

## Professional Learning and Development Accreditation

### Personal Profile

First name and surname	Allan Powell
Personal statement	Allan is a highly experienced facilitator. He enjoys working with schools and communities of learning to help solve complex issues, particularly finding ways to accelerate the achievement of students who find learning difficult. His skills in open to learning conversations and deep knowledge of what really causes learning are of huge benefit to schools with which he works.

### Professional learning and development overview

Allan has worked for over ten years as an education consultant. He works out of Evaluation Associates' Auckland office and is the team leader for the northern region. Allan works mainly in primary and intermediate school settings but has experience in secondary schools also. His specialist areas are:

- Evaluative capability
- Collaborative inquiry
- Teaching as inquiry
- Developing active learners – assessment for learning
- Open to Learning theory and practice
- Assessment – National Standards – data analysis and use – standardised assessment tools
- School leadership and change
- Coaching staff to lead learning within and across schools
- Literacy

### Professional information

**Qualifications**  
Allan has a Masters of Professional Studies in Education (First Class Honours), Bachelor of Music Education and Diploma of Teaching (Primary) from the University of Auckland.

**Professional learning and development expertise and experience**  
Allan has worked as a facilitator in the area of leadership and assessment for a number of years and, prior to that, supported schools through the Assess to Learn professional development contract. He has a wealth of knowledge of assessment for learning principles and practices. This includes how to grow students' 'learning to learn' skills, and the skills leaders need to build a learning-focused school. Allan has worked with dozens of schools across the top of the North Island, including primary and secondary, kura and integrated. He is utterly convinced from his work over many years that students who are deliberately taught to be active in the learning process **do** learn more and improve beyond expectations. Watching this happen is one of the highlights of his job.

Allan believes that educators who are serious about improvement must be serious about evaluation and inquiry. One of his facilitation strengths is supporting leaders and teachers to develop robust inquiry processes to address achievement issues. He is able to support leaders and teachers to synthesise information to define the issue clearly and takes them beyond their current thinking to challenge and critique their improvement plans. Having led a large team of facilitators in the Northern region, Allan is adept at pulling together a range of evidence from across schools in order to evaluate progress and adapt approaches as required.

A key element of evaluation is the use of evidence to determine what is important to focus on and to monitor improvement efforts. Allan has a great deal of experience and skill in how to collect, collate, analyse and interpret assessment information, and how to use it to meet the diverse needs of students. He can support schools with their use of standardised assessment tools such as e-aTTle and PAT, and with teaching students to understand what these mean for their learning. Allan also has specialist knowledge in National Standards assessment. Since the introduction of National Standards, he has been involved in the design and delivery of Ministry-funded workshops throughout New Zealand on how to make dependable OTJs. He is also able to support schools with their reporting to parents and

boards of trustees. A number of resources Allan has developed around OTJs and reporting have been published on Assessment Online TKI.

Allan is one of New Zealand's premier specialists in Open to Learning (OTL) conversations and his facilitation is based on the OTL principles of openness, honesty and respect. He has supported many senior and middle leaders to develop an understanding of OTL theory and practice. Schools are finding this learning increasingly relevant and important as they move towards more collaborative teaching and learning contexts. For example, Allan has worked with leaders of multi-teacher, innovative learning spaces to develop their communication skills, with team leaders responsible for building their colleagues' practice, with across-school leaders in Communities of Learning and with principals and senior leaders. In addition to supporting schools in this area, he has acted as tutor and marker for post-graduate studies in OTL conversations and supported Distinguished Professor Viviane Robinson with OTL research coding and course delivery at the University of Auckland. His Master's degree dissertation focused on OTL theory and practice and examined how school leaders addressed complex school issues.

Allan's facilitation experience is cross-curricular but he has particular expertise in how students learn to write and read. He has supported schools to develop writing and reading programmes and is able to model for teachers how to identify students' particular literacy needs and teach to those needs.

In his facilitation, Allan will always focus on what makes a difference for students' learning and achievement. He has a wide range of knowledge and skills which enable him to tailor professional learning to the specific needs of the schools and clusters in which he works.

## Summary of example of practice

An urban school in which Allan worked through the Leadership and Assessment contract had high levels of underachievement for its mostly Māori and Pasifika student population. The school sought Allan's support to help them raise achievement, particularly in writing. Allan co-constructed a plan with the school which involved learning for students, teachers and leaders. It was reviewed and modified regularly in response to need over the course of the professional learning, and included:

- Use of a teaching as inquiry process to inquire into the learning needs of targeted students.
- Developing teachers' knowledge of the progressions of learning in writing and how to use assessment information to determine students' learning needs
- Developing teacher knowledge and application of the active learner/ assessment-for-learning capabilities that build student agency and are shown by research to accelerate achievement
- Developing leaders' capability to lead the learning of teachers through establishing clear goals and expectations, observing teacher practice, and supporting teachers to engage in evidence-based inquiry. This included training in Open to Learning theory and practice.

During Allan's work with the school he worked closely with the leader of the rumaki Māori unit in the school to look at how the professional learning could be aligned with kaupapa Māori and the particular philosophy and values of the rumaki. Allan and the rumaki kaiako planned how he could bring his expertise to the rumaki Māori context while also learning from them about how the active learner capabilities were relevant and significant from a Māori world view. A key focus of Allan's facilitation of the PLD was helping leaders and teachers apply an evaluative/inquiry mindset. Progress in student achievement was monitored carefully and changes made as new inquiries emerged. The combination of employing an inquiry process and assessment for learning principles, and building knowledge of what to teach, resulted in a 32% increase in the number of students at or above the national standard for their year level at the end of the second year of professional learning.

## Referees

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