

Professional Learning and Development Accreditation

Personal Profile

Name	Debra Ryan
Personal statement	Debra is an approachable, knowledgeable and hands-on facilitator. She works collaboratively alongside leaders, teachers and students to support and evaluate practice and find ways to achieve success in each and every classroom. She recognises that no two students learn in the same way and so works with schools to instil the essential principles and practices of assessment for learning to ensure that each student flourishes at school.

Professional learning and development overview

Debra works as an education consultant in the Wairarapa, based out of Masterton. She has a wide range of skills and knowledge. Her specialist areas are:

- Assessment – standardised assessment tools – data analysis and use
- Assessment for learning – learners being active participants in their learning
- Teaching as inquiry
- Cultural inclusiveness
- Mathematics
- Collaborative inquiry
- Evaluative capability
- Coaching staff to lead learning within and across schools

Professional information

Qualifications

Debra has a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning from the Christchurch College of Education and University of Canterbury.

Professional learning and development experience

Debra has worked as a facilitator for Evaluation Associates since 2014, initially as a member of the Auckland team, before moving to Masterton with her young family in 2016. Prior to this she worked as a classroom teacher, team leader and acting assistant principal in primary schools in Wellington and Auckland. Although the majority of her teaching career was at intermediate level, she has also taught at most primary levels. Throughout her teaching career Debra was involved in a number of education initiatives and opportunities including piloting the numeracy project, being part of a lead school for the extending high standards contract and involvement in various second language learning opportunities including the Ministry of Education language immersion award.

Debra is passionate about students leading their learning and in her role as a facilitator she aims to support all teachers she works with to discover this passion within their practice too. To see students leading their learning in action is simply breathtaking – the joy, engagement and ownership are evident across all ability levels, cultures and backgrounds. Students who lead their learning are engaged and driven and this leads to increased student achievement, particularly for those students who are priority learners.

Debra is very astute, and skilfully coaches school leaders and teachers in their inquiries. She's able to help find the root causes of issues that arise, and her deep knowledge across the curriculum supports teachers and leaders build their knowledge. Teachers instantly warm to Debra's positive, constructive approach which is informed by training in open to learning leadership through Auckland University. Debra is also experienced in supporting lead teachers to lead the learning of others – she coaches them in using effective methods of professional learning including observation protocols and practice analysis conversations.

Debra knows that current, consistent and valid assessment is crucial to raising the achievement levels of all students. In her role she supports leaders and teachers to develop, analyse and introduce assessment systems that are appropriate to their learners, their needs, culture and interests.

Debra has deep knowledge of e-asTTle and Curriculum Progress Tools. She has provided support nationwide to schools in how to effectively use these tools to support achievement.

Summary of example of practice

While working as a leadership and assessment facilitator in a small suburban intermediate school, Debra identified the need to introduce assessment for learning to improve the students' achievement levels, with a particular focus on writing. Debra worked with the key stakeholders – leaders, teachers and students to achieve this by:

- Reviewing current assessment systems and processes, working with the leaders to improve these systems and involve the teachers in the decision making process including a focus on culture, language, gender appropriate to the students' backgrounds.
- Leading professional development workshops for the teachers in assessment tools. This ensured that all teachers were administering the assessment in the same way and that teachers had a greater knowledge of the assessment, its purpose and how it was going to support students to raise their achievement levels.
- Facilitating professional learning sessions on assessment for learning.
- Analysing assessment data with leaders and teachers– what does this tell us about our students? Where are the greatest needs? How can we best support this as leaders/teachers? How can we best resource this? She showed leaders how to calculate effect sizes to track progress over time.
- Modelling assessment for learning practices in all classrooms for teachers to observe and use as a model with other groups
- Observation of classroom practice, focused on assessment for learning practices.
- Speaking with priority learners about their learning, sharing their feedback with their teacher.
- Having practice analysis conversations with teachers, using evidence gathered from observations, data and student voice to analyse students' progress, focusing particularly on priority and target learners.
- Supporting leaders and teachers to use leading/teaching as inquiry to improve their practice and outcomes for their learners.
- Supporting opportunities for teachers to share the various digital technology/programmes/apps they use in their classroom and incorporating these into professional learning sessions.

In collaboration with leaders and teachers, Debra's facilitation in the school was successful in that the achievement levels of students in writing were greatly increased. The school had an overall effect size which showed that each priority learning group achieved more than two years' progress within one school year. Students were engaged in writing sessions and took greater responsibility for their learning. Students were clearly able to talk about what they were learning, why and how they were going to achieve this. They also referenced to assessments they had undertaken and how these aligned to what they were learning in class.

"Can't say anything apart from positives! Debra is the right person for our school. She has a very good knowledge of what needs to happen, and goes about her role in a professional non-threatening manner. Due to the way that she interacted with staff, the staff were willing to change their practice." - Feedback from a senior leader at the conclusion of the PLD.

Referees

Reference One

Referee name	Danielle Maclean
Contact number	(06) 368 7938
Contact email address	principal@koputaroa.school.nz

Reference Two

Referee name	Dave Finlayson
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