

The survey summary is printed with this report and only abridged to avoid the identification of individuals who have contributed anonymously. This makes for more authenticity as principals communicate directly and in their own words to the intended audience, their principal colleagues.

Findings: What did 267 principals say?

Almost 30% visit classrooms daily and 72% visit 2-5 times a week.

71% want to visit classrooms more often

The top 5 strategies principals use to get into classrooms

1. Take a short "clear the head" break to walk through classes
2. Visit to welcome new students
3. Diary classroom visit times
4. Schedule walkthroughs
5. Work longer hours to provide visiting time

The top 5 things principals do when visiting classrooms

1. Question children about their learning
2. Visit without advance warning for the teachers
3. Note levels of student engagement
4. Read walls/displays
5. Talk to children to get to know them better

Although 77% have not attended a Break Through Coaching seminar, 20% of principals have applied some of the Malachi Pancoast Break Through Coaching ideas in their practice to help get them in to classrooms. See the conclusion for more on this.

80% of schools have 2 or 3 DP/APs but only 20% principals state they deliberately delegate to provide time for visiting classes.

Findings: What did 24 principals who visit regularly say?

The top 3 things principals do when visiting classrooms

1. Informal visits to talk to children
2. Informal observations
3. Formal walk throughs

They enjoy the feedback about their visits.

- They receive very positive feedback from teachers who value their interest.
- They receive universally positive feedback from children.
- Most receive positive feedback from parents.

Teachers like to know you are interested in their programmes. They tell me their work is valued when I take a direct hand on interest in pedagogy and the programmes they are running.	Teachers feel you know what they are doing and can share their new ideas or something that is going well.
Students know who you are and you become a real person. They didn't know I was a teacher!	Students love the opportunity to share their learning with me. An opportunity to celebrate achievement and discuss next steps.
Parents inform me that it makes their child feel noticed, that I know their child and that the child has a better understanding of me as someone who is trying to help them, not as an authoritarian as in their day.	Parents like to hear, "I was in Jonnie's class today and I noticed xyz." I often share these observations with parents on gate duty and wandering around the school. Not only does it give them, and the student if they are with them, a positive buzz, it reinforces the notion that as Principal, I know what is going in in classrooms. I healthy state of affairs I feel.

There is more description of this feedback from principals in the survey summary (Appendix 2.)

They all enjoy visiting classrooms. Significantly, one third rated visiting classrooms as the most enjoyable aspect of their job. All really enjoy it.

When you are up to your neck in paperwork or you have been reading some negative statement from the MOE or in the media about education...Going for a walk around puts clarity back into all the great reasons we do what we do.	I love going to the rooms of all year groups. I get to know the children, observe teacher engagement and join in on the learning process. It helps me make decisions regarding PD and teacher or student support.
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They are keen to encourage their colleagues to visit classrooms regularly and have written compelling calls to action:

Get your diary set up so that your classroom visits are in there first as a priority. How can you coach if you don't see the game? - so make classroom visits an important part of your work. Look at what tasks you are doing that are not related to teaching and learning and where possible delegate these to other staff members who could carry them out. This might mean that you have to invest in building other staff capability but if it frees you up to do classroom visits. It is worth it. <i>Margaret Palmer</i>	I didn't become a principal to sit in an office. If I don't get my classroom fix I question why I am in the role. The office staff comment that I come back to my office with a joy that only my classroom visits or assemblies give me. I still don't do nearly as much as I would like to do, but find for every hour in a classroom I do another hour at night on catching up emails, etc. <i>Maree Bathurst</i>
See if the children know where they are at with their learning and that learning is transparent. Set a time so that you do not miss the opportunity to see classrooms in action and vary these times throughout the day. You will have a better understanding of the work going on at the frontline by making classroom visits. <i>Anon</i>	Get someone else to do the admin!! Management units are our school are allocated for some of the 'principal admin' tasks that I would rather not do - as I would like to concentrate on classrooms and curriculum. <i>Melinda Bennett</i>
Make it a priority - show yourself as a leading learner and a learning leader. Credibility and practical awareness shows you in a different light. <i>Anon</i>	Fantastic, you see your school ethos, philosophy, pedagogy, tone, learning community in action. <i>Paul Engles</i>
Timetable the visits. Try not to let the urgent (incoming mail etc...) override the important - easier said than done - and overtake classroom visits. Be kind to yourself - I have times when I don't get into classrooms enough - don't feel guilty, be proactive and use your calendar or go for a quick walk about then and there so you stay in touch with the happenings in your school. <i>Linda Barton</i>	I find that it is really buzzy to be where the action is, seeing children share and celebrate their learning. It is reassuring as a Principal to see the progression of development as I move across different levels. I am always so impressed with the interaction within rooms and how capable children are to lead their own learning. <i>Juliet Small</i>
This year I have booked out Monday and we'd and my office can make no appointments on that day. In the first half of the year I did walk throughs and try hard to priorities something directly related to curriculum or pedagogical leadership on these days eg coaching, reading teachers' reflective journals, visiting classes. I make a point of walking around the school and through every classroom most days. <i>Carolyn Marino</i>	Be clear about your purpose of why you visit classrooms and share this with staff transparently and often. Don't mesh your purposes - if you say you are just visiting to get a sense of the learning community...it's just that....evaluations and judgments need to be checked at the door. <i>Anon</i>
Try the four minute observation path, it gets you into the rooms and gives you the opportunity to see where	Just do it. You started out as a teacher, so go back into the classroom. The office is not what we trained for.

you need to spend more time. <i>Martyn Weatherill</i>	See the kids, see your staff in action. It then refreshes you for the next 40 minutes in the office. <i>Bruce Cunningham</i>
Just do it. It is a very enjoyable part of the day. You do have to keep at it however to keep it as a habit so you don't get captured by the admin etc of our job. <i>Maurice Young</i>	Get in there and enjoy seeing teachers making a positive difference. Children can articulate their learning well and support your decision making. <i>Anon</i>
Diarise it and do it! <i>Anon</i>	If you don't go, you won't know <i>Anon</i>

Conclusion

A significant number of principals see that visiting classrooms is a top priority each week day or at least several times a week. They are prepared to work longer hours to achieve time in classrooms and some have adopted strategies, such as delegation, to free up time for this important activity. Many diary classroom visits and some have office staff protect that time from competing demands. A number have adopted and adapted the Break Through Coaching approach promoted by visiting American, Malachi Pancoast, which empowers the principal's secretary to help plan and protect time clearly dedicated to either management (in the office) or to coaching (classroom visiting).

Those who are regularly in classrooms have made this behaviour habitual and they rate it as the most or one of the most enjoyable parts of the job.

The ratings and words of survey respondents indicate that many principals find the time in classrooms of great benefit to them for taking a break from the administrative workload and staying in touch with their people and the core purpose of the school. They write of fostering stronger and more trusting relationships with teachers, children and parents. They tell of each of these groups feeling more valued and in turn they feel more valued themselves.

Many principals say they want to be in classrooms more often. If this paper encourages them to reprioritise and to try new strategies to achieve regular visiting, then something good has been achieved.

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. *Mark Twain*

Personal Reflection

I was delighted to get a response rate of about 67% (267 of approx. 400 principals). This rate is higher than many APPA surveys and I believe that this is because the topic struck a chord with a significant number of principals who see that visiting classrooms is an essential habit for effective school leadership and that it takes deliberate action to make it a reality as so many less important /more urgent tasks can steal time. Despite the difficulties, I was encouraged to learn that almost ¾ of the 267 APPA colleagues say they visit classrooms between 2 and 5 times a week. I was also inspired by my 24

colleagues who shared their learning and expressed a real passion for this activity. You cannot lead effectively from your office. If you don't go, you won't know your people and they won't know you.

One incontrovertible finding emerges from my career spent working in and around schools: The [nature of relationships](#) among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else.”

Roland S. Barth, Educational Leadership (March 2006)

Thank you

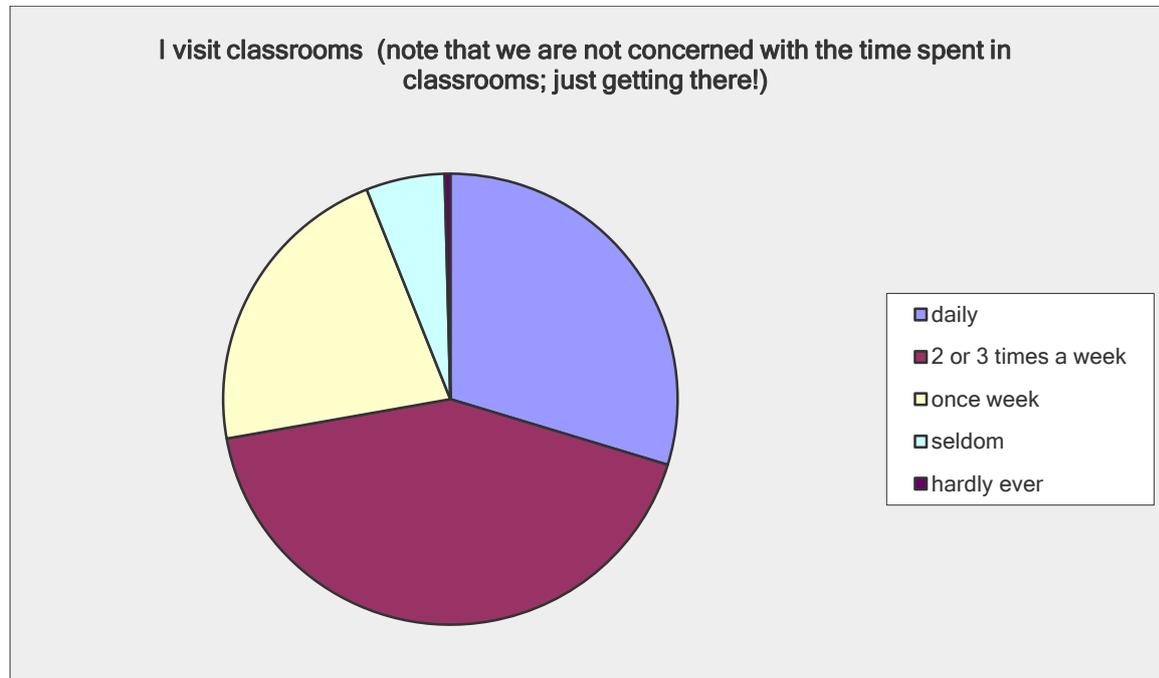
- The 267 APPA colleagues who completed the first survey;
- the 24 principals who provided further information about their learning;
- The Ministry for this wonderful opportunity;
- Jonno Buckley, Board Chair and the Mairangi Bay School Board for its support;
- Jill Corkin, APPA president for agreeing to send out the first survey to all APPA members and Alison Smith, APPA secretary, for doing so and providing advice about Survey Monkey; and
- Jeanette Smail, principal in my absence and all staff who acted up (love that term!) and/or filled a gap when they saw it.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Survey sent to all APPA principals

Initial Survey Question 1:

I visit classrooms (note that we are not concerned with the time spent in classrooms; just getting there!)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
daily	29.7%	79
2 or 3 times a week	42.5%	113
once week	21.8%	58
seldom	5.6%	15
hardly ever	0.4%	1
<i>answered question</i>		266
<i>skipped question</i>		1



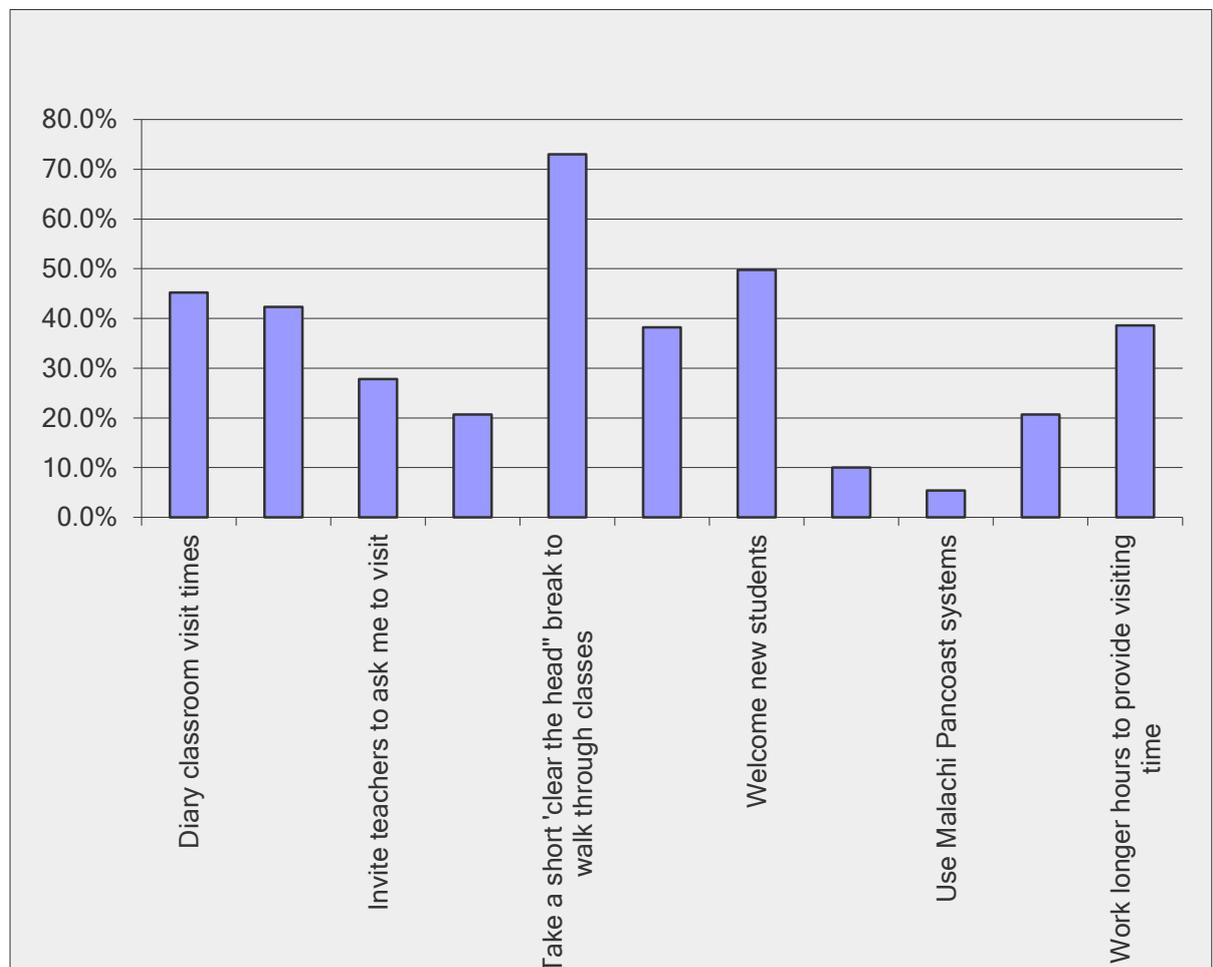
Initial Survey Question 2:

I am happy with the frequency of my visits to classrooms		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
yes, I visit as much as I need to	29.2%	78
no, I'd like to be in classrooms more often	71.2%	190
<i>answered question</i>		267
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Initial Survey Question 3:

The following questions are for principals who visit classrooms regularly. My assumption is that you visit classrooms to be better informed but primarily to build relational trust, and to help teachers become better teachers. My experience has been that although I want to get into classrooms, something more urgent often gets in the way. How do you prioritise and make classroom visits a reality? Please tick the strategies that work for you to make classroom visits a regular happening thing. Tick all that you actually do regularly.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Diary classroom visit times	45.2%	109
Schedule walkthroughs	42.3%	102
Invite teachers to ask me to visit	27.8%	67
Commit to teaching daily/weekly sessions	20.7%	50
Take a short 'clear the head" break to walk through classes	73.0%	176
Release teachers to visit other teachers	38.2%	92
Welcome new students	49.8%	120
Visit to acknowledge birthdays	10.0%	24
Use Malachi Pancoast systems	5.4%	13
Delegate work to other leaders to provide time for visits	20.7%	50
Work longer hours to provide visiting time	38.6%	93
Other (please specify)		28
<i>answered question</i>		241
<i>skipped question</i>		26



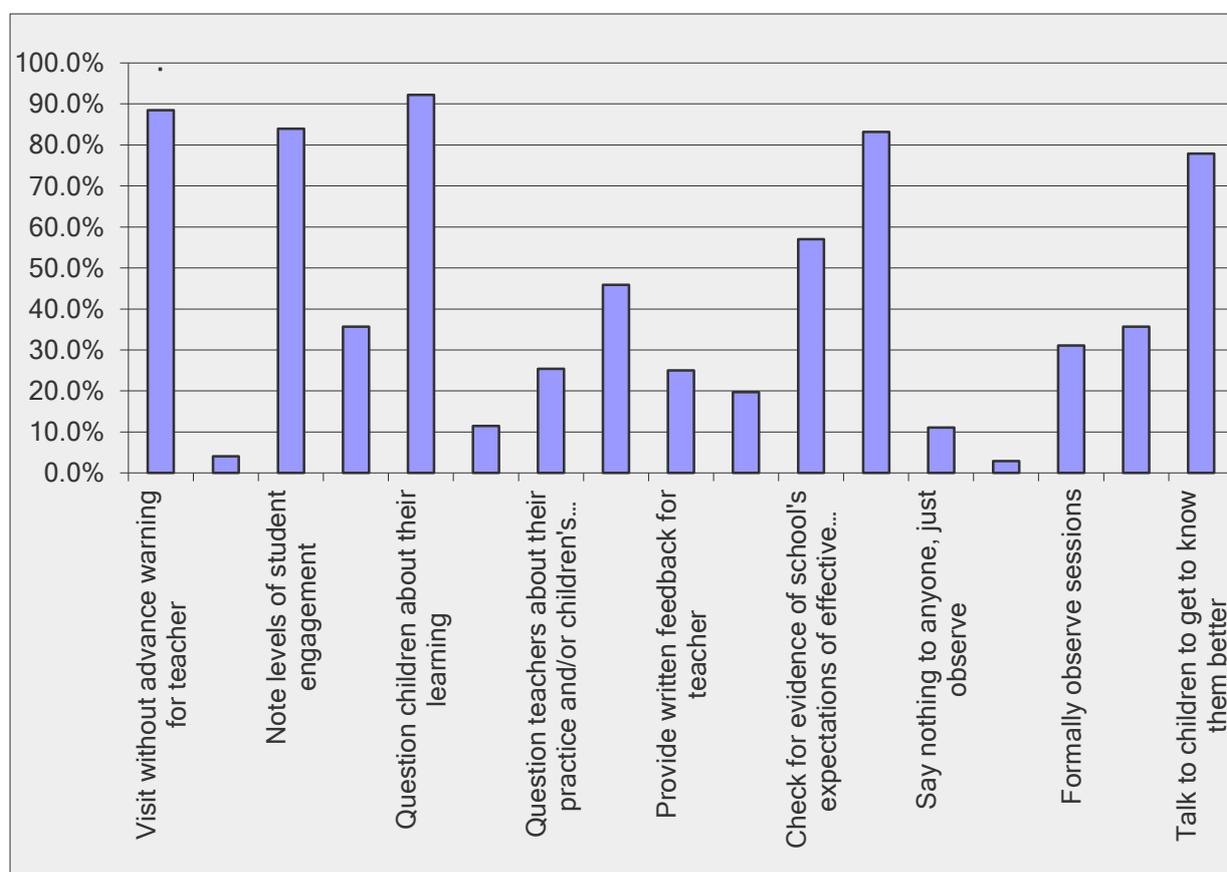
Other strategies for getting into classrooms

- 4 minute walk throughs
- Observe lessons following a review
- Specific observations related to professional development
- I just do it all the time as well as teach children every day
- VISIBILITY AND MY "SMILE "
- meet parents (NE), open days, special events
- Although visit regularly as I take new visits to school around to all classrooms along the way formal visits are done. Term 1 formal walk through, Term 2 Student work viewed in depth and discussions about their learning, Term 3 formal observations with written feedback. Term 1&2 is feedback to whole staff unless I have something to say to an individual that needs urgent addressing. BTs I do a formal visit twice a year with written feedback
- Accompany Leadership Team on appraisal visits - rich discussion afterwards
- attend morning prayers in various rooms
- Following staff meeting discussion about programme planning etc schedule with Staff times when I may view and engage with their programme with the aim of experiencing the teaching/learning taking place.
- visit classrooms to chat to teachers about routine things
- mobile office' which is Malachi - that way I drop in and set myself up with my laptop to assist teachers and students being used to me just being there
- often get paged back to the office
- model for teachers and do CRT and occasional sick leave depending on my timetable
- Manage time and tasks well
- Unscheduled walkthroughs
- Although not diaried, I make it a rule to visit all rooms each day. I have 16 classes. Some visits last 30 seconds, others 5 minutes. it is part of my job.
- Rather than send an email, take the opportunity to visit a classroom to talk to the students about their learning and speak to the teacher face-to-face if possible. If not, return to the office to write the email anyway, but meanwhile, I've been in the class and connected with several students.
- Scheduled appraisal visits
- My contact in classrooms is a mixture of the above ticked points. Different purposes define the different contacts
- Show others through rooms
- Release teachers for meetings e.g. to work with SENCO on IEP's
- I have multiple students daily (up to 10-15 daily) sent to my office to share their best work. I keep a record and acknowledge them at assemblies with my own (highly valued) Principals Award certificates. Last year I saw 167% of the students (some more than once) but it really allows me to keep in touch with what is happening with teaching and learning in the classroom.
- This has become more and more challenging due to highly dangerous children at our base taking up a lot of time/90+staff and school on 5 different sites - i tried working longer hours and at school all weekend for months on end-no one can keep this up!
- Every morning from 7.50 a.m. move informally around classrooms and make myself available for professional/personal chat...
- Do targeted observations of individual students.
- check out relievers in the school
- Termly observations

Initial Survey Question 4:

When you are visiting classrooms in action what do you typically do? (Note that this is during class teaching time and does not include things you might follow up on later) Tick all that you do regularly.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Visit without advance warning for teacher	88.5%	216
Only visit when pre-arranged	4.1%	10
Note levels of student engagement	84.0%	205
Check if teaching and resources are needs appropriate	35.7%	87
Question children about their learning	92.2%	225
Question children about effectiveness of teacher practice	11.5%	28
Question teachers about their practice and/or children's learning	25.4%	62
Provide verbal feedback for teacher	45.9%	112
Provide written feedback for teacher	25.0%	61
Read teacher planning	19.7%	48
Check for evidence of school's expectations of effective pedagogy eg WALTs	57.0%	139
Read walls/displays	83.2%	203
Say nothing to anyone, just observe	11.1%	27
Video teacher and/or children	2.9%	7
Formally observe sessions	31.1%	76
Note any health and safety concerns	35.7%	87
Talk to children to get to know them better	77.9%	190
Other (please specify)		35
answered question		244
skipped question		23



Other in classroom activities listed. (Abridged)

- I also do arranged visits with clear agendas
- Questioning children is reflective - what learning have you found hard/tricky this week? How did ... help you with this?
- to say hello
- check registers for attendance, environment checks, look at behavioural strategies and things that other teachers might learn from
- Take groups, let chn share what they are doing, teachers often want to show something specific, behaviour issues etc
- If I note positives I verbally feed back to the teacher at a later time, if I have any concerns I discuss with Syndicate Leader to have a further look at issues and develop support if needed. May require an arranged time for me to visit formally.
- Formal pre-arranged visits are always followed up with a formal written report which is signed by them and me
- Tricky to answer cos there are two types of visits - the casual, informal walk through (once a week approx) and the more formal visits with set criteria to be looked at, which gets written feedback afterwards (2 times per year approx.
- each term complete a formal timed appraisal visit. Do lots of impromptu visits
- give some feedback in a casual conversation afterwards
- The above is a mix or responses to informal visits and scheduled walkthroughs.
- chat informally to students and teacher
- it varies and depends
- If its a formal appraisal my ticks would all be different
- praise teacher and children, will be starting in the moment coaching
- I don't do these at every visit as I go to classes about twice a day and sometimes it is a quick walk through and other times I spend longer
- Assist where needed with group follow-up. Email quick positives after the visit.
- Formal visit once a year if possible (time)
- Look through children's books. This is a must in my opinion.
- Walkthroughs are part of our appraisal system so they are done regularly, often with myself and another member of the SMT. During the walkthrough I give commentary on the teaching practice to the observing teacher. Following the walkthrough we have a approx 45min discussion where the teacher reflects on their own teaching practice in the light of what they've observed and how that relates to their developmental goal.
- When I visit, as per your question, I would not discuss during the visit some of your checklists as this would be unprofessional in my opinion. Some of these would be a follow up, eg question teachers, question children, provide verbal feedback, provide written feedback, discuss pedagogy.
- Questioning students about effectiveness of teacher practice only occurs when teachers know in advance that this is part of the data gathering process and when it is going to occur.
- I do scheduled visits as well as unscheduled visits
- Consider what I will look for next time in this teacher's class
- Also visit with warning. See Work plans online, see work online
- The items I have ticked are things I do regularly. I also do formal observations of Senior Leaders as part of the Appraisal System and appraise all teachers in Term 3. These visits are more formal, pre-arranged and both verbal and written feedback is given. If there were concerns about a teachers' practice and guidance and support was being provided I would also be in that classroom more often, but would have clarified who was giving what feedback / feed-forward with the Team Leader.
- Teachers video each other and share it with me
- Comment positively on something I see happening in the room to the teacher
- Any more formal visit is pre -arranged
- For formal observations there is a set time to visit.
- identify the relationship between students and teachers

- I try to plan visits but frequently something crops up-we have a new DP and two curriculum facilitators so I see that by next year i might get out of my office more
- when I do attestation visits I formally observe
- The DP and I do a formal observation in each class once a term. Checking of planning is delegated to senior teachers who get release for this.
- I am a teaching Principal in a four teacher school so am in an out a lot for different reasons

Initial Survey Question 5:

Size of your school		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
U2	1.6%	4
U3	7.0%	17
U4	23.8%	58
U5	38.1%	93
U6	22.1%	54
U7	4.9%	12
U8	2.0%	5
U9	0.4%	1
U10	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		244
<i>skipped question</i>		23

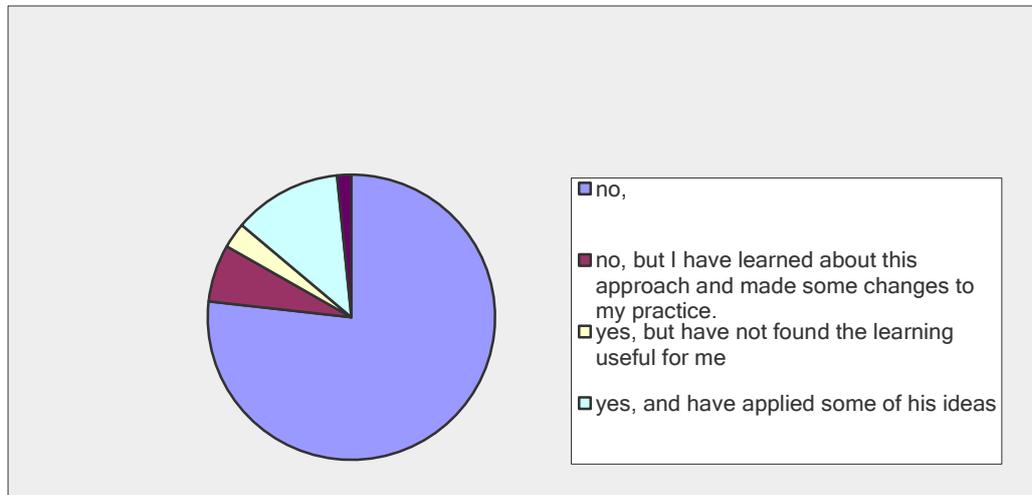
Initial Survey Question 6:

Number of DP/APs		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	17.0%	40
2	67.7%	159
3	12.3%	29
4	3.0%	7
5	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		235
<i>skipped question</i>		32

Initial Survey Question 7:

Have you attended a Malachi Pancoast Breakthrough Coaching seminar? (Malachi is an American consultant who was invited back by principals' groups several times after his first presentation to a NZPF Conference a number of years ago.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
no,	76.7%	188
no, but I have learned about this approach and made some changes to my practice.	6.5%	16
yes, but have not found the learning useful for me	2.9%	7

yes, and have applied some of his ideas	12.2%	30
yes, and have applied most of his ideas.	1.6%	4
<i>answered question</i>		245
<i>skipped question</i>		22



Initial Survey Question 8:

Are you enthusiastic about classroom visiting, and keen to share any learning that would help others build instructional leadership by being visible and engaged in classrooms? If so, at what email address would you like to be contacted? (leave this box blank and I'll leave you alone!)

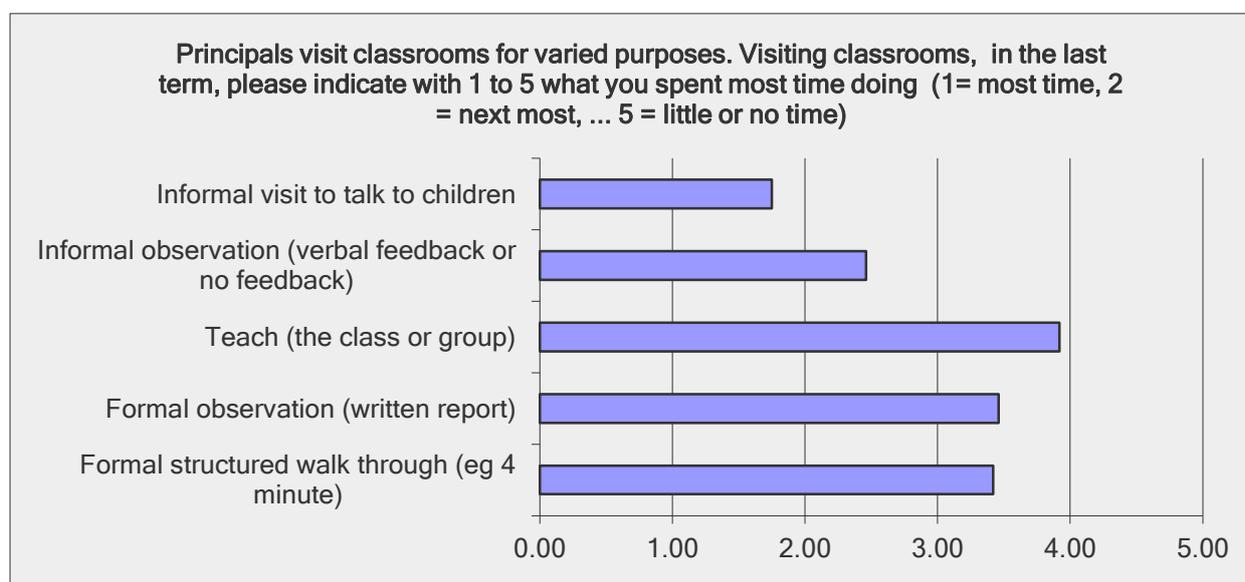
Answer Options	Response Count
	50
<i>answered question</i>	50
<i>skipped question</i>	217

Note a significant number of respondents wrote yes and did not give their email addresses requested so they were not able to be included in follow up survey.

Appendix 2: Follow Up Survey sent to 40 APPA principals who visit classrooms regularly

Follow Up Survey Question 1:

Principals visit classrooms for varied purposes. Visiting classrooms, in the last term, please indicate with 1 to 5 what you spent most time doing (1= most time, 2 = next most, ... 5 = little or no time)							
Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Formal structured walk through (eg 4 minute)	1	4	8	6	5	3.42	24
Formal observation (written report)	3	2	5	9	5	3.46	24
Teach (the class or group)	2	1	6	3	12	3.92	24
Informal observation (verbal feedback or no feedback)	7	7	4	4	2	2.46	24
Informal visit to talk to children	11	10	1	2	0	1.75	24
<i>answered question</i>							24
<i>skipped question</i>							0



Follow Up Survey Question 2:

How do you know visiting classrooms makes a difference? Briefly describe feedback you have received from teachers?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	24
<i>answered question</i>	24
<i>skipped question</i>	0

Number	Response Text
1	Regarding visits making a difference, teachers tell me they like the feedback, I don't always give it and most times teachers ask for it, they say it makes a difference and they feel successful. we both note that their teaching improves. on the teacher registration criteria visits

- the teacher and I meet with them giving their feedback first, this allows for them to note their strengths and weaknesses and often leaves me free to ask if they need help to make progress.
- Teachers fed this information back very clearly in my recent 360 appraisal. They feel that through my visits I am in touch with the day to day reality of classroom teaching and learning and from their perspective is the MOST important part of my role Shows value for the teacher and students.
- 2** Teachers acknowledge they feel valued To answer the first question.
- It makes a difference as the students appreciate sharing their learning and being proud of their work.
- I have a presence around the school and the children respect this as they get excited when I visit.
- Teachers and students are pleased to share with me.
- My expectations are high and children know I might turn up at any given time. This helps with behaviour expectations.
- Staff talk to me about my visits and / or I talk to them to gather thoughts, further information or clarity about something I was unsure about.
- Teachers tell me the children liked me being in their room.
- Feedback from teachers...Wow, this varies and depends on the reason for attending the classroom.
- Anyway...a few comments of late...
- Thanks for reading to the class, the children loved it.
 What do you think of my environment?
 My children all know what stage they are at for maths.
 Thank you for acknowledging my lesson.
 Can you come back again as that was madness during Discovery time.
 Can you give me some feedback on my room environment?
 Do you like how the children are connecting with the active board?
- 4** Can you read to my class?
 Have become increasingly relaxed about me being involved
 Like to know what the students are saying to me and reflect on this
- 5** Like to show/tell about innovative things they are doing
 Because teachers identify how it helps and request it often, whenever they would like some
- 6** advice our support.
 Feedback mainly about what they are doing in their room at the time - teachers like the opportunity to share. These conversations have also led to me providing resourcing in a
- 7** particular area
 Teachers prefer the approach of Walk Throughs rather than formal visits. They carry on with whatever they are doing. I am not a visitor in my own school so don't get introduced. I do have some interesting dialogues around and about as a consequence of spending time in rooms.
- 8** Teachers often want to show off work and learning.
- 9** Mixed - but basically they like to know you appreciate what they are doing.
 Visiting classrooms is just normal practice for us. Time is allowed for teachers to do this too.
- 10** It keeps me aware of how things are going; resources needed/used, student engagement and motivation.
- 11** They comment on the conversations we have about the learning and the positive interaction with students

- 12 I feel the main thing is that I am visible - kids get to know me, I get to know them!
Teachers like to know you are interested in their programmes. They tell me they feel their work is valued when I take a direct hands on interest in pedagogy and programmes they are running.
- 13 They like the feedback, particularly when it is focused on the positive. Teachers are really good at putting themselves down!
This is difficult to answer, I have spent the best part of two years persuading teachers that you can make a valid observation in four minutes. A hold over from the previous practice of two
- 14 one hour observations per year as part of appraisal.
It allows me to specifically reference their practice when having learning conversations. The more I visit, the more often they seek me out for pedagogical dialogue. This becomes a cycle of sharing and learning with increased targeted visits to their classroom.
- 15 The students inform me they like it when I ask about their learning so it makes them think. I believe it also lets me know the child better, so when a teacher has a grumble, I can relate a lot better, as I have been in their shoes. Parents inform me that I made their child feel special by showing interest in their work. Most teachers like it. They say it shows I care about the children and them. The odd one, depending on the lesson and time of day, would prefer I don't
- 16 enter, but this is very rare.
Teachers actually want feedback! Unfortunately it is the Principals who often struggle for time to get into classrooms. Teachers appreciate the way you 'check' on them to see if all is going well, do they need support with 'challenging' students, comments about their wall displays, advice and guidance on classroom management and different ideas on how to engage with
- 17 students.
The teachers feel you know what they are doing and can share the new ideas or something
- 18 that is going well
Teachers comment that they enjoy me visiting rooms, or comment if I have been busy and
- 19 haven't made it to rooms frequently
Teachers indicate that they are pleased to see P or DP in the room. They enjoy sharing what
- 20 they are doing. They also say that the children love it.
I am aware of what is happening at the chalk-face; the engagement of the students; the level
- 21 of differentiated teaching; the mood of the teacher and of the students.
Teachers change their practice when they know that you are a regular visitor and especially so if you spend a reasonable amount of time in the classroom talking to children about learning etc.
- 22 At times teachers ask for feedback and I was pleasantly surprised how many do like feedback (especially of the warm affirming nature but also critiquing what you see).
Because I give criteria I am observing and feedback about what I see, I can observe
- 23 improvement. I have been told the criteria helps steer the direction for improvement.
- 24 Initially nervous but now welcoming

Follow Up Survey Question 3:

What feedback have you received from children?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	24
<i>answered question</i>	24
<i>skipped question</i>	0

Number	Response Text
1	Feedback from children is generally related to what they are learning. in some cases where teacher performance is shared as an area for development the kids are usually spot on. It is powerful to let teachers know what their children are noticing

- 2 Students love to share their learning with me in class. They remember and talk about when I have been into their room (particularly if I was teaching). Students know who you are and you become a real person.
- 3 Students love to share their learning
Did you like our art work?
Can you come back again.
Don't leave I want to show you my topic work.
Are we being good?
Look, look, look at my great writing...I can...
Can you teach us today.
I like my teacher.
- 4 ETC...
Didn't know I was a teacher!
You're fun!
- 5 You can really help us
- 6 Not sure how you put this into words, I am talking to kids all the time about everything!
- 7 Very keen to share their learning
- 8 I haven't asked them- interesting idea
- 9 Enthusiastic welcome
- 10 They love the fact that senior managers value their work and learning. They like to enter into discussions about their work. They let me know they miss me if I am away
Great! Asking such things as e.g. what they are doing and why? How do they know they're on the right track? Tells you lots of things about the learning environment, the teacher and the students.
- 11
- 12 Very positive - we have great chats
- 13 They love sharing their learning, telling me about their achievements and their lives.
In most classes student love the opportunity to share their learning with me. An opportunity to celebrate achievement and discuss next steps.
- 14 You know my name? How do you know my name? (5 year olds).
- 15 Older students come and reference their learning with me after I have been to visit their class. They want to show me their learning because they have a sense that I care. Last week...had a year 6 boy yell across the school...Ms! I got a 3P on my asTTle test!
They like it when I visit as it gives them a chance to talk with me about their learning, their achievements in and outside school, they say they feel a little bit special and it makes them think about their learning when they need to articulate it.
- 16 Lots... we asked them why they hated writing... and received incredible feedback, which we used to change the way we teach Written Language and now they love it!
- 17 Children come and show you more of what they are doing
- 18 They love talking about their learning- showing me what they have been doing
- 19 The children are keen to engage in conversation and obviously enjoy the visits.
Students seem to appreciate my interest in what they are doing, creating, solving, or designing
- 20 The children love the visits they make a connection with you and are very willing to share their learning. This sense of connection also is evident in the playground etc because they know you as a person and know that you are interested in them and their learning.
- 21
- 22 Nothing specific - just pleased to be noticed really!
- 23 Love me there
- 24

Follow Up Survey Question 4:

Describe any feedback you have you received from parents	
Answer Options	Response Count

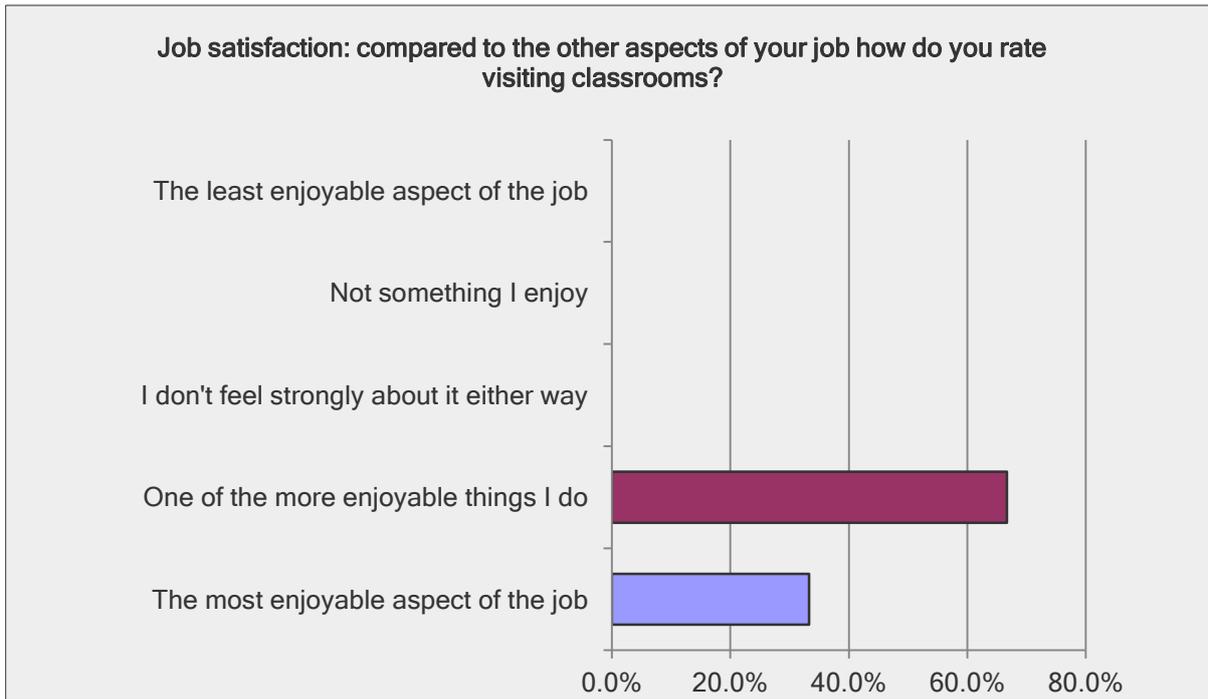
	23
<i>answered question</i>	23
<i>skipped question</i>	1

Number	Response Text
1	They like the idea that I am in classrooms Parents and students have told me they really appreciate the birthday certificate I deliver each week to each child. Parents also really appreciate me knowing about their child progress and achievements, and I speak about these efforts when awarding principal certificates.
2	
3	Parents see you as approachable and real This school is the best. My chn are happy here. The school is clean and tidy. I like the new playgrounds. My kids are up early to come to school. Your newsletter was real long. I like those flash boards in the rooms. Your teachers are real good.
4	ETC... Great seeing me in the class Kids really look forward to you being here each week
5	Kids love being taken by a man I would say like any school, positive and negative. The one great thing is that if a parent raises a concern about a child i have first-hand experience of the child and can usually comment on the spot without having to go to the teacher for information.
6	
7	The parents do like to see the principal about the school - sometimes they are surprised
8	They appreciate that I am visible around the school and that I know what is going on in rooms.
9	None
10	That I am visible and walk the talk on the positive side. Won't repeat the negative! None really, other than I can talk about the classes that they refer to from a personal and
11	professional perspective
12	Again very positive - they love that I teach in classes Parents are always impressed I know all the children's names and have a hands on understanding of what is happening in the classrooms. I think they get a bit surprised that I have a good handle on curriculum and the learning programme for their child. I make a point
13	of finding out. Parents almost universally like to hear feedback in the form 'I was in Jonnie's class today and I noticed xyz'. I often share these observations with parents on gate duty and wandering the playground after school. Not only does it give them - and the student if they are with them - a positive buzz it reinforces the notion that as Principal I know what is going on in the
14	classrooms. I healthy state of affairs I feel. You really know my child's learning... You have described _____ exactly.
15	It seems like you have a good handle of what is happening in my child's class. Parents inform me it makes their child feel noticed. They inform me I know their child and the child has a better understanding of me as someone whi trying to help them, not as an
16	authoritarian as in their day. We do a number of surveys, questionnaires, though the best feedback was when the government tried to take away technology Teachers. The parents were up in arms and
17	became very supportive of all the different things the school was offering to their children.
18	Nil
19	Can't really specifically comment on that. Very little feedback other than mere mention in an unrelated conversation that their child had
20	shown me their work.
21	Parents are very pleased to see me in the classrooms and I often get comments such as

- 22 None.
- 23 Some good feedback via PTA. It makes a difference when you are visiting classrooms.

Follow Up Survey Question 5:

Job satisfaction: compared to the other aspects of your job how do you rate visiting classrooms?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
The most enjoyable aspect of the job	33.3%	8
One of the more enjoyable things I do	66.7%	16
I don't feel strongly about it either way	0.0%	0
Not something I enjoy	0.0%	0
The least enjoyable aspect of the job	0.0%	0
Comment to explain if you wish		10
<i>answered question</i>		24
<i>skipped question</i>		0



Number	Comment to explain if you wish	Categories
1	Wish I could do more but invariably fighting fires takes me away from what I plan to do to When you are up to your neck in paperwork or you have been reading some negative statement from the MOE or in the media about education...Going for a walk around puts clarity back into all the great reasons we do what we do.	
2	It is the essence o what we should be focussing on	
3		

4	My job is about the learning. Every decision I make is based on how it impacts on the children and classroom programmes.
5	In touch with reality
6	I still rate actually teaching a group of students the most enjoyable.
7	I love going to the rooms of all Year groups. I get to know the children, observe teacher engagement and join in on the learning process. It helps me make decisions regarding PD and teacher or student support.
8	Most Principals are in the job because they love working with children. That's why we became teachers and then moved up into management, but it is those relationships that you build with the kids which still give you the most job satisfaction.
9	It is always great to see wonderful things happening despite all the pressures of the day to day administrative compliance we have to do
10	love it

Follow Up Survey Question 6:

Any words of encouragement for colleagues who would like to be visiting classrooms more frequently?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	22
<i>answered question</i>	22
<i>skipped question</i>	2

Number	Response Text
1	Get your diary set up so that your classroom visits are in there first as a priority. How can you coach if you don't see the game - so make classroom visits an important part of your work. Look at what tasks you are doing that are not related to teaching and learning and where possible delegate these to other staff members who could carry them out. This might mean that you have to invest in building other staff capability but if it frees you up to do classroom visits it is worth it.
2	I didn't become a principal to sit in an office. If I don't get my classroom fix I question why I am in the role. The office staff comment that I come back to my office with a joy that only my classroom visits or assemblies gives me. I still don't do nearly as much as I would like to do, but find for every hour in a classroom I do another hour at night on catching up emails etc
3	Plan it in your diary and make it happen
4	See if the children know where they are at with their learning and that learning is transparent. Set a time so that you do not miss the opportunity to see classrooms in action and vary these times throughout the day. You will have a better understanding of the work going on at the frontline by making classroom visits.
5	Staff enjoy seeing you so get out there as it will also give you some respect.
6	Make it a priority - show yourself as a leading learner and a learning leader. Credibility and practical awareness shows you in a different light.
6	Get someone else to do the admin!! Management units are our school are allocated for some

- of the 'principal admin' tasks that I would rather not do - as I would like to concentrate on classrooms and curriculum.
- 7 Timetable the visits. Try not to let the urgent (incoming mail etc...) override the important - easier said than done - and overtake classroom visits. Be kind to yourself - I have times when I don't get into classrooms enough - don't feel guilty, be proactive and use your calendar or go for a quick walk about then and there so you stay in touch with the happenings in your school.
- 8 I find that it is really buzzy to be where the action is, seeing children share and celebrate their learning. It is reassuring as a Principal to see the progression of development as I move across different levels. I am always so impressed with the interaction within rooms and how capable children are to lead their own learning.
- 9 Make the time!! Ensure teachers know why you are visiting and when.
- 10 Fantastic, you see your school ethos, philosophy, pedagogy, tone, learning community in action.
- 11 Make a time at least once a week when you can pop in and see, talk etc - you might like to tell teachers you will be doing this so no-one feel any worries about this
- 12 This year I have booked out Monday and we'd and my office can make no appointments on that day. In the first half of the year I did walk throughs and try hard to priorities something directly related to curriculum or pedagogical leadership on these days eg coaching, reading teachers' reflective journals, visiting classes. I make a point of walking around the school and through every classroom most days.
- 13 Try the four minute observation path, it gets you into the rooms and gives you the opportunity to see where you need to spend more time.
- 14 Be clear about your purpose of why you visit classrooms and share this with staff transparently and often. Don't mesh your purposes - if you say you are just visiting to get a sense of the learning community...it's just that....evaluations and judgments need to be checked at the door.
- 15 Just do it. You started out as a teacher, so go back into the classroom. The office is not what we trained for. See the kids, see your staff in action. It then refreshes you for the next 40 minutes in the office.
- 16 Timetable it into your planner... and tell your office staff to be your gatekeepers, and get them to stop anyone intruding on your time that you have set down to visit rooms... or just visit rooms for 2 - 3 minutes every day at a certain time ie. just after roll call.
- 17 Finish a meeting or some paper work 5 mins before the bell in a block and pop into to see a class even if you just do one a day
- 18 Diarise it and do it!
- 19 Stick with it - it pays dividends in the end.
- 20 Just do it. It is a very enjoyable part of the day. You do have to keep at it however to keep it as a habit so you don't get captured by the admin etc of our job.
- 21 Get in there and enjoy seeing teachers making a positive difference. Children can articulate their learning well and support your decision making.
- 22 If you don't go, you won't know.

Follow Up Survey Question 7:

If you are happy for me to quote you directly in my report please write your name in the box below.

Answer Options	Response Count
	18
<i>answered question</i>	18
<i>skipped question</i>	6

Number	Response Date	Response Text
1	Sep 22, 2012 11:16 p.m.	
2	Sep 17, 2012 5:43 a.m.	Maree Bathurst
3	Sep 16, 2012 11:13 p.m.	Mary Wilson
4	Sep 13, 2012 1:41 a.m.	
5	Sep 13, 2012 12:59 a.m.	Linda Barton
6	Sep 13, 2012 12:52 a.m.	Juliet Small
7	Sep 13, 2012 12:29 a.m.	Lois Kirkbride
8	Sep 12, 2012 9:45 p.m.	Paul Engles
9	Sep 12, 2012 7:12 p.m.	Nicola Girling
10	Sep 12, 2012 10:50 a.m.	Carolyn Marino
11	Sep 12, 2012 6:17 a.m.	
12	Sep 12, 2012 4:37 a.m.	
13	Sep 12, 2012 4:37 a.m.	Nigel Davis
14	Sep 12, 2012 4:35 a.m.	Gillian Bray
15	Sep 12, 2012 4:02 a.m.	Dave Latimer
16	Sep 12, 2012 3:59 a.m.	Maurice Young
18	Sep 12, 2012 3:54 a.m.	Yes