



## Professional Learning and Development Accreditation

First name and Surname	Margaret Hesketh
Personal statement	Margaret is a dedicated, hardworking learner, teacher and leader who enjoys working cooperatively and collaboratively with teams and individuals to help them develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes enabling them to be positive and effective learners and practitioners. Margaret is a new facilitator, working for Evaluation Associates. She comes with extremely recent school experience and has the capacity to assist schools with areas of development in order to raise student achievement.

### Your Professional Learning and Development Practice

<p>Margaret has been a primary and intermediate school educator for 29 years and a deputy principal for the past 14 years. She has recently joined Evaluation Associates as a Professional Learning and Development Facilitator for Primary Schools in the Wellington Area. Her specialist areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy – particularly Writing</li> <li>• Teaching as inquiry/ collaborative inquiry</li> <li>• Developing Active Learners – assessment for learning</li> <li>• Assessment – data analysis and use – standardised assessment tools</li> <li>• School leadership and change</li> <li>• Catering for diverse learners</li> <li>• Establishment of Innovative Learning Environments</li> <li>• Developing teacher-led appraisal systems</li> </ul>
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### Professional Information

<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <p>Margaret has a Master of Education with Distinction, Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Professional Development with Merit from Victoria University, Bachelor of Education and Diploma of Teaching from Wellington College of Education</p>
<p><b>Professional learning and development expertise and experience</b></p> <p>In her role as deputy principal Margaret has had responsibility for planning and facilitating numerous school professional development initiatives. She has also worked collaboratively with others to effect change within a school to improve student learning outcomes. Over the last three years she has collaboratively led the establishment of innovative learning environments in single-cell classrooms to meet the needs of 21st century learners.</p> <p>Margaret has extensive experience in collecting, collating and analysing data to inform both micro, and macro decisions within a school, leading to improved student achievement. She has a deep knowledge of strategies to increase student agency and, as a classroom teacher, used these to instil an enjoyment and motivation for learning. She has particular strengths and experience in Writing. During her time as a practitioner, Margaret was asked on many occasions to present to groups about her approach to teaching writing. She was a Key Teacher of Writing for Learning Media, which provided teachers the opportunity to observe and discuss her practice and approach.</p> <p>Margaret completed her Master of Education Degree in 2013. She completed papers in effective professional development, leadership and the use of coaching and mentoring to improve the practice. Margaret’s published thesis was on the professional development of primary school teachers with leadership responsibilities, in which she designed a framework of professional learning and development for teachers with leadership responsibilities.</p> <p>Inclusion for special learning needs is about students remaining in classes for instruction and maximising teacher aide support to enable the classroom teacher to work with students who have the greatest learning needs. In her role as a SENCO over a number of years, Margaret has supported and encouraged teachers to provide highly inclusive education for special needs students.</p>

## Summary of Examples of Practice

In an urban primary school in which Margaret was the deputy principal there were high levels of underachievement of Māori students and boys in Writing. Margaret was a member of a team working with a Student Achievement Facilitator to create and implement a Change Improvement Plan. Margaret designed a target student monitoring system for teachers to use progressively through the year that enabled the teachers to carry out the following:

- Back-track student achievement over the year so that feasible targets were set and monitored.
- Use and reflect on different deliberate acts of teaching to accelerate student learning.
- Collect student voice to increase understanding of learners' backgrounds and attitudes towards writing.
- Organise meetings with parents, family and whānau (PFW) to ascertain aspirations for their child as a writer.

The use of the target sheets prompted teachers to surface and question their own beliefs about the teaching of writing and inquire into their practice to accelerate the learning of the target students. The target sheet encompassed the principles of wananga, whanaungatanga and ako as meetings with PFW established rapport with parents. Connections strengthened throughout the year with regular meetings to report student progress and set new goals.

Margaret used Google Forms to ascertain student voice to critique teacher hunches about why students may or may not be achieving. Hunches confirmed from the data led to staff discussions and changes in teacher practice to address the identified issues. These actions had a significant impact on the professional development that occurred, resulting in 55% of boys and 75% of Māori target students moving from writing below the National Standard to meeting it.

Margaret has planned and facilitated the establishment of professional learning circles (PLCs) that utilises a coaching format to encourage teachers to inquire more deeply into their teaching practice through critical dialogue. The introduction of PLCs complemented and supported teaching inquiries into their practice. Margaret gained the commitment of staff by co-constructing the PLC process and communication norms. She supported staff to analyse data to identify needs, led a number of staff meetings to share research, reading and teacher experience about PLCs, and developed shared understanding of the value of PLCs in improving student learning. For the successful running of PLCs, Margaret provided activities that developed understanding and guided teachers to co-construct a document that provided: expectations for behaviour that enabled trusting, open and honest dialogue; protocol that teachers followed during the meeting time and effective coaching questions that lead to teacher reflection.

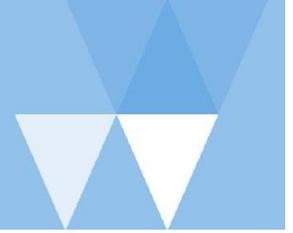
Margaret also created opportunities for teachers to reflect on the PLC process, voice their concerns and discuss how to make the PLCs more effective. These opportunities enabled Margaret to identify where further support and professional development was required.

The content of PLC discussions was often linked to teacher inquires and the school's strategic focuses, thus providing strong coherence with the school's strategic direction. Many changes made to teaching practice, as a direct result of the PLCs, led to improved student achievement results.

## Referees

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Example one	
<b>Evidence of Practice</b>	<p>This example of practice is from my role as deputy principal at a mid-sized contributing school. For three years, the school had carried out professional development in response to the Ka Hikitia strategy. The leadership team of which I was part led numerous staff meetings to unpack and understand the cultural competencies in Tātaiako and what Māori achieving as Māori looked like. To align cultural competencies with the professional teaching criteria, staff reviewed teacher appraisal documents and the leadership team revised these. <b>(Dimension 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)</b> Consequently, many strategic decisions were influenced heavily by our desire to see Māori tamariki succeeding. At the end of 2015, the school's student achievement data indicated issues in writing, particularly with a large percentage of Māori and male students achieving below the National Standards for writing. Consequently, the school engaged a Student Achievement Facilitator (SAF) in June 2016 to work with a team of teachers from across the school, the principal and me. The team was called the Change Team and their job was to plan and facilitate a Change Improvement Plan (CAP) to advance student achievement in writing with a focus on Māori learners.</p> <p>By the end of 2016, the data showed an increase in Māori students achieving at the National Standard. However, there were still a substantial percentage of Māori students achieving below expected levels. Therefore, these students became a target group for the school's 2017 student achievement goals and a focus for the Change Team's Change Improvement Plan (CAP). Although the number of Māori students in the school was not high, our approach continued to focus heavily on developing teachers' cultural competencies, on the understanding that this would have positive outcomes for Māori students as well as other target students, and also honour our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership. The Change Team was aware of the importance of wānanga and whanaungatanga in order to see Māori succeed (Ministry of Education, 2011). Therefore one key focus within the Change Improvement Plan was to improve educationally powerful connections with whānau as the school had struggled in previous years to engage with Māori whānau both on an individual and collective basis. <b>(Dimensions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 2.5)</b></p> <p>One of the strategies planned for, to achieve this in the CAP, was centred around using a number of different communication avenues such as texts, e-mail and Facebook to inform whānau of hui throughout the year in addition to personal contact with them. The decision to expand the way we communicated was driven by informal consultation with some whānau with whom we struggled to maintain contact previously. They indicated that electronic communication was an easier way for them to receive and send messages. Another goal set by the Change team was to investigate further the use of the Whānau Education Action Planner (WEAP) Tool to develop reciprocal partnerships with whānau. Subsequently, the Change Team met with a Ministry of</p>



Education official, who was developing the use of the WEAP tool with other schools, to talk about its use and benefits that were occurring as a consequence of this tool. (Dimensions 1.2, 1.3, 2.5) .

One of the initiatives the Change Team introduced during 2016 was to have teachers maintain monitoring sheets for each student who was identified as a target student. My role was to design the sheet, gather feedback for the Change Team and then introduce the use of it to teachers, ensuring that learning outcomes for the student were kept as the focus. This resource enabled teachers to think about the range of research-based factors integral to raising achievement and enabling Māori learners to achieve success as Māori. These factors included:

- Deep knowledge of the learner and building of strong relationships
- Knowing the historic progress of each learner (backtracking)
- Knowing the whānau and their aspirations for their tamariki. **(Dimensions 1.2, 1.3,)**

Tātaiako concepts drove the need to better understand the background of our Māori students and co-construct the learning of tamariki with their whānau. To do so I included a section in the monitoring sheet with questions for teachers to ask the target students about their interests, passions, the things they found easy and difficult in writing, and how teachers and whānau could help them become a better writer. Teachers were expected to make contact with whānau and ascertain their aspirations for their child, including writing. Whānau were asked what they wanted to see happen for their child at school during the year and, in particular, what did they want their child to achieve in writing? Teachers arranged face-to-face meetings to gather this information and to discuss with whānau why their child was a target student and construct plans for the child's learning throughout the year. **(Dimensions 1.2, 1.3, 2.1)**

The sheet also provided a tool for teachers to backtrack student achievement over the year so that feasible targets could be set and monitored. The sheet encouraged and challenged teachers appropriately to inquire into their teaching of writing and experiment with different deliberate acts of teaching to accelerate student learning. In doing so, the use of the sheet complemented the inquiry cycle that teachers were carrying out as part of their appraisal goals. **(Dimensions 2.2, 2.3)**

The second facilitation action that arose from my work within the Change Team was driven by the assertions and noticings the staff made about why Māori learners (and boys – another target group) were not achieving as well as other cohorts. Three of these assertions were:

- They may not recognise a purpose for writing.
- Individuals may prefer to write on digital devices.
- The school may not be teaching writing to Māori learners and boys in a way that relates to their experiences and appeals to them.

In a Change Team meeting, I voiced a concern that these were hunches rather than facts. Consequently, to confirm whether these hunches were correct, I created a student questionnaire using Google Forms for all Year 3 to Year 6 students to complete. This allowed the school to gather evidence and to inform decisions the Change Team would make in the future. **(Dimensions 3.2, 3.3)** The results from the questionnaire confirmed these assertions to be true. The results that had the greatest impact on me were from the assertion that the school may not be teaching our Māori boys writing in a way that relates and appeals to them. For this survey item, students were asked to complete the statement “I enjoy writing at school the most when.... The option that had the



highest percentage for both boys (90%) and Māori students (70%) was “I get a choice in what I write about.” As a classroom teacher, I allowed some choice but had been quite prescriptive in either the genre the students were asked to write in or the topic. **(Dimension 1.3, 2.5, 3.2)**

This data prompted me to carry out my teaching inquiry on how I might raise student achievement by implementing a writing programme where my Year 5 and 6 students were independent writers who were clear about their learning pathways and could evaluate and adjust their learning to meet their needs in partnership with me. After reading and reflecting on a variety of books and articles about the teaching of writing, I challenged myself to change some practice in order to achieve that goal. Many of the strategies I adapted and used in my teaching practice focussed on the Assessment for Learning dimensions (Absolum, 2006) of building learning focussed relationships and promoting further learning. To affirm my Māori learners as Māori and the competency of tangata whenuatanga, my aim was for them to have a far greater locus of control in determining their learning and the choices they made in their writing, thus making the learning relevant to them and letting them pursue their interests. **(Dimensions 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5)**

After much adapting and changing of teaching and learning strategies, I eventually wrote a philosophy of how I would run a writing programme. I shared this philosophy with the Year 5/6 teaching team, one of whom is in her fourth year of teaching and another a second-year teacher I had been mentoring. My aim in sharing my philosophy was to challenge and develop their beliefs about the teaching of writing to take subsequent action to make changes in their practice if needed. **(Dimensions 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5)**

Alongside this deliberate focus on changed practices for teaching Writing, I was cognisant of manaakitanga and the need to use, and pronounce correctly, Te Reo Māori throughout the school. Within my own practice, I developed further my personal te reo capability and included this daily within the classroom context. This included day-to-day instructions as well as planning and implementing lessons for the students to learn ngā kupu hōu relevant to other learning they were doing. A school expectation was that each teacher wrote and learnt their own pepeha as they could then teach the students to learn their own. In years prior to 2017 the school had consulted with the local papakāinga, to develop a pepeha that all students born in the area could use as a starting point from which to base and develop their own pepeha. Students from Year One learn this pepeha and each year, as they grow older, the students are encouraged to add and adapt to truly reflect their whakapapa. As a classroom teacher of Year 5 and 6 students, I supported the Māori students to find out about and write a pepeha that originated from their whānau which they could, in turn, teach me. **(Dimension 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.4)**

As a leader within the school, I supported other teachers in developing their use and pronunciation through constant use of te reo Māori in communications with them. This included introducing ngā kupu hōu in a weekly written communication giving the teachers an outline of events happening within the school. Teachers often approached me to clarify the use of, and correct pronunciation of, Māori kupu and I provided on-going support, as well as learning myself, in the weekly ‘Te Reo Hotspots’ in every staff meeting. Each term the school held a pōwhiri for new students and their whānau for which I sent a personal invite to all new families and whānau. In order to increase our Māori students’ sense of place and belonging, the school supported students to lead each part of the pōwhiri. I supported the students leading the karanga, haka – pōwhiri or whaikōrero by helping them learn and use the correct pronunciation in addition to delivering it in an appropriate manner. **(Dimensions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)**



	<p>Finally as an on-going practice the school held whānau hui for our Māori students. As part of developing further the concept of Ka Hikitia in the school curriculum, the leadership team aimed to co-construct a Year 6 leaver’s profile for Māori students. The school knew that Māori whānau should be integral in the development of this profile and so we sought to work in partnership with whānau to do so. In the planning and preparation for the hui the leadership team consulted closely with the Ministry of Education official with whom the Change Team had worked to ensure manaakitanga was maintained. I was able to support the teacher who was leading this initiative in two ways. Firstly, at our annual school matariki celebrations we personally invited Māori whānau to the upcoming hui. Secondly, in order to connect with whānau in ways in which they had indicated were useful, I supported the lead teacher to use the School Management System to contact and inform Māori whānau through bulk texting and e-mail. <b>(Dimensions 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 3.3)</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation and Evidence</b></p>	<p>This example of practice brings together a range of strategies that the school implemented to focus on acceleration of progress for targeted students, and in particular Māori students, while endeavouring to also support Māori students to achieve success as Māori. Some of these strategies were facilitated by me while others were jointly facilitated by other leaders and me. <b>(Dimensions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)</b></p> <p>The monitoring sheet I developed was intended as more than ‘just a sheet to fill in’; it enabled teachers to surface and question their own beliefs and attitudes about the teaching of writing, thus requiring them to continually seek and use evidence to inform their teaching decisions. Importantly, the sheet prompted teachers to learn more about their target students, both as learners and as people, in order to meet their learning needs. The inclusion in the monitoring sheet of a meeting to find out whānau aspirations for their children as writers was valuable, as it enabled whānau to engage with their child’s teacher in a non-threatening environment at a time and place suitable to them. The meetings provided an excellent opportunity for ako to occur; teachers learnt more about whānau knowledge and perspectives to help the tamariki achieve whilst whānau learnt how they could support their tamariki at home with their learning. It was found that the aspirations whānau had for their tamariki were aligned with what the school wanted for the students; they wanted their tamariki to feel happy and positive about learning so that they could make progress in their learning of writing. The practice of having meetings to ascertain whānau aspirations is something the school is continuing. At the beginning of 2018, the staff had professional development on the use of the WEAP tool by the Ministry of Education. During this session, teachers developed their questioning to allow for more effective wānanga. <b>(Dimensions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 3.3)</b></p> <p>The second key element of the Change Team’s approach, to build te reo and tikanga capability and practices, was done in consultation with both the school community and experts. While capability and practices definitely improved, we missed an important evaluation process in that we did not deliberately seek evidence about whether Māori learners or their whānau actually experienced this as enabling learners to experience success as Māori. This is clearly a focus for future years. <b>(Dimensions 1.3, 2.5, 3.2)</b></p> <p>In terms of the aim to accelerate achievement for Māori learners’ and boys’ achievement, there were significant shifts -particularly for Māori target students- in relation to the school’s student achievement goals. At the end of the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 17/31 of target students (58% of the writing target group) moved from ‘below’ to ‘at’ the standard by December.</li> </ul>



- 4/5 (80%) of the targeted Māori students moved to achieving the National Standard.
- 16/25 (64%) of the targeted boys moved to achieving the National Standard.

Student voice was collected from the target group to get their perspective of engagement and improvement in writing. For example:

- “This year I have made great improvements in writing because I have been writing well-thought out beginnings and adding lots of detail to my paragraphs to entertain my audience.” - *Year 5 Māori student*
- “This year, I have made improvements in my writing because at the start of the year I would go on and on about boring stuff that happens but now I am using language that keeps the reader interested. While writing my speech I added a lot of supporting detail unlike nearly anything else I have written.” – *Year 6 Boy*
- “My highlight of this year has been my writing because I've written longer stories that entertain my readers.” - *Year 6 Boy*

The change team identified a number of shifts in teacher practice as a direct result of implementing the strategies prompted by the monitoring sheets:

- Moving from the use of global goals for students to more specific, manageable, individual goals and deliberate acts of teaching to meet these with time-framed goals.
- Greater choice in what students write about, including writing contexts which relate to their experiences and heritage.
- A change from teachers having an awareness of our target students but not necessarily planning to meet their specific needs in a deliberate way to deliberate acts of teaching planned, discussed and reviewed in meetings. Looking at different approaches and ways to cater for target student learning needs to accelerate learning. **(Dimension 2.2)**

Although the number of targeted Māori students achieving at the expected standard had increased significantly, the Change Team did not gather any feedback on what impact the regular hui with whānau for the target students had. This was a major oversight. Use of a Google Form sent to whānau and teachers of each target student would be a non-threatening and efficient way of collecting this information. However, it is acknowledged that kanohi ki te kanohi may be whānau’s preferred way to make connections and share information of this kind. **(Dimension 1.2, 1.3, 3.3)**

Reflecting on how the use of the target student monitoring sheet was facilitated with staff, I would certainly change elements of my facilitation. In particular, I would focus more on how to support teachers to see it as a valuable tool to improve teaching and learning rather than something extra to be done. While there were tangible improvements to student learning outcomes and teachers inquiring consistently into their teaching practice at a deeper level, it was an initiative decided upon by the Change Team and created by me with limited input from all the teachers. The introduction of the sheet was too brief and lacked clarification of its purpose. In order to build stronger ownership of the process I would allow time for teachers to co-construct it and decide on the expectations of how the sheet was to be used. **(Dimensions 2.2, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2)**



With regards to my creation and use of the questionnaire to seek evidence to verify hunches about the teaching of writing, I found this as an extremely useful act of facilitation as we obtained student voice that confirmed the hunches that we had. In response to the issues identified and the data collected in the questionnaire, there were a number of school-wide discussions to inform and apply deliberate acts of teaching to address these concerns. One of the resounding issues that arose from the questionnaire was the need to allow student choice in writing. This can be seen to reinforce the concept of tangata whenuatanga, as teachers need to provide learning opportunities that acknowledge and value what the students bring to the learning and what they are interested in (Tataiako, Ministry of Education, 2011). **(Dimensions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 3.3)**

In my own class inquiry into the teaching of writing:

- I moved two out of the three target students to meeting the National Standard for Writing.
- A Year 5 Māori girl's PACT results showed a move from a range of 559 – 613 at the beginning of the year to 701 – 752.
- Over a five month period a Year 5 Māori boy moved from PACT range of 629 - 687 to 680 – 732

The two teachers mentioned above wrote the following about the sharing of my philosophy of writing:

Fourth year teacher:

*“Margaret shared her philosophy on writing at the beginning of 2018. As a result of reading her philosophy I was inspired to make some changes to my own teaching practice. In particular, I decided to focus on the power of student choice as a motivation tool for writing. With the concept of choice being a driving force for my writing practice I reflected on what I was currently doing and what my next steps could be for improving this. Margaret had many practical ideas to improve student voice and choice in the writing programme. I believe that this shift in practice has been of great benefit to the children with an increase in participation and engagement. In addition, as a result of reading her philosophy on writing I have decided that my own personal inquiry for 2018 to be based on student choice across all curriculum programmes.”*

Second year teacher

*“Earlier this year Margaret shared her philosophy of writing with me. This document, as well as Margaret's mentorship, have heavily influenced how I have implemented my writing programme this year. Influenced by Margaret's philosophy, I began the year by asking Room \_\_ what awesome authors do. This created an understanding of what they should aspire to do in their writing, thus providing direction. The next lesson I asked the class why it is important we can write in 10 years' time? This helped students understand that many of their heroes e.g. All Blacks, movie stars and pop stars need to be able to write in order to get to where they are. This appeared to increase the importance of being able to write, especially for the boys and Māori students.*

*Throughout Term One I unpacked the writing process with the students, from author's note book through to publishing. This has developed their understanding of the process noted authors take to publish a text. Because of their understanding of the requirements at each stage of writing, I have seen students develop further independence and metacognition in their writing.*



*Allowing choice in writing genre and topic has increased motivation for students to write, in particular boys and Māori students. Students often chose to write when rewarded with 'choosing time'. Through setting writing goals with students, I have seen many take ownership over their learning and writers who were considered 'reluctant' are now making positive learning gains.*

*Guided by Margaret's writing philosophy and mentorship I believe I have begun to implement a programme where students understand the relevance of writing to their lives, are developing independence, are motivated and making visible learning gains. There is a positive buzz during writing time in Room \_\_. Every lesson is thoroughly enjoyed and the students and I are excited for the next one."*

Through my own inquiry into the teaching of writing and the subsequent development of knowledge and skills I was able to facilitate change in others' teaching of writing to raise student interest and achievement. **(Dimensions 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3)**

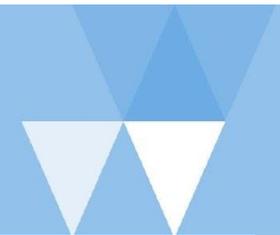
## Example two

### Evidence of practice

This second example of practice illustrates my work as a deputy principal when facilitating the establishment of formal professional learning groups (PLGs) for teaching staff to enhance the teaching and learning that takes place. At the time the school had 12 classroom teachers divided into three teaching teams: Junior, Middle and Senior. Within the staff there was a range of experience, some teachers were nearing retirement and two teachers were in their second year of teaching. All teachers were hard working and demonstrated a great deal of integrity in day-to-day activities. The professional development to introduce and implement PLGs commenced mid-year. **(Dimension 2.5, 3.1)**

There were two main reasons for introducing the use of PLGs within the school. Firstly, collaboration between teachers generally took place during team meetings where teachers worked closely together to plan and implement programmes to meet the learning needs of their students. They also shared successes and challenges occurring within their classrooms and sought support and guidance from the other members in the team in order to solve any problems they had. In the Education Review Office visit that occurred around this time, teachers commented on the formal opportunity provided to share ideas with one another about challenges they are having in their classroom; they felt that their contributions were valued by each other and they did not feel alone. They could see that the difficulties they were having were not unique. However many teachers lacked the confidence to share their skills and knowledge of teaching in any situation other than a team meeting or within small groups in a staff meeting situation. In order to build our staff's capacity, there was a need to establish a more structured vehicle for teachers to learn from each other in a situation other than in their own teaching teams. **(Dimension 2.5, 3.1)**

Secondly, the school is a data driven one. School-wide data achievements are shared with the staff and strategic goals are determined in response to the data. Within classrooms and teams, teachers constantly use formal and informal assessment records to make decisions about the learning needs of their students. At the beginning of the same year, professional development also began to advance the use of teaching as inquiry. Inquiries were carried out in



teaching teams using data from the previous year. End of year data showed that each team's inquiry had a positive impact on student achievement. The following year teachers were expected to carry out individual inquiries. The implementation of PLGs would provide another avenue in which teachers could reflect on and receive coaching in relation to their inquiries. **(Dimension 2.5)**

Rather than using the label of professional learning groups I chose to modify and introduce them as 'Transformative Learning Circles' (TLCs), transformative change being where critical analysis of practice and data prompts a teacher to challenge practice and deeply held beliefs about teaching and make changes accordingly. Within a learning circle, transformation can happen in the members' learning through the process of sharing teaching practice and the use of critical dialogue in order to discover alternative solutions. The use of the word 'Circle' rather than 'Group' advocates a collective strength and collaboration. Of course the acronym of TLC, tender loving care, had not escaped me! One aim for the TLCs was that there would be robust and critical dialogue taking place but carried out with honesty, dignity and care for one another. **(Dimension 2.4)**

The overall objectives for the inception of TLCs were:

1. Teachers will understand and appreciate the effectiveness of TLCs in order to improve student learning.
2. Teachers will feel confident and competent enough to carry out a TLC that elicits change in practice.
3. Teachers will feel valued, encouraged and supported sufficiently to surface deeply held beliefs and assumptions within the TLC.
4. Teachers will demonstrate modifications to their teaching practice resulting from the engagement in reflective and critical dialogue about their practice within a TLC.
5. Students' attitudes to learning and their level of achievement will improve as a direct result of the modifications made by teachers that were decided upon during a TLC.

Initially there was the need to create motivation and commitment to the productive action that TLCs would engender. Previous changes I had facilitated in the school had been ones that were mandated by the Government such as the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) and the introduction of National Standards. These changes had to happen and it was my job to facilitate the participation of, and learning by, the teachers in order to stimulate some ownership by them and embed those changes. However, TLCs were something that was not mandated and, although the teachers wanted to see their students succeed, they were reluctant to make changes if they could not see the benefits. Some teachers had taught for many years and had a certain amount of cynicism about changes in education. **(Dimensions 2.3, 2.5, 3.1)**

Therefore, to seek and use evidence to inform decisions, my first action was asking teachers to fill in a questionnaire that allowed them to examine the existing culture of the school. This was completed individually, and analysed collectively, by the teachers. Whilst the majority of teachers signalled that they felt the culture was a trusting one where power is shared and learning of students is the focus, the need for carrying out critical dialogue between teaching teams was identified. This critical dialogue would strengthen capacity further and consequently have increased positive impact on students' learning. This was the catalyst that illustrated to staff the relevance of and need for TLCs as they had made connections with their own beliefs and values. Consequently, teachers had a more favourable attitude towards wanting to learn about TLCs and establishing them. **(Dimensions 2.4, 2.5, 3.2)**



In order to illustrate to the teachers that TLCs were valued and valuable and not an added extra I needed to ensure the provision of time over an extended period. I arranged with the other teaching team leaders within the school to forgo two of the scheduled team meetings each term, to work with the entire staff, for the development and running of TLCs. **(Dimension 2.3)**

Although teachers had identified the school culture as a trusting one, I believed it was important to scaffold reflection and meaningful discussion in order to increase the relational trust that is needed within TLCs. To surface and engage their beliefs, attitudes and understanding of the concept of trust I provided an opportunity for them to have conversations about the good and bad experiences they had in regards to trust and identify the tangible actions that engender trust. As part of this teachers considered the entire teaching teams' areas of strength and areas to strengthen in relation to the actions that create trust. Making connections to this work I then asked the teachers to come up with a Learning Talk Covenant (Dalton & Anderson, 2010) that would be used as the norms for individuals to behave and interact within the TLCs. **(Dimension 2.4)**

Another vital component to the professional development I facilitated was to providing teachers with theory and research focussed on effective, reflective and intentional dialogue and the impact it has on teaching practice and subsequent student achievement. Time for reading was provided in the meetings rather than expecting readings to be completed in the teachers' own time. Various facilitation activities such as think, pair, share, Give One Take One, Tripod Inquiry and Jigsaw Groups were utilised in order for teachers to fully comprehend and synthesise the information they were receiving. Similar activities were used to equip the teachers with the understanding of a coaching role and effective questioning within a TLC situation. **(Dimensions 2.1, 2.5)**

As part of navigating the teacher's perceptions of risk in relation to participating in TLCs I invited two teachers from another school who had regularly participated in Quality Learning Circles (Stewart, 2008) for three years to speak with the teaching staff. They shared how, initially, the process was difficult as they were only allowed to question rather than give answers. However, this became easier with practice. The guest speakers also explained how QLCs enhanced their practice and raised student achievement. **(Dimensions 2.1, 2.3)**

The final meetings were used to generate commitment to the process, by the teachers. It was important to have them co-construct an objective for the TLCs, devise the protocol and integrate questions into each protocol stage. My role was to scaffold this through providing examples of each of these, time to read and opportunities to amalgamate ideas in collaborative groups. **(Dimensions 2.3, 2.5)**

After six staff meetings, over three terms, it was time to carry out TLCs in groups of teachers from across the school. Before this occurred I had the Senior Leadership Team model a TLC session using the protocols the staff had devised. It was paramount that the staff could see the leaders in the school carrying out the same learning activities that were expected of them. I was the individual who presented a teaching dilemma and was questioned by the others in the group. A video recording was made of the session so that newcomers to the school were able to see a TLC in action prior to participating in one themselves. **(Dimensions 2.1, 2.4)**



<p><b>Evaluation and evidence</b></p>	<p>After a year of teachers participating in TLCs I provided an opportunity to review them using an appreciative inquiry format. Teachers were enjoying the opportunity to talk about their practice with others they would not normally talk with. The issue that arose was the frustration that teachers could only ask questions and could not give solutions to the individual presenting. From this feedback, I could see that I had not spent enough time on developing the teachers' understanding of the purpose of coaching. To address this I led a staff meeting where I provided further reading about how coaching provided individuals with a platform to elicit solutions for themselves thus providing greater impetus to make changes to their teaching practice. Although leaving somewhat dissatisfied, teachers persevered with the process, became more comfortable with it and had a greater appreciation for the coaching format. <b>(Dimensions 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2)</b></p> <p>Establishing the TLCs provided the teachers with an opportunity to discuss dilemmas they had in their teaching. Often the dilemmas were linked with teacher inquires linked to the school's strategic focus thus allowing increased coherence with the school's developmental direction. Preparation/Reflection sheets developed two years after the start of TLCs allowed teachers to formally record their thoughts and decisions and use these as artefacts for appraisals.</p> <p>TLCs are now part of the inquiring culture of the school after being run for several years. Teachers have become more comfortable with the process. The supporting paper work that came from the original professional development, and some that were later developed in staff meetings that I led, provide new teachers with clear guidelines of what is expected in a TLC meeting. <b>(Dimensions 2.4, 2.5)</b></p> <p>When teachers were asked about the benefits of TLCs they wrote:</p> <p><i>Teacher One: TLCs have helped me modify and review my practice multiple times. One example of this was last year when I was struggling to find a way to fit in working with my target children. There did not seem like there were enough days in the week to give the children the extra support they all needed. It was beneficial to have time to reflect on this with my group. With their support, I settled on talking to the rest of my team about 'working smarter, not harder'. Instead of all four of us trying to fit in target groups across the syndicate, why didn't we pool our resources/skills and have two teachers take sessions with the target children whilst the other two led Community Time? We trialled this idea immediately and it worked fantastically. We could then work with our target writers for three extra sessions a week. Almost all made accelerated progress as a result! We have continued to build on this in our Hub of 4 this year. We now have time for 3 sessions for our target writers and target mathematicians respectively, and we are already seeing progress.</i></p> <p>This teacher mentions the accelerated progress of the targeted students in writing in the syndicate she taught in. Of the 12 students who were judged as being below the National Standard for their year at the beginning of the year, eight students progressed to meeting the National Standard.</p> <p><i>Teacher Two: As a result of inquiring into my practice and reflecting during a TLC session I scaffolded and supported students to participate in quality mathematical discussions. Videoing small group sessions provided both the students and myself the opportunity to reflect on the quality of the talk happening. We co-constructed norms, explicitly identifying expectations for participating in discussions. I also considered how I could use questioning to promote thinking and support students to elaborate on their ideas during discussions. As a result of these changes students were clear about the expectation</i></p>



*for them to actively contribute to their learning. They developed increased confidence in talking about their problem-solving strategies, were able to actively listen to the ideas of others, notice connections between their thinking and others then use these to build on their own. Students also showed improvements in building arguments to support their thinking and were beginning to question the reasoning of others when it differed to their own. There were improvements in student ownership of discussions as well. Students were observed noticing inconsistencies and errors then revisiting their thinking to correct these without teacher intervention when working collaboratively.*

*Teacher Three: The process of organising and preparing something for my TLC group has given me time to think about how things are going in my classroom. At times it has not been a 'problem' that I needed to fix, but instead how I could improve my teaching and implement best practice. In one TLC meeting I reflected on the reading programme that I ran in my Year 2 class. The children followed a rotation of independent activities that were chosen by me. This system was working well and the children were settled. However, it didn't fit with what I knew about children's motivation and the power of choice. Through the process of the TLC group I was able to answer questions and reflect on what I was doing. This led me back to the knowledge that giving children choice in their learning motivates them and helps them become self-directed learners. As a result I changed the way I ran my reading programme to include more choice through 'Must do' and 'May do' activities. The children could choose the order of the tasks, what they did and how long they spent on it; effectively managing themselves and making their own decisions. I noticed a real difference in the children's enthusiasm, motivation to read and in their ability to manage themselves and their learning. The TLC process gave me time to stop and reflect on my practice and I believe it has helped me make positive changes in my teaching as a result.*

On reflection I was satisfied with my facilitation of this change. The learning was facilitated over time and created a learning environment in which the teachers were actively engaged. The success of the TLCs was very dependent on the extent to which the teachers had input into developing the goals and procedures. The activities I planned and facilitated stimulated teachers to collaborate effectively to develop a comprehensive protocol that has withstood the test of time and is seen by teachers as directly impacting on their capability to meet the needs of students.