# Measuring classroom practice in literacy

## Final report of Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

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## Introduction

To date, much of the information we have about classroom practice has come from teacher self-reporting with data gathered through surveys, logs, diaries, and/or interviews (Burstein, McDonnell, Van Winkle, Ormseth, Mirocha & Guitton, 1995). To a lesser extent, information has been gathered about teachers' classroom practice through structured observation schedules, video and/or audio recordings of lessons, student interviews, and the collection of artefacts including teachers' documentation and students' work (see for example, Henk, Marinak, Moore, & Mallette, 2003; Hoffman, Sailors, Duffy, & Beretvas, 2004; Junker, Matsumura, Crosson, Wolf, Levison, Weisberg, & Resnick, 2004; Stigler, Gonzales, Kawanaka, Knoll, & Serrano, 1999). An ongoing issue in the field has been the lack of agreement between multiple data sources. Burstein et al. (1995) for example reported a lack of agreement among survey, log, and artefact data in measuring various aspects of the curriculum. In addition, with respect to gathering data about the frequency of instructional activities, it was found that while teacher survey responses and daily logs averaged around 60 percent agreement, this agreement ranged from 28 to 80 percent depending on the actual activity, and teacher logs and independent observer data agreement ranged from 55 to 98 percent (Stigler et al., 1999).

More specifically, there are in New Zealand few if any widely used and proven tools for gathering information about teachers' literacy practice. In contrast, researchers and teachers in the United States have access to a number of such tools. The majority of these however either lack alignment with the New Zealand context and/or emphasise the measurement of instructional practice in order to evaluate large-scale teaching reforms (e.g., Junker, Matsumura, Crosson,

Wolf, Levison, Weisberg, & Resnick, 2004; Sawada, Piburn, Judson, Turley, Falconer, Benford, & Bloom, 2002). Thus a central purpose of the current project was to develop a reliable and valid means of capturing the critical elements of *New Zealand* teachers' literacy practice in Years 1–8. It was intended that the approach taken to capturing these elements would have research *and* practical value, enabling researchers to sample classroom practice and teachers to identify areas for professional learning.

Following analysis and evaluation of possible approaches to gathering data about the critical aspects of teachers' practice, it was decided that the *primary* tool for data collection would be a structured observation instrument (Observation Guide). This approach was deemed to offer the most practical, systematic and efficient means for researchers and teachers to capture and document what was happening in literacy programmes, as it was happening[1]. Development of the Observation Guide occurred over two phases: phase one (2006) and phase two (2007).

## Developing the Guide: Phase one (2006)

The partners involved in phase one were three researchers from the University of Auckland and five teachers from two Auckland schools: Newmarket and Mangere Central. Newmarket is an inner city, decile 9, contributing primary school (Years 1–6 students) with predominantly Asian (43%) and Pakeha (39%) students. Mangere Central is a decile 1, South Auckland full primary school (Years 1–8 students) with predominantly Pasifika (71%) and Maori (28%) students. Sometimes the three university researchers met together, at other times they met with teachers from one or both of the school partners. These latter meetings, held at regular intervals throughout 2006, focused on identifying and reaching agreement about the critical elements of best practice in literacy teaching, expressing these elements as observable indicators and incorporating the indicators into an instrument that facilitated reliable observation and valid interpretation of teachers' literacy practice. Involvement of practitioners in such activities is critical in establishing the validity and credibility of both the development process and the instrument.

### Identifying and reaching agreement about the critical elements of teachers' literacy practice

The university partners started the process by carrying out a search of national and international literature for research evidence that highlighted elements of effective literacy practice (e.g., Alton-Lee, 2003; Farstup & Samuels, 2002; Wray & Medwell, 2001). Findings are included in Table 1.

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[1] Supporting data about teachers' literacy practice was gathered (by the teachers and researchers) through the collection of artefacts and brief semistructured interviews with selected students.

Table 1 **Elements of effective literacy practice**

| Elements of effective literacy practice | Literature and research evidence |
| --- | --- |
| Activation of students' prior literacy experiences and knowledge | Alton–Lee & Nuthall (1992, 1998); Mayo (2000); Myhill (2006) |
| Sharing the goals of learning with students; co-constructing the goals with students; students setting their own goals | Clarke (2005); Crooks (1988); Marshall (2004); Sadler (1989) |
| Sharing expectations with students about what constitutes successful learning (verbal descriptions; exemplars) | Clarke (2005); Marshall (2004); Sadler (1989) |
| Sharing success criteria with students; co-constructing s/c with students; students creating their own s/c | Clarke (2005); Marshall (2004); Sadler (1989) |
| Teachers have an expectation that all students can and will learn to read and write | Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson (2003); Phillips, McNaughton, & McDonald (2001); |
| School-based alignment between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment | Luke, Matters, Herschell, Grace, Barrett, & Land (2000) |
| Curricular alignment: alignment between goals of learning, task design (teaching/learning activities), teaching and feedback | Alton-Lee (2003); Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1992); Biggs (1999) |
| Teachers set challenging literacy activities for students | Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Teacher uses "deliberate acts of literacy teaching": modelling; explanations; questioning; prompting; feedback; telling; directing | Freedman & Daiute (2001); Mayo (2000); Ministry of Education (2003, 2006); Myhill & Warren (2005) |
| Use of a range of appropriate approaches to the teaching of reading:<br><br>• reading to students<br><br>• shared reading<br><br>• guided reading<br><br>• reciprocal reading<br><br>• independent reading<br><br>• literature circles | Eke & Lee (2004); Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Use of a range of appropriate approaches to the teaching of writing:<br><br>• language experience activities<br><br>• shared writing<br><br>• guided writing<br><br>• independent writing | Eke & Lee (2004); Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Scaffolded learning (through, for example, explicit prompts, activities, peer involvement, feedback, appropriate resources/texts) | Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1998); Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson (2003); Clay (1979); McDonald (1993); Mayo (2000); Myhill & Warren (2005); Phillips & Smith (1999) |

| Elements of effective literacy practice | Literature and research evidence |
| --- | --- |
| Sufficient and effective opportunities provided for students to learn—*aligned time on task* | Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1990); Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1992); Eke & Lee (2004); Walberg (1999) |
| Teacher provides sufficient opportunities for students to engage in authentic literacy activities (in student's first language); | Alton Lee & Nuthall (1990); Freedman & Daiute (2001); Nixon & Comber (2006); Squire (1999) |
| with ample opportunities to practice and apply learning | |
| Opportunities are provided for students to engage in meaningful literacy-related conversations in English (where English is not their first language) | Met (1999); Nixon & Comber (2006) |
| Opportunities are provided for differentiated learning through:<br><br>• differentiated teaching/learning activities<br><br>• differentiated resources | Eke & Lee (2004); Freedman & Daiute (2001); Nixon & Comber (2006) |
| Opportunities for peer interactions | Gillies (2002); Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock (2001); Nuthall (1997); |
| Opportunities for co-operative learning | |
| Opportunities for reciprocal teaching | Palinscar & Brown (1989); Vaughan (2002) |
| Use of appropriate literacy exemplars, models, vignettes (these are aligned with learning goals . . . ) | Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Students are engaged with a range of appropriate texts (related to goals of learning and student learning needs) | Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Links between reading and writing are made explicit | Mayo (2000) |
| Provision of a text-rich environment | Farstup & Samuels (2002); Freedman & Daiute (2001); Mayo (2000); Ministry of Education (2003, 2006); Wray & Medwell (2001). |
| Quality interactions between teacher and student(s) | Myhill (2006); Quinn (2004); Ward & Dix (2001, 2004) |
| Teacher scaffolding of class discussions (use of prompts, using examples, contrasts, sustained wait time) | Alton-Lee, Diggins, Klenner, Vine, & Dalton (2001); Myhill (2006); Myhill & Warren (2005); Quinn (2004) |
| Teacher "opens up" interactions with students | Myhill (2006); Myhill & Warren (2005); Smith & Higgins (2006) |
| High proportion of literacy related talk:<br><br>• teacher and student(s)<br><br>• student(s) and student(s) | Myhill (2006); Myhill & Warren (2005); Quinn (2004) |
| Quality interactions between teacher and student(s) | Myhill (2006); Myhill & Warren (2005); Quinn (2004); Ward & Dix (2004) |
| Teachers draw on their knowledge bases to inform their teaching/interactions:<br><br>• knowledge about students (in the class; students of the same level/age/stage; students as literacy learners) | Cowie & Bell (1999); Shulman (1987); |

| Elements of effective literacy practice | Literature and research evidence |
| --- | --- |
| - *literacy knowledge (subject / content knowledge)*<br>- general pedagogical knowledge<br>- pedagogical content knowledge<br>- knowledge of literacy learning<br>- curriculum knowledge<br>- knowledge of educational contexts<br>- knowledge of educational aims and objectives | Braunger & Lewis (1998); Indrisano & Squire (2000); Ministry of Education (2003, 2006); New London Group (1996) |
| - Close monitoring of student learning with data used to inform teaching | Black & Wiliam (1998); Cowie & Bell (1999); Phillips, McNaughton, & McDonald (2001) |
| Use of a range of procedures and tools to gather information about students' literacy learning (assessment) | Ministry of Education (2003, 2006) |
| Feedback is related to learning goals/objectives | Black & Wiliam (1998); Hattie (1999); Marshall & Drummond (2006); Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock (2001) |
| Feedback identifies achievement | Black & Wiliam (1998); Tunstall & Gipps (1996) |
| Feedback identifies "next step" in learning (improvement) and how to take it | Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson (2003); Black & Wiliam (1998); Hawe, Dixon, & Watson (2008); Tunstall & Gipps (1996) |
| Students are involved in generating feedback, determining where to go next and the strategies to achieve the next step(s) | Hawe, Dixon, & Watson (2008); Sadler (1989); Tunstall & Gipps (1996) |
| Inclusion of peer assessment opportunities/action | Hawe, Dixon, & Watson (2008); Sadler (1987); Tunstall & Gipps (1996) |
| Inclusion of self-assessment opportunities/action | Hawe, Dixon, & Watson (2008); Tunstall & Gipps (1996) |
| Encouragement of student self-monitoring and self-regulation | Hawe, Dixon, & Watson (2008); Marshall & Drummond (2006); Palinscar & Brown (1989); Xiang (2004) |
| Use of assessment information to inform teaching: planned, interactive approaches | Black & Wiliam (1998); Cowie & Bell (1999) |
| Management practices facilitate learning | Alton-Lee & Nuthall (1992); Kounin (1970) |
| Class literacy time is spent on literacy-related activities | Brophy (2001) |
| Climate of respect | Brophy (2001); Myhill (2006) |
| Inclusive learning environment; development of a learning community | Alton-Lee (2003); Bossert (1979); Brophy (2001); Nuthall (1999) |
| Acknowledgement of diversity/diverse learners (linked to scaffolding) | Brophy (2001); Nuthall (1999) |
| Teacher responsiveness to student learning processes | Brophy (2001); Myhill (2006); Nuthall (1999) |

| Elements of effective literacy practice | Literature and research evidence |
|---|---|
| Teacher responsiveness to diverse learners, based on knowledge of each student, the student's pathway of progress, the student's characteristics as a literacy learner . . . | Alton-Lee (2003); Freedman & Daiute (2001); Nuthall (1999) |

A list of elements based on those in Table 1 was sent to all partners for consideration prior to a meeting. In the main, discussion at the meeting centred on teasing out what each element entailed and the addition of elements identified by the teachers as integral to their literacy practice. Time was also spent grouping "like" elements together and assigning names to the overarching category. A revised list with categories and constituent elements was then compiled and circulated for further comment. Refinements were made in response to feedback and revisions circulated until all partners were satisfied that the critical elements of literacy practice had been identified. The next stage involved translation of the agreed-upon elements into statements of observable behaviour.

## Translation of elements of effective literacy practice into behavioural indicators

Four key issues emerged as the elements of literacy practice were translated into statements of observable behaviour. In the first instance, the need to have indicators that were directly observable meant that categories such as teachers' expectations and teachers' knowledge of students were not considered for inclusion in the Observation Guide. It was decided these would be best explored through the peer conversations that followed a cycle of teaching, peer observation, and feedback.

Secondly, teachers from both partner schools requested that the academic language used for some elements be adjusted to make ideas more accessible. In addition, they asked for terms that were already part of teachers' professional and literacy language to be incorporated into the behavioural statements.

Thirdly, it is noted in the literature that attempts to capture elements of teacher behaviour in statements of observable practice often result in overly technicist and prescriptive statements (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Reynolds & Salters, 1995; Wolf, 1995) that trivialise and fragment practice. At the other extreme, statements of observable practice can be so nebulous they fall foul of Scriven's (1996) "swamp of vagueness" and as a result can be interpreted in multiple ways. Sadler (1987) has argued, however, that verbal descriptions are always to some degree vague or fuzzy. Rather than attempting to make them sharper through the language used (a solution that may not be possible given the nature of language—see, for example, Marshall, 2004; Sadler, 1987) their fuzziness can be offset, to some degree, by the use of exemplars which illustrate key aspects of the behaviour in question. Moreover, descriptions of behaviour have their

interpretation circumscribed, more or less adequately, over time, through usage-in-context (Sadler, 1987).

Once the verbal descriptions had been developed, attention turned to the layout of the Guide and how observations would be recorded, that is, the type(s) of scales to use. In some cases such as 1.3 (Figure 1) and 2.7 (Figure 2), a continuous descriptive rating scale (Linn & Gronlund, 1995) was created where each point on the scale was identified through a brief verbal statement.

Figure 1 **Appropriateness of time spent**

| 1.3 Appropriateness of time spent on the learning aim and success criteria given their significance |
|---|

| \| | \| | \| | \| | \| |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| much less time could be spent | less time could be spent | appropriate time | more time could be spent | much more time could be spent |

Figure 2 **Degree of alignment**

| 2.7 Degree of alignment between <u>class</u> activity and learning aim / success criteria | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No alignment | Tenuous alignment | Reasonable alignment | Strong alignment |

In the majority of cases however the "rating scale" consisted of four or five points with each point defined by a set of brief statements or verbal descriptions. In several instances, as illustrated in 1.1 (Figure 3), although it was likely that the points on the scale were underpinned by an asymtopic continuum, the intention was to treat them as discrete entities.

Figure 3 **Presence and quality of learning**

| 1.1 Presence and quality of learning aim and success criteria | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1.1** No learning aim expressed | **1.1.2** Learning aim implicit in teaching / learning activities | **1.1.3** Learning aim expressed either: in general terms ☐ as a topic ☐ as a task ☐ | **1.1.4** Learning aim expressed as a specific cognitive process or skill |

In other instances, such as 3.2 (Figure 4), while the points on the "scale" had the appearance of being discrete, it was intended that more than one point could be "met" during an observation.

Figure 4 **Quality of improvement**

| _3.2 Quality of improvement related feedback_ | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.2.1** Teacher provides feedback regarding aspects to improve but these are not related to the success criteria, learning aim or generic aspects of literacy learning | **3.2.2** Teacher's feedback about areas for improvement refers in a general manner to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | **3.2.3** Teacher tells the learner about **what** needs to be improved, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | **3.2.4** Teacher tells the learner about **how** to improve their work, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | **3.2.5** Learner and teacher discuss _(with learner 'taking the lead')_ **what** needs improvement and **how** to go about this, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |

Users of the Guide were to be alerted to these differences in scale and how to apply them, during training sessions. Provision was made for observers to record evidence related to their ratings in the right-hand side of the Guide sheet.

## Developing exemplars of literacy practice

Once an initial draft of the Observation Guide was constructed, it was sent to the partner schools for feedback. During a meeting involving all partners, it was agreed that the development process and later training in the use of the Guide would be enhanced if those involved had access to instances of "typical" literacy practice in a concrete format, that is, in the form of exemplars. To this end, three of the teachers offered to be videoed, "fly-on-the-wall" style[2], as they taught a series of "typical" reading and written language lessons.

Video-taping of the teachers' practice resulted in production of over 15 hours of unedited tapes. At this stage one of the teachers withdrew from the project and all data traceable to her including video-taped lessons of her junior class were removed. As a result valuable footage that had ensured coverage in terms of diversity of class level and teacher practice was lost. Permission had been given by the remaining two teachers for use of the videos (both the unedited and shorter versions) to train teachers in the use of the Guide and to establish inter-rater reliability when making practice-related judgements. These lessons were initially viewed in their entirety by the researchers to determine whether the critical teacher moves evident in these literacy lessons had been captured in the Guide. At the same time, extracts suitable for editing into shorter exemplars

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[2] The need for these had been anticipated and appropriate ethical processes put in place through the University of Auckland's Human Participants' Ethical Committee.

of practice (15–20 minutes each) were identified[3]. These exemplars highlighted a number of typical pedagogical and literacy-related practices such as the development of students' understanding of learning intentions, the modelling of specific literacy skills, and making links to students' prior literacy experiences.

Five exemplars were initially created and sent to teachers from the two schools who independently viewed the videos, then re-viewed them using the Guide to record their observations. The researchers undertook the same exercise. Meetings were then held with each partner school to discuss how the Guide had worked. Areas of strength and areas needing further development were identified. The researchers incorporated feedback from each school and from their own appraisal into a revised version of the Guide.

## Trial of the Guide with exemplars

Once the revised version was developed, two teachers from Newmarket School and one from Mangere Central agreed to participate in an exercise to determine levels of agreement between independent observers when using the Guide to observe two of the video-taped lessons. The exercise aimed to highlight areas of teachers' literacy practice in the Guide where the teacher-observers readily reached agreement and those where there was a significant amount of disagreement. Overall, results showed 61 percent agreement among the three observers for the first lesson and 51 percent for the second lesson. Data were analysed according to each of the sub-categories on the Guide so specific areas of agreement or disagreement could be highlighted. Table 2 summarises the percentage of observer agreement over the three observations of two lessons, according to the sub-categories in the Guide.

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[3] The sound quality of these was affected by the "fly-on-the-wall" approach to videoing—transcripts of the lessons/interactions were made to accompany use.

Table 2 **Observer agreement when using the Guide to record judgements while watching video exemplars of practice**

| Observation Guide categories and sub-categories | Percentage agreement |
|---|---|
| 1. Learning aim and success criteria | |
| 1.1 Presence and quality of learning aim & success criteria | 91 |
| 1.2 Developing students' understanding of learning aim and success criteria | 100 |
| 1.3 Appropriateness of time spent on learning aim/success criteria given significance | 50 |
| 2. Learning/teaching activities | |
| 2.1 Relationship between teacher modelling and learning aim/success criteria | 83 |
| 2.2 Link(s) made to students' prior knowledge/understanding to support current learning | 33 |
| 2.3 Deliberate acts of teaching | 33 |
| 2.4 Teacher interactions with students | 63 |
| 2.5 Extent of teacher and student engagement in learning-related talk | 75 |
| 2.6 Overall appropriateness of lesson pace | 100 |
| 2.7 Degree of alignment between class activity and learning aim/success criteria | 66 |
| 2.8 Degree of alignment between learning purpose and group activity | 8 |
| 2.9 Evidence of differentiation | 50 |
| 2.10 Overall appropriateness of lesson pace | 83 |
| 3. Feedback about students' productive activity during reading and/or writing | |
| 3.1 Quality of achievement-related feedback | 33 |
| 3.2 Quality of improvement-related feedback | 50 |
| 3.3 Self-regulating prompts | 83 |
| 3.4 Opportunities for quality peer assessment | 33 |
| 3.5 Opportunities for quality self-assessment | 66 |

The teachers involved in this exercise met with members from the university team to discuss the findings with particular attention given to areas where there was less than 70 percent observer agreement. Once again, feedback was incorporated into a further iteration of the Guide.

## Feedback from experts

When the Observation Guide was near its final form, it was sent to three literacy experts for one last set of feedback. The basis for this feedback differed as each person was asked to review and/or trial the Guide and the short videoed exemplars with specific reference to their area(s) of expertise and experience. The first of these experts, an author of numerous literacy guides for teachers in New Zealand schools, gave feedback in relation to her use of the Guide to record observations drawn from the video-taped exemplars. The second expert, an experienced teacher and literacy facilitator, provided feedback in terms of how the categories and elements included in the Guide related to classroom settings she worked in. The third expert, an accomplished teacher and senior manager with school-wide responsibility for and expertise in literacy, first reacted to the Guide then provided information based on her "real-time" use of it when observing literacy lessons at her school. Feedback from these experts was incorporated into the eleventh version of the Guide (see Appendix 1). This version was used in phase two of the study.

## Phase two (2007)

Phase two was conducted at Berkley Normal Middle School, a decile 9 state school in Hamilton. This phase involved all of the teachers at the school in a year-long trial of the Observation Guide under the guidance of the school's literacy leader, Wendy Foster, in association with Judy Parr and Eleanor Hawe from the University of Auckland.

## Using the Observation Guide to observe and make qualitative judgements about teachers' literacy practice

Staff at Berkley Normal Middle School used the Guide from February to October as the focus for making qualitative judgements about teachers' literacy practice during seven cycles of literacy teaching, peer observation, and feedback. The frailty of observers' or appraisers' qualitative judgements has been well documented in the literature with the majority of concerns centred on issues of reliability and bias (Koretz, Stecher, Klein, & McCaffrey, 1994; Linn, 1994; Mullis, 1984; Sadler, 1986). Such judgements can however be made more dependable when points of reference for making judgements are developed and disseminated in appropriate forms—in the case of this project, the Observation Guide—and when observers or appraisers are given relevant conceptual tools such as exemplars, and practical training (Sadler, 1987). The latter was provided through professional learning sessions (of 80–90 minutes' duration) held with staff, prior to the beginning of each cycle. During these sessions staff members were introduced to the section of the Guide that was the focus of the upcoming cycle. In addition, video-based exemplars of practice were used where appropriate, and professional readings of relevance to the focus area provided. The aims of these sessions were to develop shared understandings regarding the verbal

descriptions used in the Guide, become familiar with protocols for use, and address implementation issues.

To illustrate, the first of these training sessions centred on Section 1 of the Observation Guide (1.1; 1.2; 1.3) and on parts of Section 2 (2.1; 2.2; 2.3)—all of these were related to the use of literacy learning intentions and success criteria (see Appendix 1). As learning intentions and success criteria were an established part of teachers' practice at this school, it was anticipated that staff members would have a reasonably sound and shared understanding about what these entailed and how they "played out" in a literacy context. Prior to the meeting, all teachers had been given a short extract to read about learning intentions and success criteria (Absolum, 2006). Each section of the Guide (1.1–2.3) was examined in turn at the meeting with reference to specific points raised in the extract. In addition, literacy-based examples were used to illustrate what each category "looked like" in practice. Interestingly, much time was spent discussing two of the statements included in 1.1: that the learning aim is "expressed as a specific cognitive process or skill" and that success criteria "include a standard or progressions/levels of achievement in relation to each element or property of the learning". With reference to the first of these statements, staff members were unsure what was meant by "specific cognitive process or skill" and asked for examples related to their current literacy programme. This resulted in an impromptu appraisal of learning intentions in the current programme. Discussion regarding the second statement indicated that, in the main, teachers at the school broke each learning intention into a number of constituent elements and each of these elements had a single success criterion attached to it, often expressed in terms of presence or absence or number of instances (for discussion of this practice see Hawe, Dixon, & Watson, 2008). Teachers did not seem to be familiar with expressing success criteria as progressions/levels of achievement and the inclusion of an explicit standard, so some time was spent considering the rationale underlying these practices and providing illustrations.

Once the initial sections of the Guide had been introduced, staff watched one of the video exemplars where a teacher established with her class the learning intention and success criteria for a series of writing lessons. Rather than illustrating "best practice", this exemplar depicted slippage in the alignment of the learning intention, success criteria, and what was modelled. As they watched the extract for a second time, staff used the Observation Guide (Sections 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.1; 2.2) to make judgements about the teacher's practice. These judgements were then discussed, firstly in small groups then together. Reported variations in observer judgements generated further discussion about the verbal descriptions in the Guide and the evidence observed in the video.

Additional training regarding Sections 1.1–2.2 occurred without input from the university personnel as the teachers used the Guide in "real time" during their peer observation and feedback sessions and as they discussed issues with colleagues. Remaining areas of the Guide were introduced to staff in a similar fashion prior to the commencement of each new cycle of peer observation and feedback.

## Changes to the Guide

No changes were made to the Observation Guide during the first four cycles as the teachers needed time to become familiar with it. Two requests for change emerged however during the introductory session for cycle five where the focus was on "Feedback about students' productive activity during reading and/or writing". In the first instance, teachers sought clarification regarding some of the verbal descriptions. The section related to self-regulating prompts, for instance, included four elements (Figure 5):

Figure 5 **Self-regulating prompts**

| 3.3 Self-regulating prompts Oral ☐ | Written ☐ | N/A ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| The teacher reminds learners to evaluate / check their work | The teacher reminds learners to evaluate / check their work with reference to: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | The teacher provides students with evaluative self-regulating prompts related to: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | The teacher specifically refers students to evaluative self-regulating prompts related to: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |

During discussion, it emerged that teachers felt the distinctions between these four categories was somewhat "forced" and they made suggestions about how these could be reduced to three quite distinct categories, more reflective of practice (Figure 6):

Figure 6 **More Self-regulating prompts**

| 3.3 Self-regulating prompts | Oral ☐ | Written ☐ |
|---|---|---|
| 3.3.1 The teacher reminds learners to evaluate / check their work | 3.3.2 The teacher specifically provides learners with / refers learner(s) to, evaluative self-regulating prompts related to: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.3.3 Learner(s) spontaneously refer to / use self-regulating prompts |

Secondly, it was suggested that a fifth element be included in both 3.1 and 3.2 to incorporate D2 types of feedback. D2 feedback that "constructs learning" and "constructs the way forward" (Tunstall & Gipps, 1996) has been identified in the literature as important in terms of supporting and enhancing students' learning and developing "intelligent self-monitoring" (Sadler, 1989). Staff had been given a pre-publication copy of a New Zealand study (Hawe, Dixon, & Watson, 2008) regarding the use of different types of feedback in written language and, as a result, some argued strongly for the inclusion of D2 types of feedback in the Guide on the basis that it would encourage teachers to consider and incorporate such practices into their repertoire. As a consequence, the following were added to 3.1 and 3.2 (Figure 7):

Figure 7 **Quality of achievement-related feedback and improvement-related feedback**

> **3.1 Quality of achievement related feedback:**
> 3.1.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead')* **whether** and **how**
> the work has met/has not met:
> - success criteria ☐
> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐
>
> **3.2 Quality of improvement related feedback**
> 3.2.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead')* **what** needs
> improvement and **how** to go about this, with reference to:
> - success criteria ☐
> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐

A structural change was also made to Section 3 of the Guide, shifting the column for recording evidence in support of judgements from the right-hand side of the sheet to directly underneath each of the elements. This change was made because teachers reported it was often difficult to determine which category and/or elements the observer's comments recorded down the right-hand side of the Guide related to. Staff decided that having space for recording evidence directly below each element would make the links more obvious. Figure 8 illustrates the change:

Figure 8 **Quality of achievement-related feedback**

| 3.1 Quality of achievement related feedback | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1.1 Teacher's feedback is not directly related to achievement (rather it is approving, rewarding, disapproving of behaviour) | 3.1.2 Teacher's feedback refers in a general manner to: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.3 Teacher tells the learner about **whether** their work has met/has not met: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.4 Teacher tells the learner about **how** their work has met/has not met: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner' taking the lead')* **whether** and **how** the work has met/has not met: <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| *Evidence:* | | | | |

The amended version of Section 3 (see Appendix 2) was e mailed to staff prior to commencement of the cycle.

*Written exemplars*

During introduction of the fifth cycle, teachers asked if they could have a written copy of the orally provided examples of feedback practice used to illustrate each of the elements. While staff found the video exemplars useful to help develop understanding of the elements, the written illustrations were more accessible and "transportable"—teachers could have these next to them as a point of reference when observing and/or engaging in learning conversations with their peer. These examples were added under each of the categories (see Appendix 3) and also emailed to staff.

## Reliability of teachers' qualitative judgements

Given that staff had used parts of the Guide for four cycles and they were becoming familiar with the process, and given that considerable time had been spent discussing feedback and the elements on the Guide, it was decided to carry out a short exercise to determine the reliability of teachers' qualitative judgements using this section of the Guide. Following completion of cycle five, 17 of the teachers viewed a short video exemplar where a teacher and student were engaged in a writing conference and the class was guided through a short peer feedback session. A written transcript was made of the exemplar (to ensure all teacher–student dialogue was picked up) and on a second viewing of the video, staff were asked to refer to the Guide when making and recording judgements in the column provided about the teacher's practice, using the feedback categories 3.1–3.5, with corresponding evidence highlighted or underlined or recorded on the transcript. Each teacher handed in their annotated transcript once they were satisfied with their judgements.

For the purpose of analysis, two experts divided the transcript into 15 segments and identified 22 instances of feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation across these segments (not counting the instance filled in on the sheet to indicate how to annotate the transcript). Judgements made by the teachers were compared with the agreed-upon appraisals from the two experts. Overall, no teacher had more than 50 percent agreement with the experts. Agreement among the 17 teachers as a whole and the experts, on each of the 22 instances, ranged from 0 to 64 percent. In total there were 79 instances of agreement (out of a possible total of 374) between these two groups regarding the nature of the feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation observed; 117 instances where teachers identified the occurrence of feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation, but their categorisations did not match those of the experts; and 178 instances of feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation that teachers missed. Close examination of the full data set and the annotations on the transcripts provided some insights into the 117 instances that were incorrectly categorised. In the majority of cases, these were classified within the same overall category on the Guide; for example, an instance categorised by the experts as **3.2**.3 (The teacher tells the learner about *what* needs to be improved . . . ) was classified by teachers as either **3.2**.2 or **3.2**.4, indicating that either further familiarisation with the distinctions between these sub-categories was needed and/or the verbal descriptions needed to be revised. Failure to recognise instances of feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation

and the categorisation of non-examples indicated however that the teachers were not yet secure in their knowledge about the nature of these areas and pointed towards the need for further "serious-talk" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) around these matters. Overall these findings suggested that recognising examples of feedback, self-/peer assessment and/or self-regulation is not as straightforward as it seems—these areas are acknowledged in the literature as complex and problematic (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003; Torrance & Pryor, 1998: Shepherd, 2000). Moreover, a recent study of New Zealand teachers' conceptions and use of feedback found that although teachers believed they understood and were practising "feedback for learning", there was a significant disjuncture between perception and reality (Dixon, 2008). This was alluded to during an interview with one of the Berkley staff when she commented, "We thought we understood about feedback but when it was actually presented to us with all of the readings around it . . . it's like you keep learning . . . you-don't-know-what you-don't-know stuff . . ." (Sarah[4]).

## Teachers' perceptions of the Guide

Teachers' perceptions regarding the Guide were gathered from a survey carried out near the end of the project and during individual semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of six teachers.

### *Survey information*

All teachers were asked at the end of October to complete a short survey (see Appendix B4) where they rated on a 6-point scale each of the 11 broad areas of practice on the Guide with reference to their importance (1 = very unimportant; 2 = unimportant; 3 = slightly important; 4 = moderately important; 5 = mostly important; 6 = very important) when observing and providing feedback about teaching practice. No area had a mean ranking below 4.50, indicating that, although some areas of the Guide were considered slightly more important than others, all areas were rated as moderately, mostly, or very important.

Three areas had a mean ranking of 5.40 or above. The degree of alignment between learning intentions, success criteria and class/group activities received the highest average rank (M=5.58) with 75 percent of the respondents rating it as a "very important" aspect of teaching practice to observe and provide feedback about. Quality of achievement- and improvement-related feedback received the second highest mean ranking (M=5.50) with 60 percent rating it as "very important", while the links between teacher modelling and learning intentions/success criteria was third highest (M=5.40) with 50 percent rating it as "very important". Observing and providing feedback about deliberate acts of teaching (M=5.35), the nature and quality of learning intentions and success criteria (M=5.30), and teacher/student engagement in learning-related talk (M=5.30) were

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[4]  Pseudonyms have been used.

the next highest ranked areas. Relatively speaking, the three areas of least importance when observing and providing feedback about teaching practice (although ranked on the whole as moderately to mostly important) were the overall appropriateness of lesson pace (M=4.50), the presence and student use of self-regulating prompts (M=4.60), and the inclusion of opportunities for peer and self-assessment (M=5.0).

The survey also asked teachers to rank on a scale of 1–100, the impact on their professional learning of nine areas, one of these areas being use of the Guide to inform observations and feedback. Use of the Guide was ranked seventh (M=40/100) with staff clearly split in their views. Half of the teachers perceived the Guide as having a reasonable impact on their professional learning (M=65/100) while the other half considered it as having relatively little impact (M=12/100). This is discussed further in Part B, Section 3.

*Interview information*

Four key themes concerning teachers' use of the Guide emerged from the interviews. The first and most dominant theme related to the role of the Guide in making teachers "more aware" (Katie) of specific aspects of their teaching practice. All teachers made mention of how as a result of using the Guide they gave more attention and thought to developing appropriate learning intentions and success criteria. Marilyn, for example, admitted that until she had seen the Guide she had "never thought of success criteria as . . . progressive levels", while Cameron indicated that the Guide made him think about whether he provided sufficient opportunities for his students to engage in talk with their peers. Those interviewed noted that their awareness had also been raised about self-regulating prompts, deliberate acts of teaching (DATs) such as modelling, feedback, alignment between activities and learning intentions/success criteria, the provision of differentiated activities, and the promotion of interactions between students.

The second theme related to use of the Guide to focus observations. Claire commented that the Guide "makes it very clear what you are looking for" during peer observations. Without it "we'd be a mess . . . [we'd] wallow around . . . " (Katie), and "[we] wouldn't be looking for specific things like 'deliberate acts of teaching' . . . " (Roger). All of those interviewed referred to how the Guide had provided them with a focal point for observation of their peer's teaching and the provision of feedback.

The third theme related to the hierarchical way in which some of the statements on the Guide were organised. This organisation was interpreted by some as providing information about the gap between current and desired performance, giving them a goal to work towards:

> . . . well I'm actually here and I need to be aiming for that and so it gives you feedback . . . where you are and where you should be aiming for and you could be aiming for and so its refined your teaching . . . (Katie)

Others however felt pressured to achieve at the top level and felt as though they had failed if they were not judged as having reached this level during their observed lesson.

> . . . almost like a continuum, even though you never said that you need to be in the top box, everybody felt like they should be . . . I felt, 'Oh gosh, that was bad because I didn't get [the] top box. (Marilyn)

The final theme concerned the types of support needed to help teachers "make sense" of the Guide. Roger stated that:

> If you just chucked us the entire schedule [Guide] and said, 'Right, go and do an observation', you'd probably have half or three-quarters of the staff going, 'What on earth is going on? How do you do it?

Use of written illustrations of practice, video exemplars, and opportunities for teachers to discuss issues in teams or as a staff were considered critical to the success of the Guide. Half of those interviewed indicated that they would have liked to see more video-taped exemplars of practice (not necessarily "best practice") and to have access to written illustrations of practice as a quick point of reference. Although using the Guide was acknowledged as at times "really hard" (Katie), it was noted that the "more you use it the easier it becomes" (Carol). Teachers observed that their understanding of categories included in the Guide and the protocols associated with use developed over time with practice. This was however a double-edged sword as the more the teachers used the Guide, the more they realised they had some quite significant "gaps" in their own knowledge about the elements of effective [literacy] teaching practice.

As she reflected on her experiences and those of her colleagues, Sarah recognised that "you need a lot of knowledge [about the elements of effective literacy practice] . . . [and] there [is still] a lot more learning . . . to do". For Hakeem, working with the Guide to inform peer observation and feedback in written language made " . . . us look critically at the way we're teaching writing . . . it's been a challenge, I can see benefits in my teaching", while Mary indicated that "it was the fine tuning that's going on with your practice and that's what I take from it: What am I doing? Who am I doing this for? What are my next steps in moving them [students] forward?" The Observation Guide clearly made the teachers more aware of specific aspects of effective literacy teaching practice, gave them a point of reference when observing their peer's teaching and providing feedback, and indicated the next step(s) to be taken in the development of their teaching practice.

## Revision of the Observation Guide

On the basis of feedback generated during phase two of the project, the Observation Guide was reviewed and revised. The revised Guide (Appendix A4) contains four sections:

1. literacy learning goals and expectations about what counts as successful achievement of these goals
2. curricula alignment
3. teacher interactions, and differentiation for learners and learning

4. feedback about productive activity, peers and self feedback and self-regulation during literacy learning.

It is not intended that the revised Guide address every element of teachers' literacy practice; rather, it includes those that were considered and/or emerged as central to successful practice. Each section contains no more than five areas for observation, enabling a more focused approach by the teacher being observed and the peer observer, and verbal descriptions have been refined so the distinctions between areas are more clear-cut. In addition, recording has been made more manageable by including spaces for the recording of evidence under or alongside each area and having only one or two pages for each section. Use of the Revised Guide will enable teachers to "gather rich descriptions of practice, attention to evidence, examination of alternative interpretations, and possibilities" and "over time . . . develop a stronger sense of themselves as practical intellectuals, contributing members of the profession, and participants in the improvement of teaching and learning" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1043).

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# Part B: Reciprocal peer observation and discussion as a form of professional learning

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## 1.    Placing the peer observation and discussion study in context

With an increasing focus internationally on enhancing the quality of teaching in order to raise student achievement, the ongoing professional learning of teachers is a significant topic. Teacher learning can be seen as the "construction of cognition by individual teachers in response to their participation in the experiences provided by the professional development trajectory and through their participation in the classroom (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 995). Professional growth is complex; there are multiple patterns of learning and learning is ongoing, and the need is to understand the complex processes by which learning is created and shared (Gravani, 2007).

There is limited evidence that traditional delivery models of professional development have a positive impact on teaching quality or student learning (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). Delivery models fail to bridge the theory–practice divide for the participating teachers and have been shown to create a climate unfavourable to professional learning (Gravani, 2007). A model more linked to classroom practice is one where particular teaching practices, established from research into teaching and learning to be effective in enhancing student learning and achievement, are prescribed. A professional developer takes the key skills implicated in these practices, teaches them to the teachers, and ensures their implementation.  Initiatives using such a model report relatively small effects on student achievement (Borman et al., 2005; Kerman et al., 1980; Rowan & Miller, 2007). Any gains are often not sustained once the professional developers leave (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman, & Castellano, 2003; Robbins & Wolfe, 1987; Stallings & Krasavage, 1986). This varied and limited impact, together with the lack of sustainability, is not surprising given the deprofessionalising nature of this type of approach (Timperley & Parr, 2008).

Alternative approaches to teacher professional learning focus on facilitating the development of teacher reflection and collaborative inquiry (e.g., Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, &

Beckingham, 2004; Doyle, 1990; Kohler, Ezell, & Paluselli, 1999). Models of improving professional learning and practice like that of Glazer and Hannafin (2006) cultivate reciprocity within teaching communities situated in school environments. Their model draws on a rich theoretical base of collaboration and situated professional learning and an extensive literature about reciprocal interactions among teachers within communities, together with an analysis of phases and roles demonstrated to promote collaboration. The role of the professional developer/facilitator/coach in these situations is to promote reflection. The link to improvement in outcomes for students, however, is weak. In other literature, including both detailed case descriptions (e.g. Lipman, 1997; Morton, 2005; Rousseau, 2004; Saxe, Gearhart, & Nasir, 2001) and a recent meta-analysis by Rowan & Miller (2007), changes in practice that relate to improved student outcomes, resulting from participating in such communities, are not often evident.

The current study draws on the notion of cultivating reciprocity. Professional learning is situated within the professional development trajectory often broadly termed peer coaching, a type of professional development where teachers work together, engaging in guided activities to support each other's professional growth (Ackland, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1995). This model of professional development employing coaching and peers was partly a response to the widespread finding that few teachers implemented what they had learnt from the traditional delivery model of professional development that focused on teaching strategies and curriculum (Showers & Joyce, 1996). In a series of studies, Showers and Joyce showed that regular seminars or coaching sessions, focused on classroom implementation and the analysis of teaching (especially of student response), enabled teachers to practice and implement the content they were learning and implementation rose dramatically. Their approach involved modelling, practice under simulated conditions, and practice in the classrooms. The coaching followed initial training to assist in the transfer of the skill. The coach, in this case, was an outside consultant or a more expert peer (Joyce & Showers, 1980; Showers, 1982, 1984). However, a significant finding was that teachers, introduced to new models in terms of teaching strategies, could coach one another provided they received follow-up in training settings.

There are various forms of peer coaching; they tend to fall into three general categories, according to Wong and Nicotera (2003). Technical and team coaching focus on providing support to implement innovations in curriculum and instruction, while collegial and cognitive coaching aim at improving existing practice through developing collegiality, increasing professional dialogue and assisting teachers to reflect on their teaching (Ackland, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 2002). The third category is challenge coaching which is employed in the context of identifying and treating a specific problem. The strategies differ across categories but all intend that peers help one another improve the teaching and learning process.

Facilitated collegial interaction, such as in the form of peer coaching, provides teachers with the opportunity to engage in experimentation, observation, reflection, exchange of professional ideas and shared problem solving in an integrated form (Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2007). Peer coaching centrally involves observation of practice. Observing teachers' classroom practice, analysing the lesson, and providing feedback is often cited as a central feature of promoting

professional learning that results in improved learning for students (e.g., Adey, 2004; Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits, & Kenter, 2001). The particular advantage of observing classroom practice and providing feedback is the direct embedding of the interactions in the context of teachers' daily work, a key tenet of effective professional development. Peer coaching takes place in the workplace where there are numerous opportunities for learning—some are planned, but other opportunities happen spontaneously.

In this study of reciprocal peer observation and discussion, where teachers in a dyad each take turns in the roles of observed and observer, observations by a peer with accompanying discussions were a planned professional learning activity. The observations were guided and the subsequent discussion process facilitated by training. The strength of this type of peer observation with focused feedback is that "the purpose is mutual professional development and not an examination of professional competence" (Smith, 2003, p. 213).

Opportunities to learn potentially could arise from seeing, for example, a colleague perform a skill that the observer may find to be difficult or threatening, with the result that the observer may be more likely to believe that s/he can do it (Licklider, 1995) or from watching one another work with students and thinking together about the impact of teacher behaviours on student learning (Joyce & Showers, 1995). Opportunities to learn could come from both providing and receiving feedback about observed lessons (Pressick-Kilborn & te Riele, 2008). Although feedback would seem to be central to a coaching process, there is some debate about the role of feedback. Some maintain feedback in peer coaching is too like supervision and that it weakens collaboration (Showers & Joyce, 1996) and that the focus should be on planning and developing instruction. Sustained professional learning is seen to require ongoing participation in professional conversations (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001), typically associated with communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Such conversations assist teachers and similar professionals negotiate their understandings of practice. Understandings may arise through the process of reflection (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). Some advocates emphasise the fact that the conversations are "cognitively and emotionally nourishing for our practice as well as being significant personally and professionally" (Schuck, Aubusson, & Buchanan, 2008, p. 216) and emphasise the notion of reflective self-study supported by critical friends (e.g., Loughran, 2002). Others emphasise the potential of such conversations for learning through dissonance and challenge in order to promote change towards more effective practice (Annan, Robinson, & Lai, 2003; Timperley, 2003).

In professional interchanges there are a number of features that may support the interchange, including mutual respect, a climate of risk taking, and a shared desire to improve (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Wenger, 1998). Peer observation, as a means of breaking down the isolation of the act of teaching, may be associated with the openness and shared sense of responsibility required for a true professional community to operate. In peer observation, issues of shared (or separate) understandings can arise (Schuck & Russell, 2005; Schuck & Segal, 2002). Particularly important to address is obtaining a shared understanding of what constitutes quality practice.

There are particular considerations in setting up peer observation and discussion given that it is likely that teachers hold different views of what comprises an effective teaching style. Studies show that practices consistent with what the peer (reviewer in this case) did or would do were evaluated positively and those which the peer reviewer would not engage in were typically evaluated negatively (Quinlan, 2002). One's perspectives on teaching form the basis for normative roles and expectations regarding acceptable forms of teaching (Pratt & Associates, 1998) and these, for example, may operate in peer observations. Both focused formats to use to review practice in whatever setting is being observed, and the notion of knowing, being aware of one's own perspective on teaching, are seen as means to counter preconceived notions of teaching effectiveness (Courneya, Pratt, & Collins, 2008).

In setting up peer observation and peer coaching, it is important, according to Kohler, McCulloch Crilley, Shearer, and Good (1997), to develop procedures that are both feasible and effective for teachers to use. In reviewing the peer coaching literature, Becker (1996), aside from reiterating the importance of trust among participants, mentions logistical planning and provision of resources and support.

In the current study, a major form of support in terms of the observations and discussions was the tool that we had developed (see Part A) to guide the observations of literacy practice. The tool served as an indicator of effective practice as defined in the research literature to help develop shared understandings. Spillane and colleagues (2002) defined tools as being externalised representations of ideas that people use in their practice. If the ideas represented in the tool are valid (in this case are valid dimensions of effective literacy practice) and if these ideas are represented in a quality way, in this case a way that allows them to serve as indicators of the nature of such practice, then the tool may qualify as what Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (in press) refer to as "smart tools". In terms of the quality of the ideas the tool represents, these authors suggest that smart tools incorporate sound theory about how to achieve the purpose of the task in question. In most instances, it is not the tool itself that promotes the learning; rather, it is how the tool is integrated into the routines of practice. In this study the tool is integrated into the practice of peer observation of classroom practice and the subsequent professional learning discussions.

The next section details the way the current study was conducted. Researchers examining the outcomes from peer coaching programmes have examined reported changes or improvements in teachers' pedagogy, in terms of strategies or activities (e.g., Williamson & Russell, 1990) or reports of their satisfaction (Kohler, McCullough, & Buchan, 1995). In cases where within peer coaching teachers were encouraged to experiment with new methods of teaching, they report a greater likelihood of trying new practices (Munro & Elliot, 1987). Few studies, however, have examined classroom practice or student achievement outcomes, or both simultaneously, to evaluate the programs (Kohler et al., 1997).

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## 2.    Description of the study

Reciprocal peer observations with accompanying feedback and discussion comprise the second phase of the current project. The first phase, as discussed in Part A of this report, involved the development of the Observation Guide, an instrument intended to be used to focus both classroom observation and discussion subsequent to observation. The first phase was accomplished in partnership with two schools. Both were invited to join this phase or, if this was not practicable, to arrange for a representative to participate and take any learning back to their school. Unfortunately, due to the crowded nature of school and teacher schedules, and due to staff movements (in both schools that were partners in phase one of this research, the literacy leaders were moving), this continuing involvement was not possible. A third school was the partner in this second phase.

The approach in this second phase was to work with the staff of the school as they acquired the knowledge and skill associated with undertaking peer observations and discussions in writing lessons using the Observation Guide (Appendix A1). This involved both helping staff to locate resources (mainly professional readings that, together with other material, comprised a "Guide to Using the Guide") and also providing some input in terms of their acquiring the content knowledge and guided practice in order to observe using the Guide and discuss what they had observed with their peer. The staff undertook a series of observations, meeting with us regularly both to provide feedback and to discuss and prepare for the subsequent observations.

## Context: The school

The setting for this phase of the study was a middle school that teaches students in Years 7 to 9, a decile 9 school with a roll of 615 (15 are international students). The school is predominantly European/Pakeha with 18 percent of students Asian and 11 percent Māori.

There are 31 staff in total with 21 of these homeroom, classroom teachers. There are seven specialist teachers of materials technology, information and communications technologies (ICT), music, art, and drama. In addition, there are three members of the senior management team. In general the school has a stable staff, with a turnover in 2006 of around 10 percent.

The school is not new to professional learning for staff. It had engaged in whole-staff professional development focused on literacy, in particular reading, for three years prior to the current study. Originally, in 2004 and 2005, as part of the Literacy Professional Development Project, the school focused on raising student achievement in reading comprehension. At the start of the Literacy Professional Development Project, the student need in reading was identified as specifically concerning paragraph comprehension. Student achievement data showed that significant progress was made in raising reading comprehension. Data from the Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR) showed the school raised the number of students performing at or above

national expectations. The percentage in stanines 7 to 9 increased from 39.5 to 65.3 percent and the percentage in stanines 1 to 3 fell from 13.7 to 3.7 percent. Notably, the largest mean shifts were made in paragraph comprehension, the area identified as where there was greatest need.

Then, in 2007, the focus was transferred to building staff knowledge about, and expertise in teaching, writing. This was because, at the end of 2006, asTTle data indicated that the students were performing below expected levels for Years 7 and 8 students, in marked contrast to their reading results. To work with the teachers specifically in writing, an external professional developer, who specialises in writing, was contracted by the school during 2007. The aim was to help teachers to develop sound and robust teaching and learning programmes in writing. The professional developer focused on developing teachers' content knowledge in writing. A range of different genres and purposes was covered (e.g., memoirs, poetry, essays, persuasive writing, character writing, writing to learn, scientific and legend explanation, short stories). Students produced pieces of writing associated with each of these although the chosen asTTle writing test examined writing to persuade. The consultant also assisted teachers to score asTTle samples in a consistent manner, an undertaking which would, in turn, arguably build their knowledge of writing (Parr, Glasswell, & Aikman, 2007). This professional development in writing, and the peer observation and feedback project which focused on writing lessons, together were designed to raise student achievement in writing.

## The teachers

All classroom teachers agreed to participate in the peer observation and associated feedback and discussion study. In this school, teaching staff are part of a team; these teams are formed on the basis of teacher strengths and needs. For the peer observation, pairings were made by the deputy principal of the school on the basis that the members of a dyad were in the same team. There were some pragmatic considerations like timetabling that also entered into decisions about pairing. There were eleven pairs that, in all but two cases, stayed together for the year. In two instances, pairs changed as a result of the two assistant principals having to come out of the classroom when the principal was on sabbatical.

## Organising the peer observations

Staff at the school were introduced to the proposed project and invited to participate at a staff meeting in early February 2007. Appropriate consent to participate was obtained. The participant information sheet was the first document filed in the distinctive blue folders the school provided to teachers to record their learning in the project.

The leaders of each team in the school were introduced to the Observation Guide first. They engaged in two sessions (of 90 minutes each) designed to build their knowledge of the Guide and to test the utility of it in their context. We used videotaped lessons developed in the previous year

with the two partner schools for team leaders to practice using the Guide and as a basis for discussing observing practice. The team leaders then undertook to observe all of their team as a snapshot of teacher practice at the start of this phase of the project.

There were, in total, seven rounds of reciprocal peer observation. This was organised as a block of time of about an hour in which to observe one another teaching. After the observations, time (usually up to an hour) was set aside for discussion. This occurred as close as practicable to the observations. Often this discussion was at lunchtime or after school. For each round, the observer completed the applicable sections of the Observation Guide while observing, and each member of the pair subsequently completed a questionnaire from the standpoint of observer and as the teacher being observed (see questionnaires entitled Observed Teacher Response to Feedback and Observer Response to Session Giving Feedback, Appendix B1). They filed these in their folders and copies were kept centrally.

In the early rounds (1 and 2) of observations, the focus was narrow in terms of use of the indicators of elements of practice. That is, observations initially focused on the use of learning aims and success criteria. This allowed teachers to acquire the necessary content knowledge and to gain experience and skill in giving (and receiving) the feedback that was a focus of discussions after the observation. This relatively narrow focus in observations was designed to make the task more manageable.

The university team, in partnership with the senior management from the school, provided some input into the building of teacher knowledge to enable them to engage in observation and feedback in an informed way. For example, knowledge about the function and nature of learning aims and success criteria is necessary, as is content knowledge of writing, in order to be cued into what to notice and to be able to give evidence-based feedback. This knowledge building and sharing occurred at learning meetings with the whole staff (the senior management team also participated in the sessions). These had a specific focus that related to the focus of observation in the upcoming rounds or to the process of giving and receiving feedback. In preparation for these meetings and for the observation rounds, relevant, concise readings were sourced and provided to the teachers. We used video clips and transcripts of actual classroom practice to illustrate and to amplify. For example, in the second learning meeting, the teachers watched a video that exemplified a degree of mismatch between the learning aim for the lesson(s) and the actual teaching and learning activities. Teachers were readily able to see a link to their own practice and to reflect on the different ways that they had expressed such aims and whether the associated activities were aligned closely with the aims.

After working to ensure that teachers had a basic knowledge that would allow them to observe certain elements of practice in a more informed way, the focus shifted to supporting teachers to manage the process of contracting an observation and discussing what was observed, including giving feedback that was designed to enhance practice. At a learning meeting, the basic concepts involved in a learning conversation were introduced, including the notion of using a process to guide a conversation that involved articulating one's own beliefs about effective practice and

relating these to evidence from the observation of elements of practice. A subsequent meeting modelled the process of contracting including the importance of the observer stating clearly, "up-front" as it were, his or her theory of what constituted effective practice. Also modelled was the process of achieving a shared definition of the "problem", using evidence from the observed practice, and of how to work towards a shared process for addressing and attempting to solve issues. Discussion at this meeting included how to decide on and approach the "high leverage" issues in terms of how to bring about change. In preparation for this meeting, one of the staff had agreed to videotape her practice (her students did this) so that the excerpts could be used for the visiting expert (Professor Helen Timperley) to model aspects of a learning conversation that were proving challenging.

From a focus on the process, as teachers moved to the point where they were observing an area where they felt they knew less, we switched back to the mode of building content knowledge. An instance of this concerned section 3 of the Guide, that relating to observing teacher feedback to students. As discussed in Part A, we provided examples for that section of the Guide to amplify the characteristics of each category (see Appendix A3). These were discussed and there was practice, using video footage and transcripts, in applying them.

Thus, the focus of the later learning meetings was generally in response to an issue that staff had encountered or a need they had exhibited. An interesting example of this was that, in looking at the notes on the Guides that observers had completed at each round and at the observed teacher and observer response sheets, both the school and university partners had noticed that there was little evidence recorded and that the feedback noted seemed to be based on impressions, at times relating to areas outside the contracted focus for observation. So, at a learning meeting we brought an analysis of a range of examples from observers' comments that were of varying degrees of specificity in terms of their being based on evidence. These were used as a workshop activity to discuss the issue of what counts as evidence. Appendix B2 contains the examples used. Another focus of the meetings was to provide feedback that the staff could use as a basis for reflection. An example of this was where the staff asked us to analyse what key themes were emerging from the reflections they recorded at each observation cycle.

At three of these learning meetings we also sought formative, written feedback about the progress of the project in terms of both teacher learning and the utility of the instrument. The first of these asked staff to jot down anonymously anything they felt they had found difficult about giving feedback, and what they thought they needed to learn more about. The second instance was a more formal Peer Observation Study Questionnaire (Appendix B3) that asked participants to recall significant messages they had both given and received. The third questionnaire asked about the Observation Guide and about the learning obtained from various types of professional learning activities (Appendix B4).

It was clear that the ability to engage in the process of reciprocal peer observation and feedback required a considerable level of content knowledge—in this case about writing—and also pedagogical content knowledge (after Shulman, 1986, 1987), the knowledge of the subject from

the point of view of teaching it to others. Data were collected through means of written questions that attempted to establish the level of pedagogical content knowledge with respect to writing that teachers possessed (Appendix B5).

## Procedure and tools of enquiry

Table 3 lists the rounds of peer observation and the associated meetings with the university researchers. It also shows the point at which student achievement data were collected. Following this, Table 4 lists the various data collection instruments and summarises the methods of analysis employed.

Table 3 **Organisation of the oeer observations**

| Term and week | Learning meetings | Observation rounds | Student achievement data |
|---|---|---|---|
| ½ | | DP observes team leaders | STAR |
| 1/3 | Introduce project; invite participation; Leader training (19 February) | Team leader observes members of team | asTTle writing (to persuade) |
| 1/4–6 | Introduce Observation Guide using video (12 March); Focus on element 1 | Round 1: Teachers conduct and receive one narrowly focused observation (LI & SC) | asTTle moderating |
| 2/3 | Introduction to Learning Conversations (7 May) | Round 2: As per Round 1, plus an additional area of Guide | |
| 2/6–8 | | Round 3: Three aspects of guide | |
| 2/10 | Reflection: What learned to date, what worked on/ changed, etc.—written feedback: what find difficult and what want to learn to do better; Training for feedback; Work through a feedback transcript (25 June) | | |
| 3/1 | | Round 4: Increase scope to encompass feedback section | |
| ¾ | Learning Conversations: Dealing with hard messages and the justifier (6 August); Peer Observation Study Questionnaire completed; Introduce typology of feedback | | |
| 3/6–8 | Are we seeing the same things and in the same way? Use transcript of taped lesson to investigate reliability (20 August); Measure of teacher PCK obtained | Round 5: Using most of Guide | asTTle retest |
| 4/1–2 | Feedback on Observation Guide | Round 6: Entire Guide—Leaders do some check for consistency | STAR retest |
| 4/5–7 | Exit interviews (15 October) | Round 7: Entire Guide—Leaders do some check for consistency | |
| 4/8 | Discussion/Feedback (26 Nov) | | |
| 4/9–10 | Exit interviews | | |

## Data analysis

Data were provided by the participating teachers through various means (see Table 4). Although these were largely of a self-reporting nature, it was possible, with respect to the observations and associated feedback messages, to check the perceptions of one member of a dyad with those of the other. Data about practice were collected by each member of the pair from observing and, at times, they asked students about what they were learning as evidence of effectiveness of practice.

Data were recorded from each of the observation rounds in two ways. First, the observer used the Guide to categorise or rate elements of practice and to record notes regarding the evidence on which the judgement was made. The latter enabled an analysis in terms of the degree of specificity with which the evidence was recorded, and also allowed a consideration of how aspects of practice like the formulation of learning aims and success criteria developed over time.

Then, after each observation (and subsequent discussion), both the observer and the observed teacher completed a brief questionnaire. The observer and the observed responded to parallel questions. So, for each pair there were four completed questionnaires for each round of observations. In these questionnaires they reported, for example, the main message given (and received) and either what they intended to do as a result or what they thought their partner intended to do (see Appendix B1).

Table 4 **Summary of data collection instruments and types of analysis**

| Data collection measure | How information analysed |
| --- | --- |
| Observation Guide | Ratings: descriptive statistics |
| | Recording of evidence: Focus of; judgement of degree of specificity |
| | Learning aims and success criteria: categorisation on quality |
| Observed Teacher Response to Feedback and Observer Response to Giving Session Feedback questionnaires | Ratings: descriptive statitics |
| | Open-ended questions: Categorisation of content, nature, and specificity of feedback messages. Degree of agreement between members of a pair |
| Informal written feedback: What difficult and what need to know more about | Open-ended questions: Theme analysis |
| Peer observation questionnaire: Reflection | Categorisation of content, nature, and specificity of salient recalled feedback messages. Degree of agreement between pairs |
| Questionnaire feedback on Guide | Ratings: Descriptive statistics |
| Pedagogical content knowledge questionnaire | Scored for key points |
| Interviews | Thematic analysis |

As noted previously, two forms of written response completed at learning meetings were used, in part, to inform the substance of subsequent meetings, namely, the informal written feedback regarding what was difficult and what teachers would like to learn more about, and the more formal questionnaire asking about recollections of peer feedback messages (see Appendix B3). Then there was a questionnaire that largely sought feedback about the Guide and its elements (Appendix B4). Finally, there was a questionnaire that sought to find out what teachers knew about teaching writing (Appendix B5). Towards the end of the year, a series of interviews were conducted with four of the pairs of teachers and the lead teacher (see Appendix B6 for the interview schedule).

## References (Part B 2)

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# 3.    Findings

In this section, the professional development trajectory involving the process of peer observation and feedback is considered from several angles. First, teachers' views of how various professional learning activities impact on their learning is examined in order to position peer observation and feedback in relation to other professional learning opportunities. Then, data are presented to address the question of the nature of the observations and whether the records of observations show patterns or change over time. Within this subsection, the specific practice of articulating learning aims and success criteria is examined. Then a subsection considers the act of giving and receiving feedback in detail. Student achievement data in writing for the year are briefly considered. A final subsection summarises the findings from this part of the report and examines their implications.

## Teachers' views of types of professional learning

As part of recording their response to giving and receiving feedback on a brief questionnaire (Appendix B1) in round 1 of observations (in March), teachers were asked to allocate a score out of 100 to a number of common professional learning activities based on the extent to which they felt these professional learning situations impacted in terms of improving teaching. The highest mean score was given to observing others model teaching practice (83%). The other parts of the peer observation, discussing teaching issues with colleagues, also scored highly (78%) but the act of being observed and receiving feedback rated lower at 66%, midway between the band of highly ranked items and the least favoured activities such as professional readings and seminars.

Later in the year, in a final questionnaire (Appendix B4) in October, teachers were asked to rank these professional learning activities again and, this time, we included the item, "Using the observation schedule to guide observation and provide feedback". Unfortunately, there are two actions contained in this item. One is the use of the Guide which, in itself, was a form of professional learning, and the other is the use of it to give feedback. The latter activity, giving feedback, as evidenced from other data, was a professional learning activity that met with a very mixed response. The scores for each activity at both time points are shown in Table 5 which ranks them from highest to lowest at Time 1. Although lower scores are given to all professional learning activities later in the year, the relative rankings remained consistent over time.

Table 5  **Ratings of professional learning activities**

| Activity | T 1 Mean score /100 | T 1 Standard deviation | T 2 Mean score /100 | T 2 Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observing others | 83 | 21.66 | 79.25 | 15.07 |
| Discussing teaching issues with colleagues | 78.09 | 21.23 | 68.25 | 22.32 |
| Receiving student activities/materials for classroom use | 77.14 | 26.39 | 68.33 | 32.58 |
| Examining evidence of student learning | 76.66 | 22.95 | 65.75 | 18.01 |
| Discussing teaching issues with a more expert person | 75.71 | 22.95 | 67.5 | 28.63 |
| Being observed and receiving feedback | 65.95 | 30.22 | 61.75 | 26.02 |
| Using Observation Guide (to guide observations and give feedback) | N/A | N/A | 38.50 | 31.42 |
| Professional readings | 59.28 | 23.21 | 34.75 | 27.88 |
| Attending a seminar or presentation | 56.19 | 29.06 | 28.68 | 19.14 |

## Teachers' views of the Observation Guide

In Part A of the report, teachers' views on, for example, the categories of the Observation Guide were presented to indicate how these informed the revision of the Guide. There was also discussion of an important function of the Guide, namely, how it served as a means of learning about effective practice and what that might look like.

## Records of observation: Elements observed, the content of feedback messages, and giving and receiving feedback

In this subsection, data from the observations are explored. First we look at how teachers' actions were viewed and rated in each of the categories of the Observation Guide. In particular, we consider the categories concerning learning aims and success criteria. Then the nature of the feedback messages is examined and, finally, the process of giving and receiving feedback.

*Categories observed with the Guide*

On the observation schedule itself, the observer rated the quality of the various dimensions of the schedule as evidenced in the lesson. In addition, these ratings were accompanied by notes of the evidence on which they were based. The evidence recorded to use in subsequent discussion is able to be examined to see if its nature changes, largely in terms of whether it becomes more specific with experience. This aspect was discussed in Part A. There it was explained that, when the nonspecific nature of evidence being gathered during the early observation was noted, action was taken at a professional learning session to discuss what counted as evidence in order to support the gathering of more specific evidence to utilise in the subsequent feedback discussions.

*Ratings of teacher practice by category over time*

Interpreting ratings of teacher practice is problematic. One factor is the tendency of teachers to rate positively their peers and their practice. However, also, as one becomes more experienced at observing and learns more with respect to the element being observed, expectations may rise. So, even though the teacher observed may be exhibiting enhanced practice, the new lens through which practice is viewed—a lens informed by learning—may be a more stringent one, so ratings themselves may not change.

Mean ratings for elements and aspects of elements were calculated for all rounds where the particular element was rated (for this purpose, ordinal categories were each assigned a score). There was no significant difference in the mean rating given to elements or subelements in round 1 of observations and the same items rated in round 7 (all t-tests were insignificant). Across observers, moreover, there tended to be a limited range of ratings used for most elements. The difference between the lowest and highest rating given was most commonly one or two points. On only five occasions, across all rounds and all teachers observed, was the range as great as three or four points.

*Learning intentions and success criteria*

Because the elements of the Guide pertaining to learning intentions and success criteria were the first to be introduced and were the focus of early observations, the nature of the learning intentions and success criteria can be viewed over time. From what was noted on the Guide by the observer at each observation, a list of the learning intentions (LI) and success criteria (SC) for each teacher was compiled, together with any relevant additional comments noted on the Guide. The learning intentions and success criteria for rounds 1 and 7 were compared, by teacher. The following points represent noticeable changes between rounds 1 and 7 for an individual, noted across all individuals:

• LI in a form understood by students (evidence from questions asked of students at both time points as to what learning about)

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- students clear about expectations (evidence from questions asked of students at both time points as to what a quality performance in terms of what students were learning would look like)
- more focused LI (that include a purpose for learning)
- closer links or match between the LI and SC
- SC move from checklist, performance oriented (Your answer will contain 10 words related to . . . etc.) to identifying and explaining
- SC explicitly shared and recorded
- class makes individual SC linking to LI
- SC beginning to take a form that would support self regulated learning.

Teachers made their own individual movements in terms of more effective framing of the goals and outcomes of learning for students. So, although by round 7, a teacher may still be presenting success criteria in the form of a list of attributes of writing, this is a considerable change from no success criteria or broad performance criteria. In the case of a few teachers, the recorded learning aims and success criteria were yet to yield perceptible evidence of positive shift.

## Content and nature of feedback messages

There are several sources of data from which to consider the feedback messages. One is from the more formal questionnaire where, through open-ended questions, we sought to establish feedback messages that were clearly salient in that they could be recalled. We asked givers of feedback what they recalled regarding specific messages they had given, and which one they considered to be the most significant. We also asked how they considered the feedback had impacted on the colleague's writing programme and how they knew about this impact. Then, because we asked the member of the pair who was the receiver of the feedback comparable questions, we were able to examine the extent to which the messages reportedly given aligned with messages received. In analysing the reported messages, the complete idea was the unit of analysis so that each respondent could articulate more than one idea in response to any question.

## Specific messages

The responses to this question were coded into three categories. The first and predominant category of responses recalled we labelled enhancement or change messages. Messages containing an enhancement or change message were the major type of message recalled. They comprised nearly three-quarters of messages recalled by givers of feedback (73%) and 85 percent of those reported by receivers of feedback. The majority of such messages were explicit, such as, "Cut down your teacher talk", although some presented evidence and left the message about change implicit, such as, "Children found it hard to recall the learning intention". Similarly, in response to the question of the single message that had the most impact, the type of message designed to enhance or change practice was nominated in 90 percent of instances for both the giving and receiving of feedback.

The second category included messages recalled as indicating affirmation where there was a positive statement that the desired goal had been achieved. Interestingly, givers of feedback recalled giving more of this type of message than did recipients receiving it (10 instances and two instances, respectively). These messages were recalled as explicit or as more general, implicit messages. Most (75%) were explicit: "The learning intentions, they were in line with the success criteria", or, "I like the differentiation of success criteria". Generalised affirmation messages were those that failed to specify the supporting evidence, for example, "Lessons were well paced and generally achieved the learning intentions".

A third, and minor, category of feedback reported was where the respondent recalled discussion around mutual knowledge and understanding rather than a specific feedback message (two instances), for example, "We discussed how to create learning intentions that were a cognitive skill but we did not reach a consensus". Only three responses—two from recipients of feedback and one from a giver—to the question regarding a specific message, indicated that they were not able to recall a clear message, for example, "My feedback has not had any clear messages for improvement I don't believe". This latter example is an interesting response in that it suggests that the respondent is thinking of feedback in terms of improvement messages.

*Impact of message*

The givers of feedback were asked to describe in what ways they perceived their feedback had had an impact on the peer's writing program and then to explain how they knew this. Over half the responses (10 out of 18) saw the impact in terms of changed professional practice, for example, "He has developed his learning intentions/success criteria to meet the purpose for the lesson and has been exploring a range of activities, comparing which ones work best for which aim". In three cases, respondents either could not see how their feedback could impact (for example, where the giver of feedback was much less experienced as a teacher) or did not think that it had actually had any effect.

The explanations as to how they knew their feedback had impacted fell predominantly into the category that they knew the feedback had effect because of changed practice. Where the respondent (the giver of feedback) clearly stated that the changes had been observed, they were classified as such, for example, "Has worked on these areas when I came to observe again". Only about one-third of respondents who claimed changed practice actually stated that the evidence was that they had seen these changed practices. The other two-thirds of examples were changes presumably reported by the observee, such as, "S/he told me . . . that s/he now develops sequences at a slow, more achievable pace". The other way respondents claimed to know about change as a result of feedback was through the impact on student learning or engagement. Again, this source of evidence could be either observed or reported, for example, "He has told me that his class enjoys poetry more now". Notably, about 20 percent of responses regarding how the respondent knew about impact were either of the ilk, "I don't believe that there have been any obvious areas in her practice that I could help her to improve", or were unable to be categorised as they were too vague.

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## Usefulness of feedback messages

Finally, a source of information about the nature of the feedback messages came from the questionnaires that each member of the pair completed after each observation (Appendix B1). In this questionnaire each of them rated the usefulness of the feedback given and received and gave reasons for the rating. The ratings were on a six-point scale from "definitely not useful" to "definitely useful". For simplicity, here we will consider only those ratings that the receiver of the feedback gave.

After the first round of observations, the ratings ranged from 2 to 6 with the majority of the 22 respondents selecting either 5 (10 respondents) or 6 (6 respondents). The reasons that accompanied the ratings shed more light on the operation of feedback in peer observations. A rating of 2, which suggests the feedback was not useful, was accompanied by reasons such as, "Not much feedback given", or, "X thought the lesson was very good and didn't know what to suggest to move forward". In these cases, ratings matched the reasons, namely, that there was little feedback—in one case apparently because it was difficult to find something that needed improvement. Similarly, ratings of 3 and 4 were given where either the feedback given confirmed what the teacher observed had concluded with respect to the lesson observed, or the feedback suggested some minor change. An example of the reasons for rating at this level was, "The lesson went well and I was aware that the lower children were slightly unsure of themselves and their understanding of what they needed to do".

However, at the other end of the scale, the reasons for rating feedback highly were varied. A couple rated a feedback comment that concerned "tweaking what I normally do" as useful (5). Some seemed to rate the feedback as "useful" (5) by virtue of the fact that a discussion had taken place, particularly one that reinforced or cued ideas, for example, "It made me aware of things/thoughts that I had simmering in the background. Always useful to bounce thoughts and ideas between peers", or, "Good to discuss student learning and what is actually happening". Most respondents, however, rated the feedback as "useful" or "definitely useful" (5 or 6) and gave as a reason the learning they had come to as a result: "I realised that I had missed developing the students' understanding"; "Highlighted an area that needs further clarification for students" (5); "Making the learning intention clearer for my students should, in turn, improve all my students' learning" (6).

After the seventh and final round of observations, the ratings of the usefulness of feedback again ranged from 2 to 6 and the distribution of responses was similar to that in round 1 (the one respondent who employed the rating of 2 did not give a reason). Again, ratings of 3 and 4 were accompanied by reasons such as, "No surprises—had similar ideas myself", and, "It was great to get feedback moving in the direction I was already planning to go". However, the specificity of the reasons for the ratings of 5 and 6 were noticeable and clearly reflect the more specific nature of the feedback received. Examples that represent this specific learning are: "Gave me clear examples and ways to modify my activities to match the learning aim" (6); "X has helped me to focus on some techniques that have made teaching far easier" (6); and, "I hadn't thought of using different levels of models as this was a whole-class lesson".

At this point in the process of engaging in peer observation and feedback, several respondents added a comment to the effect that the value of both of these forms of professional learning was dependent on the peer and, implicitly, their levels of knowledge and expertise. Participants were suggesting that there is a relationship between how effective this form of learning is and the skill of the peer. However, such comments need to be viewed alongside comments made above that rated the peer feedback as useful in confirming and validating what they had thought about or intended to do.

## *Alignment of messages*

A further analysis we did was to consider the responses of individual pairs to see whether what each recalled was similar. We considered responses of pairs together in each of the roles as observer and observee. The degree of match was categorised on a four-point scale from no apparent relationship between feedback reportedly given and that received to where it was clear that the messages heard were the same as those given. Only nine out of 11 pairs had these data and, as each acted in both roles, the maximum number of matches is 18. Table 6 shows that there was variation in the extent to which reported messages were aligned.

Table 6  **Instances of match in messages given and received**

| Degree of match | 1 Not matched | 2 Somewhat matched | 3 Mostly matched | 4 Precisely matched |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instances of match | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 |

## The process of observing and giving and receiving feedback

Neither giving feedback to, nor receiving feedback from, colleagues are straightforward practices, nor are they practices that teachers have traditionally engaged in. We enquired into teacher views of the practices in four main ways. One way was to ask about the relative amount of learning derived from observation versus giving and receiving feedback (questionnaire in Appendix B4). The second was a brief, informal, written response from all teachers to two open questions concerning giving feedback, namely, what do you find difficult about giving feedback? and what would you like to become more skilled at? These responses were sought to help shape the professional learning sessions being conducted around learning conversations. The third was a more structured questionnaire (see Appendix B3), administered in September/October, that asked a set of open-ended questions. Amongst these questions they were asked to recall the most difficult message they had had to give and how they went about this task. They were also asked what they thought they needed to do to be more effective at giving feedback.

*Relative amount of learning*

In the final questionnaire that asked more generally about the categories within the Observation Guide, one question asked teachers to assign relative proportions of a total of 100 points to the acts of observation, of giving feedback, and of receiving feedback. The results of this reinforce the findings reported above, namely, that teachers rate observing others the highest in terms of learning (six teachers gave this between 61 and 80 points of the total 100). Receiving feedback is generally rated more highly than giving feedback which is the activity teachers report they learn least from. However, two teachers allocated the giving of feedback between 30 and 40 points and two gave it between 41 and 50 points. They clearly considered it as valuable or more valuable than the other two components. However, most teachers (12) gave the act of giving feedback less than one-third of the total 100 points.

*Difficult aspects of giving feedback*

There were two clear themes that pervaded the responses to both questions in the written responses in the informal questionnaire, where we simply asked what was difficult about giving feedback and what they wanted to learn more about. One theme concerned professional knowledge and the other, not surprisingly, interpersonal issues. There was a strong sense in the responses that a high level of professional knowledge and skill was required to give feedback and a perceived lack of this was a barrier. In terms of what teachers wanted to become more skilled at, this was by far the most frequently nominated aspect. This professional knowledge centrally included reference to aspects of pedagogical content knowledge of writing (how text and language work and the writing process) but there was also reference to the fact that professional knowledge and skill about *how* to observe and give useful feedback was needed. Lack of pedagogical content knowledge likely also underpinned a category of the responses that talked of the difficulty in interpreting and using the Guide to observe.

The second theme in responses about what was difficult mentioned affective aspects of the process. Teachers found it difficult to talk with those they observed about areas for development in their teaching. There was the perception that offence would be caused by "giving honest messages that were not positive". As mentioned above, a few comments indicated that respondents would like to become more skilled at actually delivering such feedback messages.

In the formal questionnaire, amongst the questions asked was one about the process of giving feedback, namely, regarding the most difficult message teachers felt they had had to give and how they went about this task. They were also asked what they thought they needed to do to be more effective at giving feedback.

The major category of difficult-response message contained messages that we coded as enhancement messages, those designed to enhance practice. The majority of teachers (12) reported these as difficult. They related to pedagogical content knowledge, for example, the observer who reported that a difficult message to give was, "that teaching needs to be needs based and that evidence from data collected on students should drive the programme. As a teacher,

differentiation is an important part of planning and teaching to needs". Clearly, for this observer, the message was difficult to give because to him or her, it seemed so fundamental that its absence was a serious (and embarrassing) concern. Another type of enhancement message was more pedagogical, relating to teacher strategies and resources. Some of these, arguably, are also knowledge related. An example of such a message concerned "more specific learning intentions, less task focus". Another area where giving an enhancement message was reported as difficult was when it concerned personal qualities of the teacher, for example, that they "lacked enthusiasm".

For some teachers there had been no difficult message to give about teaching practice in writing. Seven teachers (out of 20 responding) said they had not had to give such a message, for example, "Nothing—I have not observed anything that I can remember that was really lacking". Finally, two respondents gave answers that were insufficiently specific to categorise, such as, "My peer wasn't meeting aspects of the observation sheet".

The reasons cited as to why these messages were difficult to give centred largely around notions of affect and morality and, to a lesser extent, because the observer was not sure of his or her ground. Often responses contained all three elements, for example, "Because I feel I don't have any right to judge or assess because I am only in my nth year of teaching . . . I could be wrong".

The way observers reported tackling delivering any feedback perceived as difficult included the idea that, as they had contracted to talk about this, they felt this gave licence to do so. They also felt that because they had put on the table their own knowledge and made clear their own theories and expectations of good practice, it was easier to give a challenging message about practice. However, by far the largest proportion of respondents reported that they tackled the task of giving a difficult message by using evidence, for example, "We talked about it and I told him about specific students and their behaviours during the lesson. The observee soon understood what I meant and we proceeded to explore some ways that effective differentiation could take place".

With regard to what teachers felt they needed to do to be more effective at giving feedback in relation to teaching, their responses echoed the patterns of the informal responses sought earlier. Nearly two-thirds of responses made reference to needing greater skill with respect to conducting the process, for example, "I need to work on my discussion techniques". Only one-third noted that they needed to increase their pedagogical content knowledge, for example, "Increase my own knowledge in order to have a deeper or more extensive understanding".

## Student achievement data

It is important to note that the peer observation study was instituted in tandem with a professional development emphasis on writing. Therefore, it is not possible to separate out the relative contribution of each of these major professional learning components to enhanced student achievement in writing. Clearly, the more teachers increased their pedagogical content knowledge

in writing from the writing professional development, the more effective they were likely to be in terms of both observation and giving feedback.

In terms of student achievement, as measured by asTTle, there was certainly an overall, marked improvement in 2007 with an average effect-size gain, relative to where the students started, of 0.7. Students in Years 7 and 8 began below the New Zealand mean and ended considerably above it. Māori gained at the same rate as all other students. The gain was not consistent across years with Year 9 making relatively less progress.

## Conclusions and implications

This school succeeded in raising student achievement in writing during the year of this study. However, they engaged help to develop teachers' practice in teaching writing. To use the Observation Guide most fruitfully and for the Guide to operate within the context of peer coaching as a "smart tool" to enhance both teacher knowledge and practice, support is needed to build teacher professional expertise in two areas. The first is that of pedagogical content knowledge and the second that of the process of conducting professional talk that is evidence based and challenges assumptions and practices that impede effectiveness.

With respect to the first area, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in writing, Parr and Timperley (2008) have argued elsewhere regarding the knowledge teachers might require in order to teach writing. We quote:

> [Teachers] need to know, at a conscious level, how texts work to achieve their communicative, rhetorical purposes, including knowledge of the features of text most commonly employed to support writing for a particular purpose. This involves a detailed knowledge of language and of text structures, what might be considered subject matter knowledge. But, PCK also involves the ability to articulate and make accessible to developing writers that which is implicit and often at a level below conscious thought; to unpack what writers are doing as they engage in the writing process. Arguably, in order to teach developing writers, teachers need to know, for example, what strategies more expert writers use as they engage in the complex activity of writing. Bringing to conscious awareness that which is automatic and implicit would seem to be a component of PCK in both reading and writing. Further, teachers need to marry this explicit knowledge of language and how texts work in contexts and of process and strategies with knowledge of the developmental trajectory that may operate in learning to write and of the approaches, activities and resources most efficacious to employ with developing writers.

There is evidence that building this knowledge relates to improved student achievement in writing (Parr & Timperley, 2006; Parr, Timperley, Reddish, Jesson, & Asams, 2006). The Guide could serve both to build this knowledge and to ground this knowledge in practice, but it is not intended to be used without the support of professional reading and other forms of professional learning that would build the content knowledge about writing that is the foundation on which to build useful pedagogical content knowledge. In this study, teachers reported that they find observing

others a useful professional learning activity. However, we would argue that such observation of others' practice needs to be focused and a tool such as the Guide serves this purpose.

The second area where concurrent support is needed is to develop teacher skill in the process of contributing to learning conversations around elements of practice. There is a body of work in New Zealand that focuses on teacher and facilitator talk in this sense (Robinson & Lai, 2006; Timperley, 2003; Timperley & Parr, 2008). In this study teachers found the act of giving feedback to a peer foreign and, in most cases, a considerable challenge. They were reluctant to don an evaluative hat and accept the maxim that *all* practice can be improved (unless *all* students are achieving to the levels you would want for them). The act of categorising an element or subelement of practice in terms of its nature and quality was problematic. But, asking observers to rate or rank by categorising focuses observation and underscores the need to gather evidence on which to base and justify a judgement. Despite the challenges, the data show that the majority of the teachers adopted the principles of learning conversations such as contracting, making clear their notions of effective practice, and using evidence to support feedback statements.

An important point to be noted from this work is the length of time needed for a process like peer observation and feedback to gain traction, that is for the majority of teachers to find in the process professional rewards for them. It was not until the end of the year that this sentiment was obvious to the researchers and it was seen mostly through the in-depth, exit interviews. There was evidence of enhanced practice recorded in the Guide and in the evidence noted. There was reported learning from the feedback; enhancement-of-practice messages dominated amongst those recalled by both givers and receivers of feedback.

There are organisational issues that this study highlights. These include the logistics of arranging and, secondarily, the time "costs" of using peers as coaches. In addition, there is a considerable level of professional development that needs to occur concurrently with peer observation and discussion. The pairing process was seen as a significant factor in ensuring the success of the peer observation and feedback process. It seems that, in accord with findings on peer tutoring, participants should not be too discrepant in terms of experience or expertise. Inexperienced teachers, irrespective of their level of effectiveness, feel a certain lack of moral right to make any judgements about the practice of a much more experienced teacher, even when they have relevant evidence to bring to the discussion.  If members of pairs are too different, it may operate more like a mentoring situation than a collegial interaction.

# References (Part B 3)

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Robinson, V. M. J., & Lai, M. (2006). *Practitioner research for education: A guide to improving classrooms and schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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# Appendices

# Appendix A:   Guide for observation of literacy practice

**Teacher:**          **Observer:**          **Date:**          **Obs'vn number:**

## 1:  LEARNING AIM AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

## COMMENTS / EVIDENCE

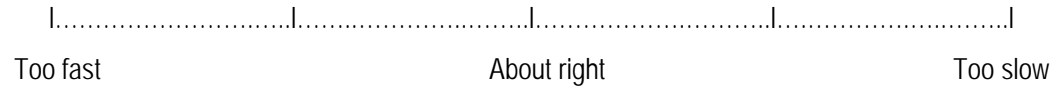| 1.1 Presence and quality of learning aim and success criteria | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No learning aim expressed | Learning aim implicit in teaching / learning activities | Learning aim expressed either: in general terms ☐ as a topic ☐ as a task ☐ | Learning aim expressed as a specific cognitive process or skill |
| No success criteria expressed | Success criteria are a restatement of the learning aim | Success criteria are a list of elements or properties of the learning | Success criteria include a standard *or* progressions/levels of achievement in relation to each element or property of the learning |
| **1.2 Developing students' understanding of the learning aim and success criteria** | | | |
| No evidence of developing students' understanding of the: learning aim ☐ success criteria ☐ | Learners asked to locate, recite, copy and/or record the: learning aim ☐ success criteria ☐ | Learners asked to identify instances in a model or exemplar of the: learning aim ☐ success criteria ☐ | Learners asked to explain in their own words their understanding of the: learning aim ☐ success criteria ☐ |
| **1.3 Appropriateness of time spent  on the learning aim and success criteria given their significance** | | | |

Learning Aim [record]

Success criteria [record]

## 2: LEARNING / TEACHING ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 Relationship between teacher modelling and learning aim / success criteria

| Teacher provides a model but it has *no relationship* to: | Teacher provides a model that is *tenuously related* to: | Teacher provides a model that is *reasonably related* to: | Teacher provides a model that is *strongly related* to: |
|---|---|---|---|
| the learning aim ☐ | the learning aim ☐ | the learning aim ☐ | the learning aim ☐ |
| success criteria ☐ | success criteria ☐ | success criteria ☐ | success criteria ☐ |
| generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |

### 2.2 Link(s) made to students' prior knowledge / understanding to support current learning:

| *No link(s)* made | *Tenuous link(s)* made to prior l experiences in form of: | *Reasonable link(s)* made to prior literacy experiences in form of: | *Strong link(s)* made to prior literacy experiences in form of: |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Thinking strategies or processes ☐ | Thinking strategies or processes ☐ | Thinking strategies or processes ☐ |
| | Language features ☐ | Language features ☐ | Language features ☐ |
| | Texts ☐ | Texts ☐ | Texts ☐ |
| | Personal/real world experiences ☐ | Personal/real world experiences ☐ | Personal/real world experiences ☐ |

### 2.3. Deliberate Acts of Teaching

| Indicate the degree to which the teacher makes explicit or visible what it is that readers and/or writers need to know and do | I……………..I……..………..I……………….I………..…….I  <br> Low degree      moderate degree      high degree |
|---|---|

## 2. LEARNING / TEACHING ACTIVITIES continued

COMMENTS / EVIDENCE

| 2.4 Teacher interactions with students are | |
|---|---|
| about elements of the task ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...….............I...................I...…...…...I<br><br>Too few             About right        Far too many<br>instances                                  instances |
| management/organisation focused ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...….............I...................I...…...…...I<br><br>Too few             About right         Far too many<br>instances                                  instances |
| about their learning ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | **NB: Change in scale**<br>I...................I...….............I...................I...…...…...I<br>Rarely             Sometimes        Nearly all the time |
| inclusive of a range of learners ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...….............I...................I...…...…...I<br><br>Rarely             Sometimes        Nearly all the time |
| Respectful of them [students] as learners ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...….............I...................I...…...…...I<br><br>Rarely             Sometimes        Nearly all the time |

| 2.5. Extent of Teacher and Student Engagement in Learning-Related Talk | |
|---|---|
| Teacher to class/group (one-way) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I................I.......…........I.................I..............I<br><br>Too few                       About right           Far too many<br>instances                                        instances |
| Teacher to student (one-way) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I................I.......…........I.................I..............I<br><br>Too few                       About right           Far too many<br>instances                                        instances |
| Teacher and student (two-way) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I................I.......…........I.................I..............I<br><br>Too few                       About right           Far too many<br>instances                                        instances |
| Student(s) and student(s) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I................I.......…........I.................I..............I<br><br>Too few                       About right           Far too many<br>instances                                        instances |

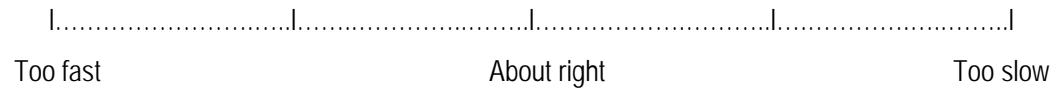| 2.6 Overall appropriateness of lesson pace |
|---|
| I…………………..……..I……..……………..……..I…………………..………..I…………………..………..I<br>Too fast                                               About right                                    Too slow |

COMMENTS / EVIDENCE

| 2.7 Degree of alignment between <u>class</u> activity and learning aim / success criteria | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No** | **Tenuous alignment** | **Reasonable alignment** | **Strong alignment** |
| 2.8 Degree of alignment between learning purpose and group activity | | | | |
| <u>Learning purpose</u>:<br>Developing current learning aim / success criteria ☐<br>Consolidating past learning aim ☐<br>Consolidating aspects of literacy learning ☐ | No | Tenuous | Reasonable | Strong |
| <u>Learning purpose</u>:<br>Developing current learning aim / success criteria ☐<br>Consolidating past learning aim ☐<br>Consolidating aspects of literacy learning ☐ | No | Tenuous | Reasonable | Strong |
| <u>Learning purpose</u>:<br>Developing current learning aim / success criteria ☐<br>Consolidating past learning aim ☐<br>Consolidating aspects of literacy learning ☐ | No | Tenuous | Reasonable | Strong |
| <u>Learning purpose</u>:<br>Developing current learning aim / success criteria ☐<br>Consolidating past learning aim ☐<br>Consolidating aspects of literacy learning ☐ | No | Tenuous | Reasonable | Strong |

| 2.9 Evidence of differentiation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resources | No evidence of differentiation | Evidence of an attempt to differentiate | Reasonable evidence of differentiation | Strong evidence of differentiation |
| Activities | No evidence of differentiation | Evidence of an attempt to differentiate | Reasonable evidence of differentiation | Strong evidence of differentiation |
| Scaffolding | No evidence of differentiation | Evidence of an attempt to differentiate | Reasonable evidence of differentiation | Strong evidence of differentiation |
| Success Criteria | No evidence of differentiation | Evidence of an attempt to differentiate | Reasonable evidence of differentiation | Strong evidence of differentiation |

| 2.6 Overall appropriateness of lesson pace |
| --- |
| I………………..…….I….…..…………..……..I………………..………..I……………...……...I<br><br>Too fast                                  About right                                  Too slow |
| |

## 3: FEEDBACK about students' productive activity <u>during</u> reading and/or writing

COMMENTS / EVIDENCE

| 3.1 Quality of achievement related feedback | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher's feedback is not directly related to achievement (rather it is approving, rewarding, disapproving of behaviour) | Teacher's feedback refers in a general manner to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about *whether* their work has met / has not met: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about *how* their work has met / has not met: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **3.2 Quality of improvement related feedback** | | | |
| Teacher provides feedback regarding aspects to improve but these are not directly related to the success criteria or learning aim | Teacher's feedback makes no direct reference to what needs improvement and how to go about improvement, rather it refers in general manner to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about **what** needs to be improved, with reference to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about **how** to improve their work, with reference to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **3.3 Self-regulating prompts**      Oral ☐     Written ☐     N/A ☐ | | | |
| The teacher reminds learners to evaluate / check their work | The teacher reminds learners to evaluate / check their work with reference to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | The teacher provides students with evaluative self-regulating prompts related to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | The teacher specifically refers students to evaluative self-regulating prompts related to: success criteria ☐ generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |

| 3.4 Opportunities for quality peer assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate peer's / peers' work | Teacher asks learners to *"talk to"* peer about their work | Teacher asks learners to talk with a peer/peers about **whether** the peer's/peers' work has/has not met the success criteria | Teachers asks learners to talk with a peer/peers about areas **where** the peer's/peers' work can be improved and/or **how** it can be improved with reference to the success criteria |
| 3.5 Opportunities for quality self assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback) | | | |
| Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate their own work | Teacher asks learners to *"evaluate"* or *"assess"* their own work | Teacher asks learners to decide **whether** their own work has/has not met the success criteria and/or **to find instances of where** it has/ has not met the criteria | Teacher asks learners to find instances of **where** their work can be improved with reference to the success criteria and/or to identify **how** it can be improved |

# 4:  Some Probes to Help Examine Practice (NB:  Use these during discussion around evidence collected)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.    The extent to which the students/particular students achieved the learning intended (how do you find out about this?) | |
| 2.    What specific things did you do that you consider helped the students in their achievement of learning?  (How do you know?) | |
| 3.    What areas of the practice observed do you want to hone?  Why this aspect? What do you need to know and do in order to do this? | |

## Appendix A2

## 3: FEEDBACK about learner's/learners' productive activity <u>during</u> writing

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">3.1 Quality of achievement related feedback</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Teacher's feedback is not directly related to achievement (rather it is approving, rewarding, disapproving of behaviour)</td>
<td>3.1.2 Teacher's feedback refers in a general manner to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.1.3 Teacher tells the learner about *whether* their work has met/has not met:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.1.4 Teacher tells the learner about *how* their work has met/has not met:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.1.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner' taking the lead')* *whether* and *how* the work has met/has not met:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Evidence:*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">3.2 Quality of improvement related feedback</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Teacher provides feedback regarding aspects to improve but these are not related to the success criteria, learning aim or generic aspects of literacy learning</td>
<td>3.2.2 Teacher's feedback about areas for improvement refers in a general manner to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.2.3 Teacher tells the learner about *what* needs to be improved, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.2.4 Teacher tells the learner about *how* to improve their work, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
<td>3.2.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead')* *what* needs improvement and *how* to go about this, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Evidence:*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</table>

| 3.3 Self-regulating prompts | Oral ☐ | | Written ☐ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| 3.3.1 The teacher reminds learner(s) to evaluate / check their work | 3.3.2 The teacher provides learner(s) with / refers learner(s) to evaluative self-regulating prompts related to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.3.3 Learner(s) spontaneously refer to / use self-regulating prompts that are available. |
|---|---|---|
| *Evidence:* | | |

### 3.4 Opportunities for quality peer assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback)

| 3.4.1 Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate peer's/peers' work | 3.4.2 Teacher asks learners to *"talk to"* peer(s) about their work | 3.4.3 Teacher asks learners to talk with a peer/peers about *whether* work has/has not met the success criteria and/or t*o find instances of where* it has/has not met the criteria. | 3.4.4 Teachers asks learners to talk with a peer /peers about areas *where* work can be improved and/or **how** it can be improved with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.4.5 Learners spontaneously talk with a peer/peers about *whether* work has/has not met the success criteria; *where* the work can be improved; and/or *how* it can be improved with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Evidence:* | | | | |

### 3.5 Opportunities for quality self assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback)

| 3.5.1 Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate their own work. | 3.5.2 Teacher asks learners, in a general manner, to *"evaluate"* or *"assess"* their own work. | 3.5.3 Teacher asks learners to decide *whether* their own work has/has not met the success criteria and/or t*o find instances of where* it has/has not met the criteria. | 3.5.4 Teacher asks learners to find instances of *where* their work can be improved and/or to identify *how* it can be improved with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.5.5 Learners spontaneously engage in an evaluation of their work (identifying where their work has/not met the success criteria; areas for improvement). |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Evidence:* | | | | |

65

## Appendix A3

## 3:  FEEDBACK    about a learner's / learners' productive activity <u>during</u> writing

Success criterion that is the focus of writing conferences [Tuesday & Wednesday]: *I use dialogue in a way that gives the reader information about my characters – it tells the reader what my characters are like.*  Most students have completed the first draft of their story; the class is concurrently working on this idea in their reading programme – looking at how authors use dialogue to develop their characters.

| 3.1 Quality of achievement related feedback | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1.1 Teacher's feedback is not directly related to achievement (rather it is approving, rewarding, disapproving of behaviour) | 3.1.2 Teacher's feedback refers in a general manner to: <br>• success criteria ☐ <br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.3 Teacher tells the learner about *whether* their work has met/has not met: <br>• success criteria ☐ <br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.4 Teacher tells the learner about *how* their work has met/has not met: <br>• success criteria ☐ <br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.1.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner' taking the lead') whether* and *how* the work has met/has not met: <br>• success criteria ☐ <br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *For example:*<br><br>*"Well done"*<br>*"Awesome"*<br>*"Not as good as usual"* | *"You've met most of the success criteria"*<br><br>*"You need to check your work for the things we were looking at last week – the paragraphs"* | *"Great, your story has dialogue - you have used dialogue to give information about Rose's character"*<br><br>*"I see you have paragraphs in your story"* | *"Great use of dialogue here where Rose says 'Come on, I don't really want to go swimming. I can go tomorrow. I'll help you' – it tells me that she is willing to miss out on things for herself and will help others - she puts others before herself – she's not a selfish person".*<br><br>*"Well done, each new idea has a new paragraph – you state the idea clearly at the start of each paragraph then develop it …"* | *"As you read me your story, show me where you have used dialogue to give information about each character … [student reads and responds]. Now, let's look at Rose – what are you trying to tell the reader about her [student responds] …"*<br><br>*"Tell me why this is a paragraph [student responds] - so it's all about the one idea, and that idea is? [student responds] …. and the next paragraph? ….. "* |
| | | | | Each of the above would be developed further into an extended dialogue between teacher and student – with the student taking the lead and doing the majority of the talking, explaining what they have achieved and how they have achieved it. |

| 3.2 Quality of improvement related feedback | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.2.1 Teacher provides feedback regarding aspects to improve but these are not related to the success criteria, learning aim or generic aspects of literacy learning | 3.2.2 Teacher's feedback about areas for improvement refers in a general manner to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.2.3 Teacher tells the learner about *what* needs to be improved, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.2.4 Teacher tells the learner about *how* to improve their work, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.2.5 Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead')* *what* needs improvement and *how* to go about this, with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| *"Fix up your handwriting, I can't read …."*<br>*"Tidy up the borders"* | *"You need to check you've met the success criteria, I think there's room for improvement"*<br><br>*""Use the ideas we have been working on in our writing over the last few weeks to help you fix up your story".* | *"You need to use dialogue to give us information about Peter's character"*<br><br>*"Fix up your use of past tense in this paragraph here"* | *"You said Peter is a 'know it all' – see if you can use dialogue to show this rather than having a statement. Peter might say something like '**I** know that, you don't have to tell me' and maybe you could use bold or underlining to emphasise the 'I'."*<br><br>*"Fix up your use of past tense in this paragraph – most of the paragraph is in the present and it reads well, but here, instead of 'used' put 'uses', and instead of 'carried' put* | *"You say here that Peter is a 'know it all'. I wonder how you could use dialogue to show this … [teacher waits for response] …  yes, that's one way, can you think of another [student responds] … so you could remove the statement here and put  [waits] …….."*<br><br>*"Let's see how you have used tenses– read this paragraph to me [student responds]. Mmm, some present tense [points] and some past tense [points] … read it again and make it all in the past [student does so]. Now read it and make it all in the present [student does so]. Which do you think works best [student responds] why …."* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *'carries' …* | |
| | | | | Each of the above would be developed further into an extended dialogue between teacher and student – with the student taking the lead and doing the majority of the talking. |
| | | | | |

| 3.3 Self-regulating prompts | Oral ☐ | Written ☐ | |
|---|---|---|---|

| 3.3.1 The teacher reminds learner(s) to evaluate / check their work | 3.3.2 The teacher provides learner(s) with / refers learner(s) to evaluative self-regulating prompts related to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.3.3 Learner(s) spontaneously refer to / use self-regulating prompts that are available. |
|---|---|---|
| *"Remember to check your work before you put it away".* | *"Jane, have a look at the questions and ideas on the whiteboard – especially this one [pointing] about the use of dialogue to develop characters".*<br><br>*"If you get stuck, read through the points on the board – they will help you with your paragraphing".* | If learners do this, it suggests that the teacher has directed students to such prompts in the past and as a result, there are some students who now refer to these without being asked – they are moving towards becoming self-regulating. |

| 3.4 Opportunities for quality peer assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| 3.4.1 Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate peer's/peers' work | 3.4.2 Teacher asks learners to *"talk to"* peer(s) about their work | 3.4.3 Teacher asks learners to talk with a peer/peers about *whether* work has/has not met the success criteria and/or t*o find instances of where* it has/has not met the criteria. | 3.4.4 Teachers asks learners to talk with a peer/peers about areas *where* work can be improved and/or **how** it can be improved with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.4.5 Learners spontaneously talk with a peer/peers about *whether* work has/has not met the success criteria; *where* the work can be improved; and/or ***how*** it can be improved with reference to:<br>• success criteria ☐<br>• generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| | | *"When you meet with the writer, read their story then talk to them about whether they have got* | *"Talk together about places where the author could improve the dialogue so it tells you more about the character; give them some* | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *dialogue that gives information about each character – find examples for each character in their story".* | *suggestions about how the dialogue could be improved – maybe try and do this together".*<br><br>*"As you read your partner's story you might see things that need to be fixed up or improved – it might be something we did last week or last month like paragraphing or using interesting words - tell them about what needs improving and give some suggestions to help make the improvements".* | If learners do this it suggests that the teacher has, in the past, encouraged students to do these sorts of activities – and as a result, there are some students in the class who now carry out these actions without prompting – they are moving towards becoming self-monitoring writers. |

| 3.5 Opportunities for quality self assessment (achievement and improvement related feedback) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.5.1 Teacher does not ask learners to evaluate their own work. | 3.5.2 Teacher asks learners, in a general manner, to *"evaluate"* or *"assess"* their own work. | 3.5.3 Teacher asks learners to decide *whether* their own work has/has not met the success criteria and/or t*o find instances of where* it has/has not met the criteria. | 3.5.4 Teacher asks learners to find instances of *where* their work can be improved and/or to identify *how* it can be improved with reference to <br> • success criteria ☐ <br> • generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | 3.5.5 Learners spontaneously engage in an evaluation of their work (identifying where their work has/not met the success criteria and/or generic aspects of literacy; and areas for improvement in relation to these aspects). |
| | | *"Take five minutes out from your writing, now, and read what you have written – ask yourself whether the dialogue is telling the reader about the character – and see if there are any characters that don't have any or very much dialogue".* | *"Before we move on today, read what you wrote yesterday and find places where you could improve the dialogue so it tells the reader more about the character; think about what the person could say so we can get to know what they are like".* <br><br> **"As you read your story you might see something that needs to be fixed up or improved – it might be something like paragraphing or even something we did last month … see if you can think of ways in which you could make the changes or improvements"** | As noted above, if learners do this it suggests that the teacher has, in the past, encouraged students to do these sorts of activities – and as a result, there are some students in the class who now carry out these actions without prompting – they have become self-monitoring. |

**Appendix A4**

**GUIDE FOR OBSERVATION OF LITERACY PRACTICE: SECTION ONE**

Teacher:                          Observer:                          Date:

1. COMMUNICATING LEARNING GOALS and EXPECTATIONS; links between LEARNING GOALS and EXPECTATIONS and; ACTIVATING LINKS BETWEEN LEARNING GOALS / EXPECTATIONS and LEARNERS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCES

| 1.1 Presence and nature of learning goals | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learning goal is not directly identified / mentioned; it is implicit in teaching / learning activities | Learning goal is expressed as a: <br> - topic ☐ <br> - task ☐ | Learning goal is expressed in terms of: <br> - literacy related knowledge / understanding ☐ <br> - a literacy related cognitive process / skill ☐ | Learning goal is expressed, *initially*, in broad literacy terms <br><br> *It is expected that there will be evidence in subsequent lessons of this goal being reviewed and / or refined, possibly with input from students* |
| **Evidence:** Record below the learning goal and evidence on which the judgement above was made. | | | |
| | | | |

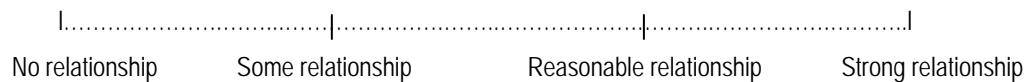| 1.2 Communicating expectations about what counts as successful achievement of the learning goal(s) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Written format  ☐            Oral format  ☐ | | | | |
| Expectations about what counts as successful achievement are not communicated clearly | The teacher communicates expectations through a list of: <br> - 'can do' statements ☐ <br> - elements for inclusion ☐ | The teacher communicates expectations through progressive levels of achievement for each 'element' of the goal ☐ | The teacher communicates expectations through: <br> - exemplars  ☐ <br> - vignettes  ☐ <br> - models  ☐ <br> - other  ☐ | Together the teacher and students *develop* and *discuss* expectations, with reference to: <br> - written statements ☐ <br> - exemplars  ☐ <br> - vignettes  ☐ <br> - models  ☐ <br> - other  ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Record below the expectations that are communicated and evidence on which the judgement above was made. | | | | |
|  | | | | |

| 1.3 Relationship between learning goal(s) and what counts as successful achievement |
|---|
| I……………….………...……I…………….……..………………I……...………….………..I <br> No relationship          Some relationship              Reasonable relationship          Strong relationship |
| **Evidence:** Identify below, briefly, the basis on which the above judgement was made. <br><br><br><br> |

| 1.4 Appropriateness of time spent communicating the learning goal(s) and expectations given their significance in terms of literacy learning |
|---|

I……………….……..I…………….………..I…………….…….…..I………….….……..I

much less time      less time      appropriate time      more time      much more time

could be spent      could be spent            could be spent      could be spent

**Evidence:** Identify below, briefly, the basis on which the above judgement was made.



| 1.5 Activating links between learning goal(s), expectations and students' prior knowledge / literacy experiences | | |
|---|---|---|
| No links made by the teacher between learning goal(s) / expectations, and learners' prior knowledge and / or previous literacy experiences | *Reasonable links* made by the teacher between learning goal(s) / expectations, and:<br>- previously taught literacy thinking strategies or processes ☐<br>- previously taught language features ☐<br>- familiar texts ☐<br>- learners' personal / real world experiences ☐<br>- other ☐ | *Strong links* made by the teacher between learning goal(s) / expectations, and:<br>- previously taught literacy thinking strategies or processes ☐<br>- previously taught language features ☐<br>- familiar texts ☐<br>- learners' personal / real world experiences ☐<br>- other ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Record below the evidence on which the judgement above was made | | |
| | | |

# GUIDE FOR OBSERVATION OF LITERACY PRACTICE: SECTION TWO

**Teacher:**                    **Observer:**                    **Date:**

**2. CURRICULA ALIGNMENT between learning goals / expectations and: act(s) of teaching; independent student activities; literacy texts / resources.**

| 2.1    Alignment between act(s) of teaching (modelling, prompting, questioning, telling, explaining, directing) and the goal(s) of learning / generic aspects of literacy learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *No alignment* between act(s) of teaching and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Slight alignment* between act(s) of teaching and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Reasonable alignment* between act(s) of teaching and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Strong alignment* between act(s) of teaching and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Identify below the act(s) of teaching and evidence on which the judgement above was made. | | | |
|  |  |  |  |

| 2.2  Alignment between independent student activities / tasks and the goal(s) of learning / generic aspects of literacy learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *No alignment* between independent student activities / tasks and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Slight alignment* between independent student activities / tasks and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Reasonable alignment* between independent student activities / tasks and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Strong alignment* between independent student activities / tasks and:<br>- the learning goal ☐<br>- expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Identify below the independent activities / tasks and evidence on which the judgement above was made. | | | |
|  |  |  |  |

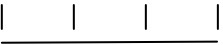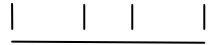| 2.3 Alignment between literacy texts / resources (eg: exemplars, models, vignettes) and the goal(s) of learning / generic aspects of literacy learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *No alignment* between literacy texts / resources and: <br> - the learning goal ☐ <br> - expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Slight alignment* between literacy texts / resources and: <br> - the learning goal ☐ <br> - expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Reasonable alignment* between literacy texts / resources and: <br> - the learning goal ☐ <br> - expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | *Strong alignment* between literacy texts / resources and: <br> - the learning goal ☐ <br> - expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Identify below the literacy texts / resources and evidence on which the judgement above was made. | | | |
| | | | |

# GUIDE FOR OBSERVATION OF LITERACY PRACTICE: SECTION THREE
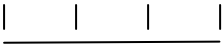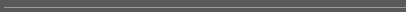
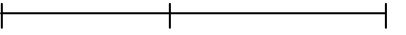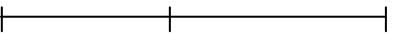**Teacher:**                    **Observer:**                    **Date:**

3. TEACHER INTERACTIONS with learners and DIFFERENTIATION for learners and learning.

| 3.1 The focus and occurrence of teacher interactions with learners (class; groups; individuals) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - learning goals / expectations | Interactions with class<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many | Interactions with groups<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some    many | Interactions with individuals<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many |
| **Evidence:** Identify the evidence on which judgements have been made. | | | |
| - generic aspects of literacy learning | Interactions with class<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many | Interactions with groups<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some    many | Interactions with individuals<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many |
| **Evidence:** Identify the evidence on which judgements have been made. | | | |
| - management of behaviour | Interactions with class<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many | Interactions with groups<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some    many | Interactions with individuals<br><br>\|     \|     \|     \|<br>—————————<br>none  few    some  many |
| **Evidence:** Identify the evidence on which judgements have been made. | | | |

| | Interactions with class | Interactions with groups | Interactions with individuals |
|---|---|---|---|
| - task organization / management | \|   \|   \|   \|<br>_____<br>none few   some many | \|   \|   \|   \|<br>_____<br>none few   some   many | \|   \|   \|   \|<br>_____<br>none few   some   many |
| **Evidence:** Identify the evidence on which judgements have been made. | | | |
| Overall focus of: | interactions with class<br><br>- learning goals / expectations ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐<br>- management of behaviour ☐<br>- task organisation / management ☐ | interactions with groups<br><br>- learning goals / expectations ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐<br>- management of behaviour ☐<br>- task organisation / management ☐ | interactions with individuals<br><br>- learning goals / expectations ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐<br>- management of behaviour ☐<br>- task organisation / management ☐ |

| 3.2 The divergent literacy learning needs of learners are addressed through differentiation in: | Degree of differentiation | Identify evidence on which the judgement was made. |
|---|---|---|
| - literacy texts / resources<br>eg; exemplars, vignettes, models | ├─────────┼─────────┤<br>No     Some     Much<br>differentiation differentiation differentiation | |
| - learning and teaching activities / tasks | ├─────────┼─────────┤<br>No     Some     Much<br>differentiation differentiation differentiation | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| - acts of teaching / scaffolding eg: modelling, prompting, questioning, telling, explaining, directing | No                Some              Much differentiation   differentiation   differentiation | |
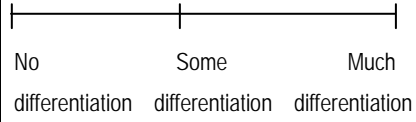
# GUIDE FOR OBSERVATION OF LITERACY PRACTICE: SECTION FOUR

**Teacher:**                    **Observer:**                              **Date:**

4. FEEDBACK about learner's / learners' productive activity, peer and self feedback and self-regulation <u>during</u> literacy learning

| 4.1 Achievement related feedback – during literacy learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher's feedback is not directly related to achievement - rather it is approving, rewarding, and / or disapproving of behaviour | Teacher's feedback refers in a *general* manner to:<br>- learning goal / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about *whether* and / or *how* their work has met / not met:<br>- learning goal / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead')* *whether* and / or *how* their work has met / not met:<br>- learning goal / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **Evidence***: Record below instances of feedback that support the judgement(s) made above* | | | |
|  |  |  |  |

| 4.2 Improvement related feedback – during literacy learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher provides feedback regarding aspects to improve but these are *not* related to learning goals / expectations regarding successful achievement or generic aspects of literacy learning | Teacher's feedback about areas for improvement refers in a *general* manner to: <br> - learning goals / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Teacher tells the learner about *what* needs improvement and / or *how* to do this, with reference to: <br> - learning goals / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Learner and teacher discuss *(with learner 'taking the lead') what* needs improvement and / or *how* to go about this, with reference to: <br> - learning goals / expectations regarding successful achievement ☐ <br> - generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Record below instances of feedback that support the judgement(s) made above | | | |
| | | | |

| 4.3 Opportunities for peer assessment during literacy learning - addressing achievement and/or improvement related feedback | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learners are not actively encouraged to evaluate peer's / peers' work | Teacher asks learners to *"talk to"* peer(s) about their work | Teacher asks learners to talk with a peer / peers about: <br> - *whether* work has / has not met learning goals / expectations ☐ <br> - and / or to *find instances* of where it has / has not met learning goals / expectations ☐ | Teacher asks learners to talk with a peer / peers about: <br> - areas where work can be improved with reference to learning goals / expectations ☐ <br> - and / or *how* it can be improved with reference to learning goals / expectations ☐ | Learners spontaneously talk with a peer / peers about: <br> - whether and / or *how* work has / has not met learning goals / expectations ☐ <br> - and / or *where* and *how* work can be improved with reference to learning goals / expectations ☐ |
| **Evidence:** Record below instances that support the judgement(s) made above | | | | |
| | | | | |

| 4.4 Opportunities for self assessment during literacy learning - addressing achievement and improvement related feedback | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learners are not actively encouraged to evaluate their own work. | Teacher asks learners, in a general manner, to *"evaluate"* or *"assess"* their own work. | Teacher asks learners to consider their work and decide: <br> - *whether* it has / has not met learning goals / expectations ☐ <br> - and / or to *find instances* of where it has / has not met learning goals / expectations ☐ | Teacher asks learners to consider their work in relation to learning goals / expectations and to: <br> - find instances of *where* it can be improved ☐ <br> - and / or identify *how* it can be improved ☐ | Learners spontaneously engage in an evaluation of their work - identifying where their work has / not met learning goals / expectations, areas for improvement and ways to go about these improvements |

| Evidence: Record below instances that support the judgement(s) made above | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| 4.5 Self-regulating prompts | Oral ☐ | Written ☐ |
|---|---|---|
| Learners are not provided with or referred to self-regulating prompts | The teacher directs learner(s) to self-regulating prompts related to:<br>- goals of learning / expectations ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ | Learner(s) spontaneously refer to / use self-regulating prompts related to:<br>- goals of learning / expectations ☐<br>- generic aspects of literacy learning ☐ |
| Evidence: Record below instances that support the judgement made above | | |
| | | |

# Appendix B:   Observed teacher response to feedback

**Observation number 1,   2,   3,   4,   5,   6,   7 (circle)**

Name_____

Class Level_____

Peer Name_____

Date: _____

1.   Overall, I thought the observed lesson was:  (circle)

1. Amongst the least effective I've taught          6. Amongst the most effective I've taught

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

1.   What was the main message you took from the feedback about the extent of changes expected in your teaching practice?

Continue with what I am currently doing

Tweak what I am already doing

Make some specific changes

Make significant changes

2.   What were the main issues (if any) talked about with your peer after the observation?

_____

_____

3.   In practical terms, how useful was the feedback in helping you to improve your teaching?

| definitely not useful | not really useful | slightly useful | moderately useful | mostly useful | definitely useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Reason for rating:

_____

_____

4.  Is there anything you intend to change in your teaching as a result of this feedback? If so, what?

_____

_____

5.  What goals have you personally set as a result of the observation and the discussion of the observation?

_____

_____

_____

6.  **Round 1 ONLY**

Feedback is one way to learn how to improve your teaching. What score out of 100 would you give feedback and then also out of 100 for each of these other types of professional learning situations.

- Being observed and receiving feedback              _____/100
- Receiving student activities and materials          _____/100
- Professional readings                                        _____/100
- Discussing teaching issues with a more expert person    _____/100
- Examining evidence of student learning              _____/100
- Discussing teaching issues with colleagues                _____/100
- Observing others model teaching practice           _____/100
- Attending a seminar/ presentation by an expert     _____/100
- Other (please specify):

_____          _____/100

Are there any other comments you would like to record about this feedback session?

_____

_____

**THANK YOU FOR RECORDING AND SHARING YOUR REFLECTIONS**

# Observer Response to Session Giving Feedback

**Observation number 1,   2,   3,   4,   5,   6, 7 (circle)**

Your name _____

Name of Peer Observed_____

Date: _____

      (i)      Overall, I thought the observed lesson was:  (circle)

1. Amongst the least effective I've seen      6. Amongst the most effective I've seen

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

      (ii)      What was the main message you gave in the feedback about the extent of changes you would like to see in the observed teaching practice?

Continue with what they are currently doing

Tweak what they are already doing

Make some specific changes

Make significant changes

      (iii)      What were the main issues you wanted to address with your peer after the observation?

_____

_____

      (iv)      In practical terms, how useful do you think the feedback was in helping your peer to improve his/her teaching?

| definitely not useful | not really useful | slightly useful | moderately useful | mostly useful | definitely useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Reason for rating:

_____

_____

(v) Do you think that your peer intends to change anything in his/her teaching as a result of this feedback? If so, what is it likely to be?

_____

_____

7. What goals have you set together as a result of the observation and the discussion of the observation?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any other comments you would like to record about this feedback session?

_____

_____

_____

**THANK YOU FOR RECORDING AND SHARING YOUR REFLECTIONS**

## Appendix B2

**What counts as evidence?**                                          **Is this evidence?  Why / not?**

| inclusive of a range of learners<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I..................I..................I..................I..................X<br>Rarely       Sometimes       Nearly<br>all the time | "Makes an effort to include a range of learners" |
|---|---|---|
| inclusive of a range of learners<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I..................I.................X..................I..................I<br>Rarely       Sometimes       Nearly<br>all the time | "Through wanderings around the room and interactions" |
| inclusive of a range of learners<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐<br>L  D  C  D  M  A  Dv  T  Cl | I..................I.................I..................I..................X<br>Rarely       Sometimes       Nearly<br>all the time | "Asked a variety of students to share their ideas" |
| inclusive of a range of learners<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I..................I.................I..................I..................I<br>Rarely       Sometimes       Nearly<br>all the time | "This was geared in a way that all could succeed". |

| Teacher to student (one-way)<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...................X...................I...................I<br><br>Too few                About right            Far too many<br><br>instances | "Always asking children's input" |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher to student (one-way)<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I...................I...................X...................I...................I<br><br>Too few                About right            Far too many<br><br>instances | "It's easy to see all the children are focused on you and listening …." |
| Student and student (two-way)<br><br>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | I................... X .................. I ...................I...................I<br><br>Too few                About right            Far too many<br><br>instances | "Could have used pair-share to discuss thoughts …" |

# Appendix B3

## Peer Observation Study Questionnaire

**Name: _____**

**Answer this set of questions thinking about your GIVING feedback.**

1.  What *specific* messages regarding your colleague's teaching can you recall giving? (Please do not write, for example, 'about learning intentions' but say what it was about learning intentions that you gave feedback about). List the messages.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2.  Which single message do you think has had the most impact on your partner's teaching practice in writing? Why?

   _____

   _____ Reason:

   _____

   _____

   _____

3.  In what way has your feedback had an impact on his/her writing programme?

   _____

   _____

   _____

(b) How do you know? What is your evidence?

_____

_____

_____

4.   (a) What has been the most difficult message you have had to give about teaching

     practice in writing?

_____

_____

_____

(b) Why was it difficult?

_____

_____

_____

(c ) Describe how you went about this difficult task. Include what happened- the outcome.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.   What do you think that you need to do to be more effective at giving feedback in relation

     practice in teaching writing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.   Any other comments about **GIVING** feedback

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.  How do you collect evidence about your own teaching in writing? Please be specific and give examples.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Answer this set of questions thinking about your RECEIVING feedback.**

1. List specific areas of your teaching that you can recall receiving feedback about (Please do not simply write 'about learning intentions' but say precisely what).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. (a) What message has had the most impact with respect to your teaching of writing?

_____
_____

(b) In what ways did it cause you to think more deeply about your teaching? (try to identify what it was about the feedback that did this).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(c ) What actions did you take as a consequence? Give details.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Other comments about RECEIVING feedback in relation to writing.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What other prompts (other than feedback form a colleague) have resulted in your thinking more deeply about your teaching in writing and then taking action? Describe an instance of this.

Prompts:

_____

_____

_____

_____Instance:

_____

_____

_____

_____

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR THOUGHTFUL INPUT**

# Appendix B4

AREAS ON THE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Circle your rating for the following areas from the Observation schedule *in relation to their importance when observing and providing feedback about teaching practice.*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learning intentions & success criteria | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |
| Teacher modelling linked to learning intention / success criteria | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |
| Making links to students' prior knowledge | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |
| Deliberate acts of teaching | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |
| Teacher and student engagement in learning related talk | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |
| Degree of alignment between learning intentions, success criteria and class / group activities | 1 *very unimportant* | 2 *unimportant* | 3 *slightly important* | 4 *moderately important* | 5 *mostly important* | 6 *very important* |

**Differentiation** (in resources, activities, scaffolding, success criteria)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *very unimportant* | *unimportant* | *slightly important* | *moderately important* | *mostly important* | *very important* |

**Overall appropriateness of lesson pace**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *very unimportant* | *unimportant* | *slightly important* | *moderately important* | *mostly important* | *very important* |

**Quality of achievement and improvement related feedback**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *very unimportant* | *unimportant* | *slightly important* | *moderately important* | *mostly important* | *very important* |

**Self regulating prompts**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *very unimportant* | *unimportant* | *slightly important* | *moderately important* | *mostly important* | *very important* |

**Peer and self assessment**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *very unimportant* | *unimportant* | *slightly important* | *moderately important* | *mostly important* | *very important* |

**OBSERVATION OF, GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK ON TEACHING**

Allocate 100 percent among the following three areas *to indicate the relative amount that you learned from each* [an example is provided to illustrate]:

| AREAS: | Example: | Your percentages: |
|---|---|---|
| Observation of a peer teaching | 50% | |
| Giving feedback to a peer through a learning conversation | 20% | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Receiving feedback from a peer through a learning conversation | 30% | |

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Score each of the following out of 100 *to indicate impact on your professional learning*.

| PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES: | Your score / 100: |
|---|---|
| Professional readings | / 100 |
| Discussing teaching issues with a more expert person | / 100 |
| Examining evidence of student learning | / 100 |
| Being observed and receiving feedback | / 100 |
| Discussing teaching issues with colleagues | / 100 |
| Observing others model teaching practice | / 100 |
| Attending a seminar / presentation | / 100 |
| Using the Observation schedule to guide observations and provide feedback | / 100 |
| Receiving student activities / material for classroom use | / 100 |
| Other: (specify) | / 100 |

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Eleanor & Judy.

# Appendix B5

**Teaching Writing Questionnaire**

**Name:**

This questionnaire examines some knowledge that may be needed to teach writing and to strengthen student understanding. It asks you to explain what you understand about aspects of language and also about how you teach them. Teacher knowledge of writing from the point of view of how to teach it is a significant contributor to student achievement.

An aim of this is to help you to reflect on your current state of knowledge. There are three sections to complete.

The following section asks you to write about features of text commonly associated with writing for a particular purpose, for example to explain something or to persuade someone etc.

1. <u>To persuade (to argue: Arguments)</u>

a) What are the generic features of a piece written to persuade?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b) How are ideas commonly organised within an argument?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c) What language features are considered more effective in an argument?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Here is a learning aim that one teacher came up with for teaching students to write in order to persuade

"To present a written, reasoned argument (which has the power to inform and persuade the reader"

Construct success criteria relevant to an aspect of this learning aim suitable for writers in your school.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Attached is a piece of writing from a *Year 8 student* who is writing to persuade.

In evaluating this piece, what are two significant features of argument, expected at this level, that this student demonstrates control of?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the most important 'next step' for this student in your view? Write your feedback to include this information.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Appendix B6

**In terms of the process of observing and giving, then getting feedback:**

How beneficial for your personal learning was the process of peer observation and *getting* feedback?

In what ways, specifically?

How beneficial for your personal learning was the process of peer observation and *giving* feedback?

In what ways, specifically?

In general who do you think have been the beneficiaries?
- How have they benefited?
- How do you know?

What do you think are the payoffs for the students?
- How do you know?

What is needed for this process to work well for you?
- What would make it work?
- What gets in the way of it working well for you?

What do you think are the ideal qualities in a peer observation partner?
- Did you change partners during the process (if so why / why not)?

Which steps in the learning conversation do you feel comfortable with?

Which steps did you struggle with / are you still working on?

**In terms of the logistics of the process:**

*The timing of the lessons taught/observed;*
- how appropriate was the amount of time you observed?
- how appropriate was the amount of time you gave to giving / receiving feedback?

Tell us about how you organised the feedback session?
- Where, when etc.
- How long did you spend on the average feedback session?

*The Observation schedule:*

How important was the Observation schedule in drawing your attention to aspects of your teaching?

- For you (and your peers) what has the Observation schedule highlighted?
- What sort of things did you learn from using the Observation schedule?

How much support do you think is needed to use the Observation schedule?

- What sort of support helps to make this work?

How has the PD in writing with Gail complemented this work?

- How do you see it doing this? In what ways?

**In terms of the time you have put into this peer observation / feedback / use of the Observation schedule**

Do you think the time commitment is matched by the benefits?

Why? Why not?

**Anything else not asked about that you want to comment on?**