The nature and practice
of goal setting in teacher appraisal
within primary schools

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ABSTRACT

Goal setting in teacher appraisal forms a large part of the performance management requirements within New Zealand schools. This study aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of performance goals and how they are set and can impact on the improvement of teaching and learning within performance appraisal in New Zealand primary school settings.

A qualitative study was undertaken within two Auckland primary schools which had recently undergone management changes. A total of four leaders and six teachers from both schools were interviewed to obtain a leadership perspective and teaching perspectives on how goal setting in teacher appraisal is used within their schools. Documentary evidence from each school was also analysed to compare the teachers' and leaders' responses with the school's stated policy and procedures on performance management.

The key findings indicated that when used in schools without shared understandings and common language, goals are a weak aspect of performance management. However, where goals were used habitually, as part of performance appraisal, there was evidence of improved teaching and learning. The factors involved in efficient use of performance goals included support, feedback, collaborative and reflective practice, productive relationships and critical inquiry.

This study reaches the conclusion that goal setting is variable. Some schools are doing this aspect of appraisal very well, others are not. Unless goals are used effectively by teachers and leaders, they could be viewed as a defective element of teacher appraisal. An important implication for practice is that performance goals are more likely to strengthen teacher appraisal when school leaders, teachers and policy makers are in agreement. Regular conversations and reflection about performance goals can have a significant impact in teaching and learning, resulting in improved student outcomes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BES Best Evidence Synthesis

COL Community of Learning

ERO Education Review Office

MOE Ministry of Education

NAG National Administration Guidelines

NEG National Education Guidelines

NZTC New Zealand Teachers Council

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PD Professional Development

PLG Professional Learning Group

PMS Performance Management Systems

RTC Registered Teacher Criteria

SLT Senior Leadership Team

SMART Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

TAI Teaching as Inquiry

UK United Kingdom

USA United States of America

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"To learn is to change how you think" Michael Merzenich, 1992 (Rock, 2007)

Specific regulatory procedures have been in place since the early nineteen nineties for the appraisal and development of all teachers and senior management within 'self managing schools' governed by Board of Trustees (O'Neill & Scrivens, 2005). During the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education (MoE), perceived that schools failed to respond to crucially establish systems for teacher appraisal (Cardno, 1999). This resulted in prescribing specific guidelines. The legislation surrounding appraisal regulations is identified through the Ministry of Education's Performance Management Systems (PMS) in the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) (2007), as well as The New Zealand Teacher's Council (NZTC), The Education Act (1989) and the State Sector Act (1988). The Ministry of Education (1997), states that the effective management of the performance of teachers involves the development and implementation of appropriate policies and processes in accordance with legislation. The State Sector Act (1988) and The Education Act (1989) provide the framework for performance management in schools. Within this framework, government policy expects that schools submit a School Charter every year. This should identify the schools vision, mission and objectives including a policy that consists of a process to appraise their staff, with reference to the schools own charter and the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs). This study will explore these processes, with the specific intention of finding the nature and practice of goal setting within teacher appraisal.

BACKGROUND

The specific leadership factors that contributed to professional learning and improved student outcomes involved the provision of goal setting, as determined by Robinson and Timperley (2007). Their findings suggested that

the co-construction of goals by teachers and their professional developers lead to the highest gain for students. The Education Research Office (ERO, 2014) also recommends school leaders should ensure teacher appraisal goals connect to organisational goals as well as professional learning and development for teachers. However, this needs to include a deep analysis of student achievement, the impact of teaching practice, as well as conversations about setting appraisal goals, and the understanding of terminology surrounding goals (Benade, 2015). For example, research on a sample of ninety-five experienced principals in New Zealand indicated that 71% of their goals were categorised as 'vague performance goals' rather than specific and measureable (Sinnema & Robinson, 2007). This shows that writing clear and specific goals is a major challenge in itself (Bendikson & Robinson, 2013). The key factor of ensuring teacher appraisal goals connect to organisational goals as well as professional learning and development for teachers is, according to ERO (2014) providing consistent criteria to measure accountability and develop professionals to meet the requirements. Piggot-Irvine (2015) explains that the importance of setting goals for attaining direction at both the organisational and personal level leads to educational achievement and organisational effectiveness, but this was not clearly conveyed within the NAGs.

Although there are many benefits of setting goals, these can often be driven towards the organisational goals aligned to the school's vision and mission, but not necessarily synchronised with an individual's performance goal.   For example, Cardno (2012) argues that for any strategic initiative to disseminate within all organisational practice it must be included in the goals of individuals and these goals must have a pedagogical focus. Cardno (2012) also suggests that performance appraisal systems provide a mechanism for motivating teachers to set development goals that are aligned with the organisation's pedagogical aspirations. However, the balance and synchronicity between these two conceptual goals can be a difficult pursuit to attain. Piggot-Irvine (2015) believes that goals are meaningful and explicit in a performance management system, which centers on goals that are personally relevant and developmentally deep whilst strategically aligned at the organisational level. The qualitative approach of this study will identify how these goals are aligned

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and how they are linked between the school's policy and procedures.

Changes in Performance Management Systems

New initiatives are paving the way for more effective appraisal systems, currently led by the Education Council (2016) such as the professional learning programme. The project currently undertaken within New Zealand is establishing how schools are conducting their own appraisal practice, whilst providing guidance and sharing best practice. This report states that "since 2013, the Council has been implementing the professional learning programme to:

- build a national understanding of how to use the "Practicing Teacher Criteria" for certification
- improve appraisal practices in ECE settings, schools and kura to benefit learning, achievement and well-being of akonga
- strengthen evaluative capability
- develop a culture of self-responsibility, accountability and professional growth
- increase the ability of teachers, professional leaders and principals to engage in a range of appraisal conversations, including those needed to address any gap between current practice and agreed elements of practice to enhance akonga outcomes" (Education Council, 2016, p. 1).

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) (2012) emphasised that through sharing experiences of appraisal it is apparent, very few schools have the right approach to appraisal. The evidence to date within New Zealand suggests huge variations in performance management systems across schools (ERO, 2014).

In 2010, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concluded that within the New Zealand context, the implementation and alignment of appraisal with other evaluation processes is variable (MoE, 2010). While New Zealand was highly commended for collaboration and improved focus on appraisal, there was a lack of knowledge and expertise. This

stems from the overall plan within New Zealand policies, which failed to articulate the connections between evaluation and assessment (MoE, 2010). This evidence provoked thoughts and questions about how schools are operating their appraisal systems and the attitudes of teachers regarding their performance management process. One of the challenges found from the research conducted by the OECD (MoE, 2010) highlighted that schools in New Zealand have such flexibility in their approach to appraisal that there is a high variation of quality in the delivery of appraisal processes, which makes it difficult to identify schools that are underperforming.

It has since been recognised by ERO (2014) that schools performing effectively within performance management identified three main points, which are outlined below:

1. "schools looked deeply into student achievement results to determine the impacts of changes in teaching practice and to decide what aspects of their teaching they needed to improve;

2. they often used the *Teaching as Inquiry* process to identify the necessary teaching improvements that contributed to their appraisal goals;

3. professional accountability was balanced with a strong desire to make improvements for their students" (ERO, 2014 p. 10).

Unfortunately, eighty per cent of schools were not considering teaching and learning effectively, as part of their performance management process, which provoked my thinking about the rationale for this research.

RATIONALE

In New Zealand, the national policy for performance management states that every teacher must be evaluated against a set of performance expectations (Cardno, 2012). These are aligned to the national professional standards including teaching, management, and school-wide responsibilities. The policy states that the evaluation must incorporate observation of teaching, teacher appraisal, discussion of the evidence, and collaborative setting of

developmental goals (Sinnema & Robinson, 2007). The problem with this policy is that the process can be compliance based, rather than an inquiry approach into teaching and learning.

The research problem for my study originated because there is an expectation that within the profession of education, teachers are consistently driven to raise student achievement. However, there appears to be little evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of appraisal in changing teaching practices, or improving learning (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Fitzgerald, 2001; Husbands, 2001; Middlewood, 2001; Sikes, 2001). Furthermore, there have been limited guidelines or specific frameworks that currently align teacher appraisals with performance goals and student achievement, which has made the process of these expectations quite ambiguous across schools and thus becomes a practical problem. This alerted me to investigate this phenomenon. The driving process of a study reflects the researcher's interest or beliefs (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrillo & Berger, 2000). Goal setting in teacher appraisal is deserving of research because it affects the personal and professional development of teachers, and can have an impact on student achievement (Robinson & Timperley, 2007). It has been stated that teacher appraisals are a sound reflection about how well teachers are performing and how improvements can be made based on the knowledge we have of student engagement and achievement (Sinemma & Robinson, 2007). This notion has motivated me as a researcher to find out exactly how specific goals and appraisal processes can lead to improvements in pedagogy, through professional development, as well as helping to raise the level of student achievement.

In 2012, The Education Review Office (ERO) discovered that only 20% of primary schools had high quality appraisal systems that contributed to improvements in teacher capability and which valued student outcomes. This evidence evoked shocking revelations for me, whilst concurrently affirming my beliefs based on my personal experiences in schools where I have taught. One example was that insufficient time was given at the end of the year for appraisal because other events took priority, which meant that the final review became more of a tick list. In another school, there was limited focus on the specific

teaching and learning of target students, but rather on developing school wide goals, which were broad in nature. In some schools my experience of the appraisal cycle had not included an induction and provided limited direction and guidance for new teachers. In some instances, the goals identified at the start of the year bore no resemblance to the needs of the students from the previous academic year. In my experience, limited inquiry about teaching and learning has been evident. Negative attitudes about appraisal procedures have also been apparent to me throughout my teaching career and are evident within the literature. Therefore, the undertaking of this research will help leaders in education by recognising strengths and weaknesses that can be associated with performance management systems. It is an area worthy of research because it affects the personal and professional development of teachers, as well as the impact on student achievement (Robinson & Timperley, 2007).

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The overall aim of this research was to explore the nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisals. As a result of this research, the findings aim to benefit educational leaders, to ensure that a more robust appraisal system can be used within their establishments.

Research Aims

1. To critically examine the significance of goal setting for improving professional practice.

2. To discuss the purpose and perceptions surrounding the practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal in primary schools.

3. To identify strategies for strengthening goal setting practices in teacher appraisal within primary schools.

Research Questions

1. Why is goal setting significant and what is the purpose in relation to improving teaching practice in primary school performance appraisal?

2. What are teachers' perceptions in terms of the nature, value and practice of goal setting, as a means of improving teaching and learning?

3. How could performance goal setting be strengthened in order to improve practice?

OUTLINE OF THESIS

This thesis is organised into five chapters outlined below:

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter presents the background for this study and the outline of the thesis. The rationale for this research is discussed with specific reference to the justification of this particular topic. The research aims and questions are included, which identify the main purpose and inquiry for this research with reference to both teacher and leadership perspectives of the appraisal process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The second chapter consists of a comprehensive literature review surrounding the historical concept of performance appraisal in New Zealand. Specific terminology is explained regarding performance management terms. The notion of goal setting is broad in nature and will be concisely described with specific reference to teacher appraisal for the purpose of this study. The themes drawn from the literature are identified and critiqued with a summary of the main idea.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three describes the methodological approach used to define the research process for this study. The epistemological position and the qualitative methodology are explained; giving the reasons for the types of data collection. Documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews are discussed and justified with a concluding interpretation on the issues of integrity, validity and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Findings

In Chapter Four, the data collection is outlined. The findings from the data collection include the documentary evidence and the perceptions of the respondents, which are summarised using key findings and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter compares and contrasts the research findings with the literature findings. The evidence from both are evaluated and analysed, to identify the conclusions. Further recommendations concerning best practice and leadership development surrounding goal setting and the appraisal process is offered, including possible future research options.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is a theoretical description of performance appraisal and goal setting. It defines the theory, and illustrates the strengths and challenges within educational practice. The chapter begins with a definition about performance goals and a description about the types of goals within education. An explanation about the nature of goals from a cognitive perspective is included with the notion of motivational theory. The historical perspective of policy regulations surrounding appraisal and how this relates to goal setting theory is also discussed.

The initial aim of this research was to critically examine the significance of goal setting for the improvement of professional practice. This particular aim has been identified through the historical perspectives, as well as the purpose and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal. Changes within the education system in New Zealand have been identified, as well as recent studies conducted within the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) iterative research (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). The second aim was to discuss the perceptions of goal setting in teacher appraisal, which involves the problems with performance goals. The factors associated with these problems include relationships, feedback and the use of the *Teaching as Inquiry* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) model. One of the themes within the literature looks specifically at the challenges of performance goals, which aligns with the final aim of identifying strategies for strengthening goal setting practices.

Definition of Performance Goals

Performance goals are short-term objectives set for specific duties or tasks. They are often related to the organisational goals or specific department goals where individuals work. According to Sternbergh and Weitzel (2001) they are objectives for change or improvement, and can help to guide and motivate people. Locke and Latham (2013) define goals as pursuing something an individual may desire. Earlier research by Latham (2004) suggests that to be effective, it is important that goals are clearly defined and easy to measure

because goals can inspire individuals, assist with self management and provide purpose. Consequently, these definitions could indicate that goals are an essential element for improvement within education. For example, the organisation and the individual can benefit from goal setting in performance appraisal because it can lead to affirmation that performance expectations are being met, while also identifying areas of improvement (Cardno, 2012). After all, goal setting involves the conscious process of establishing levels of performance in order to obtain desirable outcomes (Latham, 2004). It comprises all elements of performance review including goal setting, planning, implementation, achievement and monitoring (Piggot-Irvine, 2015).

The historical basis for goal setting stems from a cognitive theory of motivation. According to Locke and Latham (2013), it is based on the premise that people have needs that can be thought of as specific outcomes they hope to obtain. It is a human behaviour that challenges and aims people to strive towards something better, in order to feel a sense of purpose and achievement. This purpose and achievement can be related to personal life, as well as people's working lives within organisations. For instance, some authors (Yearta, Maitlis, & Briner, 1995; Bolman & Deal, 2013) agree that goal setting is a motivational technique used extensively in organisations that involve a formalised network of roles and responsibilities and align with a purpose, determined by goals. Incidentally, a fundamental task for any organisation is to align performance review appraisal with goal setting pursuits (Piggot-Irvine, 2015) because it provides a standard whereby performance can be assessed and is crucial to appraisal schemes (Yearta et al, 1995).

Types of Goals

Goal setting theory has expanded over time and is becoming an integral part of our education system. There are several types of goals within education; organisational goals, academic goals, performance goals and professional goals (Weber, 1987). The organisational goals are set within the school's charter and provide the strategic direction for the school. The academic goals are specifically focused on the academic achievement and expectations from

the students at the school. Consequently, to achieve these goals, the principal and teachers need to establish their own personal and professional goals in order to improve performance. It has recently been argued that the semantics of all of these goal titles can be difficult to understand and interpret, because they are also referred to as objectives and targets (Bendikson & Robinson, 2013). To enable clarity throughout my research, the main focus is specifically surrounding the performance goals of teachers and how these goals connect with their appraisal system. Therefore, the personal and professional goals are synonymous with performance goals for the purpose of this study.

Goal Setting in Education

An important consideration of goal setting within education is to ensure that "individual teachers are moving in the same direction as the school's vision and mission" (Nolan & Hoover, 2008, p. 83). With this is mind, tailoring goals should be blended to meet the professional's needs as well as the organisations' needs. This can be a complex process due to the nature of the individual's knowledge and skills, the supportive climate in which to attain these goals and the resources to support this process. For example, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd, (2009) state, "the content of goals may be as important as the process by which they are set" (p. 42), which means that leaders need to focus on motivational and direction-setting activities, as well as the educational content of those goals and their alignment with desired student outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). As a result, good leaders can establish the importance of goals by communicating not only how they are linked to pedagogical purposes, but also philosophical and moral intentions (Robinson et al, 2009). This claim is supported by Cardno (2012) who states that goal setting is at the heart of effective educational leadership and when these goals impact on improved student achievement, strategic and educational leadership is purposeful, meaningful and ultimately more effective.

Goal setting is not a single purpose activity associated with only strategic planning, development or learning, but as Piggot-Irvine (2015) suggests it is central to performance review in appraisal. Many appraisal systems have not

been successful because strong distinctions have been made between values that underpin accountability and values that promote development (Cardno, 2012). These two distinctions can form the basis of teacher's perceptions about appraisal, which can ultimately determine whether the process is successful or detrimental for the development of teachers and subsequently for the students. Piggot-Irvine (2015) reminds us that the main aim of appraisal in all educational settings is the improvement of teaching and learning. As such, performance review should have a developmental goal setting purpose which is equal to the accountability intent of this human resource activity.

In order to implement an appraisal system that integrates both accountability and development that improves teaching and learning, there needs to be an essential element included in the process, which as Cardno (2012) suggests; goal setting is the contributing factor. School leaders play a key role in integrating external and internal accountability systems by supporting teachers in the alignment of instruction with agreed performance goals (Schleicher, 2012). This is a key factor within this study because the foundation of this research is fundamentally a government requirement for performance management objectives.

Historical Perspectives of Appraisal in New Zealand Schools
In New Zealand, specific regulatory procedures were implemented between 1996 and 1999 for the appraisal and development of all teachers and senior management within 'self managing schools' (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2002). This was one of the most significant elements of the education reforms of the late 1980s (Youngs, Cardno, Smith & France, 2007). The Boards of Trustees were given power under the Education Act (1989) to govern the management of the school. They still serve as the legal bodies with legal obligations, to govern schools in accordance with the Acts and Regulations of Parliament and within the schools' own Charter.

This devolution of governance in New Zealand created a consumer approach to education permeated by a belief of managerial accountability, and the

foundations of performance appraisal and management (Codd, 2005). Performance targets and school wide goals, such as organisational goals, have since been a significant factor in the performance management framework of schools. It is the role of the Board of Trustees to agree on school-wide goals and the role of the Principal to employ performance appraisal as a tool for implementing these goals to improve teaching and learning (Cardno, 2012). This also includes the performance goals of individual teachers. However, the importance of cascading and aligning performance goals through to organisational goals is one that has not been well implemented according to Piggot-Irvine (2015) because there is difficulty in aligning them.

Appraisal is a large part of the performance management framework. The legislative requirements of appraisal practice include policy, principles, and goals within the performance management framework, in which appraisal plays a large part (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001). It was envisioned that the Board of Trustees would have confidence that all staff would meet the educational needs of their students and the goals of their school with an effective performance management system (Cardno, 2010). In addition, ERO (2014) emphasise that appraisal is more likely to improve the quality of teaching and learning when performance goals are specific and challenging and focus on teaching and learning. Therefore, assessing the achievement of goals is based on evidence of student learning. Hence, appraisal tools should challenge assumptions about effective teaching and develop teachers' capacity to inquire and enter discussions into the impact of their teaching (ERO, 2014). The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2011) state that effective performance management ensures that the principal and individual teachers know what is expected of them and that support is available to them to meet those expectations. Cardno (2012) recognises that any effective performance management system should include the need for improvement and the reasons why these improvements should be made.

Once the appraisal of principals and teachers became mandatory in 1997, the MoE published a series of guidelines and information to help boards and principals develop and implement a performance appraisal system. However,

Sinnema and Robinson (2007) concluded from their studies across New Zealand that the alignment of performance goals and organisation goals were not conducive for teaching and learning. One striking example of this was highlighted when only a very small percentage of teachers discussed the relationship between a particular aspect of their teaching and student learning during appraisal discussions. This data came from 178 Primary Schools across New Zealand, where only 21% of leaders and teachers had appraisal goals linked to school targets or achievement goals. Furthermore, Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) reinforced in the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on school leadership that only 4.5% of the goals identified by teachers were about student learning. This signified that schools were delivering an ineffective compliance based performance management system, that may have only been in place as a measure of performance rather than a developmental programme that focused on the inquiries of teaching and learning. The Education Review Office (ERO) have since conducted several school inspections and more recently, their report on linking charter targets to appraisal states that: "appraisal is intended to foster improved teaching by connecting the principal's development goals to the school's strategic goals and priorities. Performance appraisal establishes objectives for teachers and leads to professional growth through reflection and formal feedback" (ERO, 2013. p. 1).

A more recent survey conducted by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) (2014) indicated that professional leaders felt the criteria for the performance appraisal of registered teachers had the potential to improve teaching practice and student learning. However, they were unsure about how a consistent national understanding could be established and what these criteria would look like in schools and how they could be achieved. Consequently, the main concern from the NZTC was for them to support professional leaders by building knowledge and confidence in appraising teachers. This is aimed at establishing a strengthened culture of self-responsibility, accountability and improvement. It was identified that the evaluative processes that underpin sound appraisal will be acknowledged, including the understandings about what effective practice looks like and how it links to valued outcomes for students, reflecting the *Registered Teacher Criteria* (RTC). The survey also

aimed to establish the relationship between appraisal and professional learning, the ability to engage in a range of appraisal conversations including those needed to address any gap between a teacher's current practice and agreed elements of practice to enhance student outcomes (NZTC, 2014). This evidence highlighted the need to make changes to the current performance management systems across New Zealand schools.

PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF GOAL SETTING IN TEACHER APPRAISAL

The purpose and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal is not explicit within the literature because there is more emphasis on the purpose of appraisal. Performance appraisal has always been a complex evaluative process involving a range of activities to benefit both the organisation and the individual (Cardno, 2012). It is a natural part of the process of monitoring and evaluating work. This can involve setting goals, providing feedback on performance results, determining performance-based rewards, identifying training needs, assisting with career and succession planning, as well as decision making (Rudman, 2002; Cardno, 2012). Appraisal links together a review of practice and achievement and a discussion of how teachers can improve their performance and achieve further professional development (Bennet, 1995). These activities highlight a range of tasks involved in the appraisal process, but the purpose and practice of goal setting is not clearly identified.

In a recent project initiated by The Education Review Office (ERO, 2014) a question was posed about the purpose of teacher appraisal. It was stated that performance appraisal can be narrowed down to specific terminology of accountability and development; making teachers accountable for their performance, and using appraisal information for staff development and progression. It was also suggested that appraisal would provide assurances to the wider community that teaching standards were rigorously implemented (ERO, 2014). According to Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) appraisal is a process comprising an annual cycle for agreeing performance expectations,

collecting data, monitoring and a formal review. The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013) say that the purpose of performance management is to develop and utilise skills, knowledge, training and talent in ways that maximise learning outcomes for students. This statement includes key elements of delivering an effective performance management system where appraisal identifies the professionalism of teachers that can lead to improved student achievement.

The purpose and guiding values of performance appraisal according to Cardno and Piggot Irvine (1997) were essentially to clarify job related expectations and provide teachers with feedback about their performance. By making teachers accountable for their performance, they were assisted by identifying what needs to be improved regarding work performance. Therefore, setting performance goals and reporting on their achievement is a formal process that should be applied consistently by all staff (Fitzgerald, 2001). Grierson and Woloshyn (2013) reinforced the need for continual evaluation of goals in their research. They discovered that establishing short-term goals enabled participants to monitor their progress and celebrate their accomplishments, which fostered continued motivation for change. In addition to this research, it was emphasised by Locke (1968) during the earlier years of studies related to goal setting theory, that clear, unambiguous and reasonably challenging goals will themselves provide motivation for employees. This claim was supported later by Pinder (1984) who concluded from his research that goal setting theory has demonstrated more scientific validity to date than any other theory or approach and holds more promise as an applied motivational tool for leaders. As Sergiovanni (2000) suggests, individuals are intrinsically motivated when they experience personal responsibility for their work; a belief that is consistent with theories on motivation (Evans, 2001; Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Robbins, 2005).

It pays to have goals that will require individuals to grow, to learn new skills, expand their vision and possibilities, build new relationships, as well as learn to overcome fears or obstacles (Canfield, 2007). This is an essential element within education, as leaders and teachers are consistently managing these aforementioned competencies for themselves, as well as their students.

Cardno (2012) emphasises that the primary concern for teachers is that goal setting in teacher appraisal should have a pedagogical focus, which consequently leads to improved student outcomes when administered effectively. As a result, some schools in New Zealand have demonstrated creative approaches to set and review goals, to guide classroom activities and discuss areas with focused questions (Earl & Timperley, 2008). Key areas have been identified within these schools, such as keeping teachers on track, highlighting trends observed, and pushing their thinking beyond the existing ideas.

When all teachers have a shared understanding of the expectations surrounding goal setting and appraisal and there are consistent conversations about the performance journey across the school, positive results can be attained. Robinson, et al, (2009) argue that "if appraisal is to achieve its aim of improving teaching and learning, it should not function as a compliance-based evaluation of teaching. It should be an opportunity for leaders and teachers to inquire into the impact of teaching on student learning" (p. 216). Creating a positive atmosphere can help to make this shift, and is a critical piece of modelling the process, considering the evidence, reflecting on practice and making ongoing adjustments based on evidence (Earl & Timperley, 2008). This is an indicative process of building a school culture by creating a climate of continuous improvement with a focus on professional learning.

Creating a culture of pedagogical improvement is considered a high priority from authors, Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo, Laine and Friedman (2013). This may involve redesigning teacher appraisal systems to be more comprehensive, fair, reliable and appealing to policy makers and educational leaders. The importance of setting up a professional learning environment for setting and reviewing goals extends across all levels of leadership, including teachers (Robinson et al, 2009). Incidentally, Falcone (2011) argues that leaders are responsible for creating an environment in which people can motivate themselves. As a result, the appraisal process becomes more inclusive where motivation through growth and development can transpire and lead to success for teachers and students over time. Carr, Herman, and Harris (2005) support

this notion and mention that when goals are shared amongst all educators and learners, multiple measures can be used to define success, which strengthens the performance appraisal process.

PROBLEMS WITH PERFORMANCE GOALS IN TEACHER APPRAISAL

The problem with performance goals in teacher appraisal is the lack of clarity. During the implementation of the reforms of education in New Zealand, the MoE (1997) stated, "although the requirements are mandatory, Boards are encouraged to use the flexibility within the requirements to develop the most appropriate ways to manage the appraisal of staff in their school" (p. 1). The words '*encouraged*' and '*flexibility*' can be interpreted as ambiguous, allowing minimal rigour or robust processes to be administered. This inevitably leads to inconsistencies and variations within and across schools, while also making it difficult to identify schools who are underperforming. For example, one of the challenges found in the research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) was that schools in New Zealand have such flexibility in their approach to appraisal that there is a high variation of quality in the delivery of appraisal processes (Nusche, Laveault, MacBeath, & Santiago, 2012). This led to insufficient data about the standards and criteria of which teachers were evaluated, and resulted with inconsistencies among schools.

Following these conclusions, the MoE requested that the Education Review Office (ERO) should evaluate teacher appraisal and report on the quality of current practice; in particular how appraisal supports the improvement of teaching practice and student outcomes. As a result, "ERO identified the factors associated with an appraisal system's quality and grouped these into four interrelated dimensions:

- "school culture focused on improvement;
- coherence across school self-review components;
- guidance in policy and procedures;
- organisational support for appraisal". (ERO, 2014, p. 1).

These four dimensions highlight guidance, support and coherence within schools, but fail to mention any goal setting procedures. Incidentally, ERO (2014) discovered that one of the major differences in high achieving schools was "where conversations about teacher practice included frank and open discussions about the impact on learning and achievement of all students" (p. 1). In addition, schools with high quality teacher appraisals systems, demonstrated that the implementation of the process was part of their planning and reporting cycle. It was also linked to the strategic plan, the annual plan, the principal's performance management system, as well as decisions about teacher professional development, which highlights the coherence. Despite these effective functions, there was still very little evidence of any mention of goal setting in teacher appraisal. Although, it could be inferred that within their self review, goals do exist, in order to focus on improvement, but this is inexplicit.

More recently, ERO (2014) has recommended that school leaders implement an appraisal process that focuses on professional accountability, teacher improvement and raising achievement for students. However, to measure accountability and develop professionals within any organisation can be a highly complex process. Consequently, the leadership dimensions set out in the Best Evidence Synthesis on School Leadership (Robinson, et al, 2009) outline the extent to which appraisal is used as a tool for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Strong evidence was found that a leader's ability to encourage teachers to use student data as a basis for evaluating their teaching is critical to improving student outcomes (Robinson et al, 2009). Unfortunately, the evidence from the research suggested that there was limited data about the relationship between what was taught and what was learned. From the sample of teachers interviewed, only one described a conversation during their appraisal that focused specifically on student learning, and this was only in general terms. This evidence suggests that the goals were not specifically targeted towards student learning, and the appraisal process was a weak measure of improving teaching and learning.

The global literature identified within appraisal policy indicates that within most organisations, it is commonplace that appraisal is a key factor for improving performance (Bolman & Deal, 2013); education is not dissimilar. Classroom observations and mid year evaluations have historically served as the main vehicle for holding teachers accountable and helping them improve (Marshall, 2013). In the USA, researchers observed that teachers were the biggest critics of their current appraisal systems and the strongest proponents of a more specific and rigorous approach (Marzano & Toth, 2013). While, in the UK, a group of schools used data as a measure to engage the leadership team and teachers in school improvement. They used student-outcome information to develop strategies for learning among individual students and classrooms. Information was reviewed every six weeks. Data were analysed at the individual and classroom levels, providing an overview of where problems lay. Intervention teams then stepped in to look into potential underperformance and respond to challenges (Schleicher, 2012). This process is very similar to the NZ *Teaching as Inquiry* model (see Figure 1), which identifies the implications of teaching methods, followed by changes and improvements to enhance the teaching and learning process. The *Teaching as Inquiry* model was implemented by Aitken and Sinnema (2008) and began as a model of evidence-informed pedagogy and has since been adapted to fit within the context of the current NZ curriculum. Within this process, teachers are indirectly setting goals to establish better ways of raising student achievement and inquiring into best practice, through focused teaching and learning inquiries.
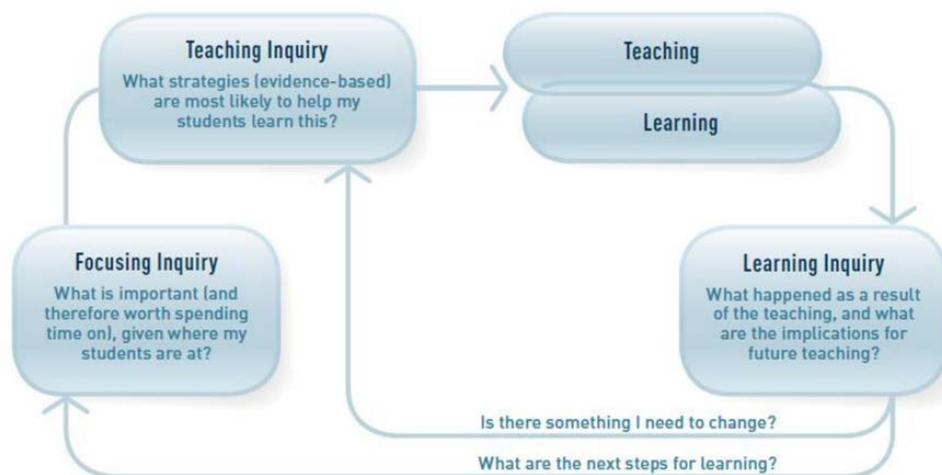
Figure 1: Teaching as Inquiry Model. (New Zealand Curriculum, 2007)

Since the research on school leadership and student outcomes from the (BES) Iteration by Robinson, et al (2009), was conducted, it was revealed by ERO (2014) that "necessary teaching improvements identified through *Teaching as Inquiry* often contributed to their appraisal goals" (p. 5). This evidence suggests that some schools in New Zealand are demonstrating good practice in terms of appraisal goals through the use of the *Teaching as Inquiry* model and other schools would benefit from effective goal setting in teacher appraisal by using this model within their performance management system. The New Zealand Curriculum Update (2011) reported on the *Teaching as Inquiry* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) initiative and emphasised that schools who were using the process were performing well. This evidence highlights a strength of performance goals in teacher appraisal, while also identifying an additional problem because this process is used inconsistently.

From the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) research on teacher professional learning and development, ten key principles have been derived. One of those principles states "information about what students need to know and do is used to identify what teachers need to know and do" (Earl &Timperley, 2008, p. 13). This concept is emphasised by Falcone (2011) stating that appraisal and goal setting process always comes from making it individualised with a personalised

action plan. This action plan can only be effective when colleagues inquire into their practice to determine their own professional development, learning needs and goals. The *Teaching as Inquiry* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) model is a symbolic process of goal setting through inquiry and has since been used as a guided action plan for teacher appraisal.

Teaching as Inquiry and Goal Setting

The 'Focusing Inquiry' aspect of the 'Teaching as Inquiry' model is a key area where specific goals can be established. It highlights what is important and worth spending time on, which infers a clear, specific target or goal. The 'Teaching Inquiry' aspect is the process, by which these goals can be achieved and measured, which becomes actioned in the 'Teaching and Learning' practice. The 'Learning Inquiry' aspect of this model is a clear reflection and review of the practice, as well as an indicator about whether the goal was attained. The Teaching as Inquiry Model is also symbolic of historical notions of reflective practice. For example, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) have identified a concurrent ideology, using a four stage process, originally recognised by Habermas (1972) and Smyth (1989):

1. "Description (what am I doing?)
2. Information (What does it mean?)
3. Confrontation (How did I come to be like this?)
4. Reconstruction (How might I do things differently?)".

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007. p. 29).

This process also reinforces the notion of goal setting by Danielson and McGreal (2000) who suggest three categories for goal setting. The first being the improvement of goals and refining current teaching practice. The second category is the renewal of goals by acquiring new knowledge. The final category is the restructuring of goals, which may involve redesigning the curriculum, instruction or assessment. All of these examples and processes are evidence to suggest that goal setting within teacher appraisal is beneficial for improving and refining current practice, but still remains an implicit measure of

performance.

Historically, there has been little evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of appraisal in changing teaching practices, or improving learning (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Fitzgerald, 2001; Husbands, 2001; Middlewood, 2001; Sikes, 2001). However, research surrounding the professional learning conversations by Earl and Timperley (2008) concludes that schools "all set specific goals and designed processes to begin rigorous investigations into school-wide teaching and learning" (p. 14). There is evidence that some schools are becoming more cognisant of the shift in teaching and learning through focused inquiry and goal setting. However, performance management systems, school expectations and MoE guidelines need to improve the explicit nature of goal setting in teacher appraisal to acknowledge the benefits towards student outcomes.

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) have provoked ideas about implementing effective performance management in schools. They have highlighted that this is a leadership competency factor and trust that effective leaders will ensure the following statements are echoed within their organisations. "If appraisal is done well, the appraisee is focused on their authentic professional learning goals, and the organisational need for accountability is met" (NZTC, 2014, p. 14). Nolan and Hoover (2008) had also stated that goals set by teachers should be data driven, relating to curriculum and assessment; improvement and refining, whilst correlating with the organisational goals. However, much of the literature on teacher appraisals focuses primarily on the renewal of teacher registration processes and the performance management process for improving teaching and learning (Nusche, Laveault, MacBeath, & Santiago, 2012) and very little on goal setting standards. The challenges already established by the OECD (2012) and Sinnema and Aitken (2011) have identified that goals in teacher appraisals provided limited attention to student and teacher learning, as well as ineffective alignments between the organisational goals and the individuals goals. Therefore, the process of setting goals and making them relevant to the individual and the organisation is still an area that needs to be strengthened.

Establishing goals and achieving them can be a challenging prospect. There are also concerns about time-consuming appraisals, particularly in a profession with an already overloaded schedule (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Many authors agree that appraisal is time intensive (Beerens, 2000; Fitzgerald, Youngs, & Grootenboer, 2003; Mahony & Hextall, 2000). Therefore, the process needs to be carefully constructed. If teachers can appreciate the positive effects of a performance appraisal system, without feelings of judgment and disclosure of inadequacies, the systems would be far more beneficial to substantiate changes and increase improved performances (Henning & Trent, 2007). To attain buy-in from teachers for an effective appraisal system, there needs to be clear criteria and a meaningful focus (West-Burnham, 2001). This can be problematic when there are several goals to consider across school, such as organisational goals, academic goals, personal and professional goals, and in some schools, syndicate goals. If teachers are unsure about how to set goals, it will be difficult to align the several crossovers between school-wide goals and the individual's performance goals (Piggot-Irvine, 2015).

Teacher's Perspectives

Educators have often been dissatisfied with the performance appraisal process. The term appraisal can create feelings of anxiety (Forrester, 2011) and, increases in compliance and accountability has historically involved increased workload. Consequently, this can create greater tension in teacher's working lives (O'Neill & Scrivens, 2005). This is reinforced by the notion that performance management originates from the business sector and is leading education towards a competitive culture that has initiated a decline in trust, changing attitudes and values in education (Forrester, 2011). Rudman (2002) emphasises that performance appraisals make many leaders uncomfortable because of the word appraisal, which implies that judgments will be made. He goes on to suggest that some managers are not committed to the process or are inadequately trained because administering appraisal systems also requires them to provide feedback. Managers don't like to give a lot of feedback because they have a fear of making mistakes (Rock, 2007). Subsequently, the notion that challenging goals leads to improved performance (Locke & Lathan,

2013) can elicit feelings of stress, ambiguity and ineffective processes of performance appraisal, which reduces the reliability of the goal. According to Rudman (2002) individuals seek reassurance and reinforcement from performance appraisals, while the organisation wants them to accept constructive criticism in order to improve performance.

One of the ways to secure a level of direct and immediate commitment by teachers is through performance management policies and procedures (Fitzgerald, 2008). These should explain what is expected to occur in schools at an organisational, professional and pedagogical level (Cardno, 2012). However, some authors have argued that the underlying principles of performance management policies have more to do with economic efficiency than these espoused values of teacher effectiveness and quality (Codd, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008). Moreover, performance management policy initiatives have devalued teaching as a profession (Gunter, 2001; Sachs, 2003; Vossler, 2005; Whitty, 2001) because they foster a culture of distrust and compliance (Codd, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008; Whitty, 2001). The problem has often been the question of ownership and accountability, for instance, to whom should teachers be accountable? (Codd, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004).

These accountability approaches to performance management appeared to demonstrate low trust in teachers (Codd, 2005; Court & Adams, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). Reduced trust in accountability can lead to minimalist approaches to appraisal (Fitzgerald, 2001), mainly because the system fails to treat teachers as professionals who already have a commitment to the students they teach and the profession as a whole. As a result, teachers can begin to feel a resentment to their profession and become less passionate about their practice when there is a lack of trust. However, since these assumptions have been published, the performance management section within the MoE (2011) guidelines reinforce that effective performance management ensures that teachers and senior leaders understand what is expected of them and trust that support is available to them to meet those expectations. Nonetheless, support can only be provided when

the relationships throughout the appraisal process are productive. This can be achieved through professional development practices that aim to involve all participants in appraisal processes, and building productive relationships (Cardno, 2010). This means that a great deal of trust needs to be established before sharing goals.

Relationships within the Appraisal Process

Another factor associated with the problems of performance goals are the relationships. The perceptions between appraiser and appraisee can be detrimental to the value of goal setting, the motivation of the teaching staff and their feelings towards the process (Cardno, 2012). Appraisal can be a concept fraught with negative overtones according to Piggot Irvine and Cardno (2005). The approach during an appraisal needs to be a much more positive experience for the individuals and clearly communicated through performance goals. Earl and Timperley (2008) discovered that a base level of trust is necessary for a professional learning community to emerge, and working and reflecting together can build trust and strengthen relationships. In order to monitor the effectiveness of professional learning communities, Kelleher (2003) recommended that participants establish specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, time-bound (SMART) goals to focus their efforts and determine their ongoing progress. Nolan and Hoover (2008) concur that motivating competent professionals to become risk-takers who set meaningful goals can achieve unexpected levels of professional growth, when offered in a supportive supervisory climate. Therefore, the relationship between the appraiser and the appraisee must be respected and positive (Cardno, 1999).

The seminal work of Cardno (2001; 2010; 2012) explores the relationships of people within educational organisations and suggests it is the responsibility of the educational leader to establish the learning conditions that make change possible. It is clear from the BES research that relationships are an important aspect of the 'goals and expectations' dimension in terms of communicating goals (Robinson, et al, 2009). It was conveyed in their research that leaders in high-performing schools tend to give priority to communicating goals and

expectations, informing the community of academic accomplishments, and recognising academic achievement. The underlying purpose of an appraisal system, as mentioned earlier, is the dual purpose of improving performance and demonstrating accountability. Consequently, performance appraisals are a valid method of recognising what works well and how educators can improve themselves, to ensure that leaders, teachers and students are making good progress. Therefore, it is crucial that guidance and support are a key part in the regular cycle of appraisal when managing the performance and development of teachers and leaders (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001).

When the perceptions for professional development are not in agreement, this can be problematic with goal setting in teacher appraisal because it can subsequently cause problems, such as defensiveness. Essentially, avoidance and control are the two key strategies of defensiveness (Cardno, 2001). However, with authentic collaboration, a balance of advocacy and inquiry can create non controlling and non avoiding interactions (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). Even though performance appraisals can provoke mixed emotions, Nolan and Hoover (2008) discovered from their studies that new opportunities inspired an improvement in pedagogy through effective professional development. If performance goals do not have a person's full emotional backing and volitional support, goals are not likely to be well energised, protected or attained (Sheldon, 2002). On the other hand, when goals are supported through sufficient resourcing, professional development, mentoring and general school ethos, the process can lower defensiveness, enhance dialogue (Piggot-Irvine, 2015) and promote growth in professionalism.

Feedback in Teacher Appraisal

The use of dialogue during the process of goal setting in teacher appraisal is a significant reminder about the impact of feedback. For example, if teachers understand how well they are performing through regular feedback, they are in a better position to identify the areas within their performance that can lead to improvements (Cardno, 2012). The ability to engage in a range of appraisal conversations allows for sincere feedback and explicit information to be shared

(Marshall, 2013) within professional learning groups. Therefore, it is paramount that effective professional relationships should be maintained for these conversations to be productive. The feedback about whether a person is doing the right thing allows them to receive data, advice, help, suggestions, direction and criticism that assists with adjusting and moving forward, while continually enhancing knowledge, abilities, attitudes and relationships (Canfield, 2007).

The effect of goal setting within organisations cannot be fully appreciated without knowing the nature of the goals and how the resulting performance is valued and appraised by an individual (Locke & Latham, 2013). The benefit of appraisal is the opportunity for giving and receiving of feedback that is collaborative and focused on performance, and is aimed at challenging teachers to stretch their talents further, to look for new possibilities, and to learn (Fitzgerald, 2001). In general, the greater the success a person experiences in goal attainment, the greater the degree of satisfaction they experience. For instance, when you determine where you stand in relation to a goal, you become motivated to seek help or information, which ultimately leads to the process of inquiry and gaining feedback through dialogue (Piggot-Irvine, 2015; Sternbergh & Weitzel, 2001).

It is important for dialogue to occur at all points of the appraisal system, including the establishment of goals and expectations, observing practice, setting and monitoring developmental goals and reporting achievement for change to be explored (Cardno, 2012; Marshall, 2013; Piggot-Irvine, 2015). Dialogue leads to mutual understanding and agreement. The link between how we perceive the world explains many organisational trends, from the power of setting goals to the impact of positive feedback on others (Rock, 2007). The person giving feedback enables the pursuer to draw their own conclusions from the evidence using strong, clarifying, probing questions and listening skills, allowing the goal setter to have control and ownership of the feedback process (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). These strategies are less likely to be defensive. Piggot-Irvine (2015) also stresses that there needs to be a balance of advocacy and inquiry, otherwise defensive domination and control becomes evident, which minimizes an effective process. Collaborative methods of setting goals within

professional learning groups have emerged as a positive way to engage in productive relationships within teacher appraisals. Marshall (2013) reinforces the concept of collaboration in setting goals because such collaboration is associated with non-defensive interactions (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). These examples provide elements of some strengths in goal setting in teacher appraisal, while still identifying the problems that can exist without the use of effective goal setting.

CHALLENGES IN PERFORMANCE GOALS

Although goal setting theory was popularised in the 1970s and 1980s, it is still the foundation of many organisations' performance planning and review systems (Rudman, 2002) including the education sector. Locke and Latham (2013) can attest that experiments have been conducted to examine the effects of difficulty and the level of participation on goal performance in controlled studies, although few researchers have investigated the nature of these relationships in the context of an operational goal setting programme (Yearta et al, 1995). For example, controlled studies in the past did not consider the external factors, such as the supervising roles, resources, individual needs and the complexity of organisations that can determine how well a goal can be achieved. These are some of the challenges faced in performance goals, particularly across schools.

There is a range of evidence from specific authors, Rudman (2002); Rock (2007); Locke and Latham (2013) who state that specific goals increase performance, and difficult goals, when accepted, result in higher performance than goals that are easily attained. According to Piggot-Irvine (2015) low level order challenges and easy to achieve goals, create low level outcomes. However, high level expectations with more specific and demanding goals are associated with a level of challenge. For example, goals are the primary source of an individual's motivation and choosing goals that are too easy to attain can devalue the process within a professional capacity, such as education. Locke and Latham (2013) have demonstrated in their research that specific, challenging goals lead to higher levels of performance because learning

through life is a process of goal produced action (Locke & Latham, 2013). The challenge for educators is to understand the complexity of a goal and what constitutes performance effectiveness. The attainment of a specific, high goal is usually instrumental in leading to outcomes that are important to an individual (Locke & Latham, 2013) whereas, often within education, performance goals are structured around the context of the school and students, as well as the individual, which makes it difficult to establish a challenging goal that is both relevant and meaningful within the parameters of performance appraisal across the organisation, as well as the individual.

Teachers have varied perspectives in terms of thinking about their own goals, according to Butler (2007). Studies have shown that teachers felt successful when they were learning something new (Hattie, 2012), which demonstrates that setting goals and achieving something new is not only a prime motivator, but also allows for explicit goals to be challenging in order to achieve success. Thought provoking situations during instruction, overcoming difficult situations, and a noticed improvement in teaching practice are described as mastery goals (Locke & Latham, 2013; Hattie, 2012). "It has to be accepted that those who set targets, and then judge the extent to which they have been achieved, are both capable and credible" (West-Burnham, 2001, p. 24). A representation of this statement is a mastery goal, which can arise when individuals "aim to develop their competence, and consider their ability to do something that can be developed by increasing effort" (Hattie, 2012, p. 47). A specific, high or mastery goal directs an individual's attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities, activating the knowledge and skills a person possesses that are necessary to attain the goal (Locke & Latham, 2013). Once an individual chooses a goal and chooses to act on it, effort and arousal is expended in proportion to the difficulty level of the goal (Latham & Locke, 1975; Locke, 1968). For example, the influential work of Robinson and Timperley (2007) revealed that the key features needed for attaining goals were that teachers believed the goals to be important, and felt they had the capacity to achieve them.

One of the most significant findings about the improvements of teaching and

learning within the review of literature was the study conducted by Robinson, et al., (2009). Their research stems from several New Zealand initiatives that aim to improve teaching and learning. These studies involve school leaders, researchers, professional developers, and ministry officials. One particular study by Robinson, et al, (2009) distinguished leadership dimensions that reflect a widely distributed approach to the leadership of school improvement. Among thirty-one studies in NZ, one of the key findings was highlighting the importance of performance goals. As a result, '*establishing goals and expectations'* was ranked first among eight of the key dimensions for 'School Leadership and Student Outcomes' from the Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES, 2009) in schools. It has been affirmed that performance is affected not only by the goal, but also by how confident one is of being able to do it (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Locke & Latham, 2013). In addition, it was emphasised that "leaders need to have an understanding of why goal setting is important and some knowledge of how goal setting works" (Robinson, et al, 2009. p. 40). This lack of knowledge and understanding becomes a major challenge in performance goals because often leaders perceive teacher's performance review goal setting as a separate goal pursuit to the general performance goals of the organisation. This is a concerning factor, which can lead to multiple, non-aligned goal activities, creating excessive, unnecessary work for teachers and a considerable waste of resources (Piggot-Irvine, 2015).

The main objective for performance goals is to enhance teaching and learning, yet these can often fall short of their intention and become another obligatory task for teachers (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) remind us that goal setting has yet to become real and compelling in schools at either a personal or organisational level due to the resistance of being tightly locked in to goals, as well as teachers and leaders having insufficient knowledge or resources to establish performance goals. Peters, Chassis, Lindholm, O'Connor, and Kline (1982) say that situational constraints can inhibit goal attainment due to insufficient resources such as requisite task information, materials or time. Piggot-Irvine (2015) supports these claims stating that without the necessary resources, a goal regardless of personal or organisational is unlikely to be attained. Figure 2. demonstrates the outline of

this concept, which is taken from the research undertaken by Robinson et al,. (2009).
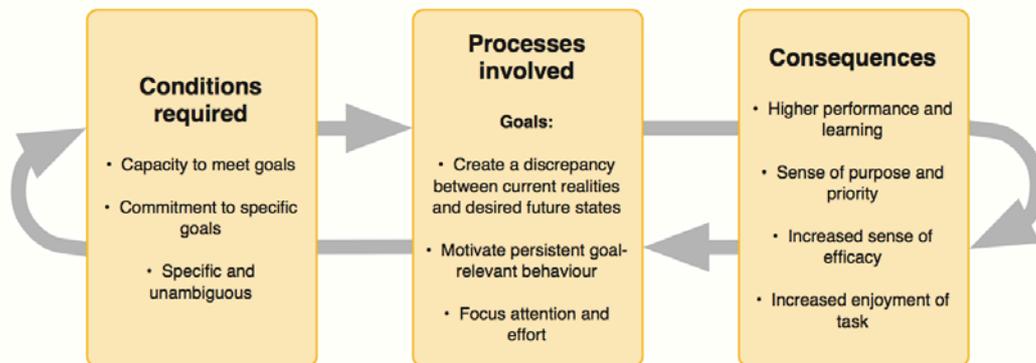
Figure 2. "School Leadership and Student Outcome: How does goal setting work?"

(Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009. School Leadership and Student Outcome: Identifying what works and why: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration).

The conditions required, the processes involved, and the consequences of effective goal setting are displayed in a cyclical formation. The capacity and commitment to meet the goals are referred to the resources and knowledge surrounding the goal, which strengthens the claims of Conzemius and O'Neil (2002); Peters, et al (1982); and Piggot-Irvine, (2015). The processes involved and the consequences are captured from the seminal work of Locke and Latham (2013) on goal setting theory. According to this evidence "the content of goals may be as important as the process of goal setting: leaders need to know *what* goals to set as well as how to set them" (Robinson, et al, 2009, p. 40).

Goal setting theory states that ability is a moderator variable that affects the goal performance relationship (Locke & Latham 2013). Ability affects the choice of goal because people cannot perform in accordance with a goal when they lack the knowledge and skill to attain that level of performance. Therefore, the conditions required are paramount in obtaining the necessary skills to set goals. Physical and human resources need to be secured with pedagogical goals in mind (Cardno, 2012). This can mean time for professional development to upskill in certain areas, to strengthen ability and commitment surrounding

performance goals. Most of the research on goal content has focused on the relationship between goal difficulty and performance, predicting that given an adequate level of ability and commitment, harder goals will lead to greater effort and performance than easier goals (Yearta et al, 1995). However, Marzano and Toth (2013) recognised that performance review systems were not specific enough to increase teacher's pedagogical skills. Educational leader's need to balance goal setting with appropriate and aligned strategic resourcing (Robinson, et al, 2009).

Goals play an important role in the development of the individual and can increase motivation, although, Latham and Locke (1975) state that specific goals make it clear to the employee about what they are expected to do. The challenge for teachers and leaders is to determine the specific performance goals, and have the motivation to critically examine the teaching and learning surrounding these goals. According to Locke and Latham (2013) goals have two main attributes; content and intensity. Goal content refers to the object or result being sought. However, goal intensity refers to the effort needed to set a goal, the position of a goal in an individual's goal priority, and the extent to which a person is committed to goal attainment (Locke & Latham, 2013). Goal intensity, including the amount of thought or mental effort that goes into setting a specific, high goal, affects their commitment to it (Henderson, 1963; Gollwitzer, Heckhausen, & Ratajczak, 1990). This can be the result of such intense processing that makes people more aware of how the goal might be attained, such as formulating a strategy, which can increase self-efficacy to implement the attainment of the goal; this can include feedback.

Feedback on Performance Goals

Research on motivation and goal setting theory has shown that effort increases when there is an indication that we are not fully achieving a goal - feedback provides this indication (Locke & Latham, 2013). Feedback on goal achievement is critical for motivation. An employee who doesn't get timely and accurate feedback cannot know whether to continue or adjust current behaviours in order to achieve future goals (Rudman, 2002; Rock, 2007; Cardno, 2012). According to Locke and Latham (2013) feedback or knowledge

of results is a significant factor of the goal performance relationship because goals regulate performance far better when feedback is present than when it is absent. Feedback allows people to decide if more effort or a different strategy is needed to attain their goal. Hattie (2012) discusses the process of setting goals, saying that challenging goals relate to feedback in three major ways: informing, establishing, and recognising.

The first point is to inform the individual about the level of performance desired and track their performance toward these goals. The second aspect is that feedback allows individuals to set further, challenging goals, establishing the conditions for ongoing learning and recognising what progress looks like (Hattie, 2012). When feedback is withheld, goal setting is ineffective for increasing performance. Goal setting is the mediating variable that explains why feedback gets translated into action (Locke, Cartledge, & Koeppel, 1968; Rock, 2007). If the feedback does not result in setting future goals or the feedback is ignored, performance does not improve (Locke & Latham, 2013). Consequently, awaiting feedback can diminish the process of setting more challenging goals for the future (Hattie, 2012).

When we think of feedback we naturally think about assessment of progress. In our daily lives, we receive feedback about our performance on desired goals that we can use to improve ourselves (Pollock, 2012). Feedback also helps in determining the level of effort required (Sorrentino, 2006). What connects engagement to feedback, and feedback to achievement, is goal setting (Rock, 2007; Pollock, 2012). It should be formative, ongoing, developmental and intentional, which results in ongoing motivation. If feedback is poorly facilitated there can be a threatened or defensive response (Rock, 2007; Cardno, 2012). In these situations, minimal collaboration occurs and the feedback becomes one sided, as discussed within the feedback on teacher appraisal.

In recent studies, Piggot-Irvine (2015) discovered that goal setting is most effective when participants are engaged with others in ways where not only support, clarity and mentoring is provided but also strong feedback, which involves honest dialogue and critique. This statement relates strongly to my

initial research questions because it highlights the nature, value and practice of goal setting, while also acknowledging how the process can be strengthened. Goal feedback provides a sense of achievement, recognition and accomplishment (Rudman, 2002). However, Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggest that leaders should regard challenging, clear goals and expectations by creating conditions for success and providing feedback around goal achievement. This can be another challenge in performance goals, because feedback is knowing where you stand in relation to the goal and how you wish to improve (Pollock, 2012). For example, once you receive feedback, you have to be willing to respond to it (Canfield, 2007). Seeking feedback from colleagues enables considerable respect and enhances openness to new ideas through regular dialogue about goal achievement (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). Consequently, when feedback is elusive, the value of performance goals is undermined and becomes pointless. Therefore, without colleague's involvement, drafting development plans in goal statements becomes hit or miss (Falcone, 2011), which in essence, is why the evidence from this literature suggests that even though performance goals are challenging, they are still important for teachers (Hattie, 2012) if they are utilised in ways that maximise learning outcomes.

A final consideration about the challenges of performance goals is the implementation of goal setting in teacher appraisal. It may seem that this process is attempting to add more work to teacher's already heavy workload, however this kind of work is different because it is all about the individuals and their own professional interests. According to Falcone (2011) even the strongest team members will involve themselves very deeply in this goal setting exercise because leaders are helping teachers focus on building their skills and accomplishments to achieve a robust self-review for their performance appraisal.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is organised into five parts and concisely introduces the epistemological position used for this study. The methodological approach is explained to justify this position, with clear links to the research questions. The two data gathering methods used in this research are introduced with key issues related to the choice of method, choice of sample, and the principles and practices of method application. The data analysis related to each method will be discussed, including the consideration of how validity and research integrity can be strengthened. The ethical issues related to the study and how these will be addressed have also been discussed.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITION

The epistemological position for this study is based on the creation of knowledge from participants, to discover the nature and value of goal setting in teacher appraisals. Epistemology is the nature and form of knowledge. It justifies how knowledge is acquired and how it can be communicated to others (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). It seeks to define knowledge, distinguish its principal varieties, and identify its sources (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). When questioning the strengths and weaknesses of goal setting in teacher appraisals, the epistemological position for this research identified assumptions about what teachers may have understood about their own appraisal process, their performance goals and whether this process affects pedagogy. Consequently, this was the rationale for this study; to investigate the nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisals. Inevitably, this would identify the strengths and weaknesses within the processes, to determine how this can affect teaching and learning.

The perceptions, values and cultures of each participant; the expectations embodied within the curriculum, and the physical conditions and resources (Pring, 2000) were significant factors when establishing my epistemology. For example, the sample choice of participants had to involve teachers and leaders

with sufficient levels of experience. The perceptions, values and cultures of each participant could then provide a range of responses depending on their appraisal process, how they feel about the process and whether they feel that this is a valued part of their repertoire of teaching experience.

All research begins with claims and assumptions. Through an epistemological position of inquiry, the knowledge claim for this study was mainly conveyed from a post positivist paradigm. This is a deterministic philosophy in which causes can often determine effects or outcomes (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). It relies on multiple methods of inquiry, as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This approach can be used to observe the behaviour of individuals and the responses from their experiences, which was the exact type of inquiry needed for this study. I needed to explore the experiences of goal setting and performance appraisals from each participant through questions and discussion. Post positivism challenges the notion of the absolute truth, recognizing that we can always be positive about our knowledge claims when studying the behaviour and action of people (Creswell, 2002). For this study, it meant that the responses were real, based on current practice, personal belief and the perceptions or thoughts about the process of goal setting in teacher appraisal and how it occurs. For this type of research, it is not enough to provide a quantitative study because the comments need to provide the absolute truth (Cresswell, 2002), which allows the authenticity of the answers to be discussed with a much more focused inquiry.

There is a cross over between post-positivism and interpretive study claims within this study. For example, the aim of research is to rely on the participant's views of the situation being studied. Interpretive knowledge claims are heavily based on the interpretations of the participant's own personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2002). The epistemological position of this inquiry explores how the teachers and leaders are using goal setting within teacher appraisal. Consequently, qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views. This has enabled a clear insight into the strengths and weaknesses of goal setting within teacher appraisals and lends itself well within this research because the questions were

based on the participant's personal experiences; hence the cross over in the knowledge claim approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define the several crossovers within qualitative research, which supports the approach for this study. They state that qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right and crosscuts several complex terms and assumptions including post-positivism and interpretive studies.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The approach for this research is a small-scale qualitative study. Qualitative research generally uses methods that gather descriptive accounts of the participants, to enhance understanding of particular situations (Mutch, 2009). It was clear that the interpersonal relationships, emotions, actions, and values that created meaning within this study had derived from an interpretive perspective. Therefore, the best way to encapsulate this perspective was through a semi-structured interview process. The participants' perspectives enabled the interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds (Davidson & Tolich, 2003) and there are several strategies used within a qualitative approach.

It was important to gain further information about the understandings of goal setting in teacher appraisals through additional forms of evidence, rather than focusing on one method of data application. This involved semi-structured interviews, as well as documentary evidence from each school. It was important to undertake a thorough examination of the process of performance goal setting and teacher appraisal with one to one discussions through an interview scenario, whilst also comparing the policy and procedures of such practices. Qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I had to be completely sure about the methods to employ in this study because the methodology within all research is the way it is conducted. It demonstrates how research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field and its

effect about the claims of significance surrounding the research question (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). Therefore, I had to justify the significance of my methods, in order to provide a clear, succinct account of the nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal. Methodology focuses on the logical and philosophical questions that particular methods assume (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). It determines the choice of tools to be used for the collection of data and is crucial for establishing how to retrieve the information required within the study. Qualitative research often begins with a question, a problem to be explored or a situation in need of change. My original research question was to examine how goal setting was used within teacher appraisals to enhance teaching and learning. In my experience - as well as my colleague's experience within the teaching profession - it was not a worthwhile process. Consequently, I wanted to specifically investigate the nature and practice of this particular aspect, which sits within all teacher's job descriptions.

Choice of Methods

This study focuses on two main research methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative researchers employ several methods for collecting empirical data, including interviews and analysing documents, and it is paramount that researchers find suitable ways of managing and interpreting these documents. Consequently, the process of these methods, and the interpretation of the results within the analysis were key factors in the initial stages of this study. The first requirement for this research was to seek permission from the principals of each school. O'Toole and Beckett (2013) mention that for some research, part of the data is derived from documents and an important aspect is to seek permission to use them. This study has included documentary evidence from school performance management policies, which involves appraisal. Permission granted by the Principal was required to undertake this initial part of the research and it was an integral part of the data gathering because it defines the purpose and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal within the policy.

Method One: Documentary Evidence

Documentary evidence was necessary for the undertaking of this research because there needed to be clarification about the expectations and procedures surrounding appraisals within schools and how goals were identified within the documents. This included policy documentation on appraisals and performance management, as well as templates and checklists, which were key components to analyse. Wellington (2000) suggests that documents can enrich a study throughout the research process, as this method complements other approaches and forms part of the triangulation of data. My aim was to define the overarching themes of each school policy, whether goal setting was actually referred to, or included in the documents. Then I could establish any subsequent patterns or themes from the participant's responses within the interviews.

The principles of documentary analysis lie within the questions raised about authenticity. For example, educational policies are a government requirement (Cardno, 2012) and as such they need to be updated and maintained as a matter of legality. Wellington (2000) mentions that various questions need to be posed when analysing these documents. The authorship is a key component and questions their position and bias. Who are the audience and what assumptions are made about the audience? The contents of the documents were scrutinized, to highlight commonly used terminology, including the values conveyed, as well as the intentions and purpose of the content. This was precisely the key factor for my research question. I wanted to discover whether the documents included the language of goal setting and how this language is conveyed in a practical sense. A final thought to consider when analysing documents was when they were written, what came before or after and how it relates to previous documents (Wellington, 2000). This was useful because changes had often been made in the process of the appraisal systems within each school, but the policy remained unchanged.

The advantages of document data can be presented using the influential work of several authors (Bogden & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 1998; and Yin, 2003). The first advantage is the accessibility of the documents, which can

be viewed at a convenient time for the researcher. This was a pertinent part of this study because most documents were emailed directly to me from the Principal of each school, which provided ease of access. The benefit of this specific information also allowed me to reference them without additional transcribing (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006).

Another advantage of documentary evidence is the overview of the context. This is supported by Hinds (2000) because it can provide valuable information about the context of an institution and its culture. However, Giddens (1993) argues that a document cannot be an 'objective cultural identity' because its meaning must depend on both the reader's perspective and the author's intentions. Consequently, it was important for me to establish themes simultaneously about the process of goal setting in teacher appraisals during the interviews and data gathering of the documents. Documentary evidence is essentially a qualitative data collection method that permits researchers to examine the contents of written communications (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). In this case, the only reason for it was to identify any reference to goals. Therefore, the documentary evidence was used to reinforce whether goal setting was a part of the appraisal policy and the interviews were used to determine how the goals were used within the appraisal process.

There are always limitations with any type of research method and documentary research can have further considerations, as well as disadvantages. For example, the evidence may not be accurate or it could be created with a biased purpose, which may not be reliable for the research (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006). This was not detrimental for my research because there was a clear focus on goal setting and the information was either present in the document, or not. However, the availability of documents was problematic for me during the data gathering process because there were some delays with certain documents obtained. This made the process of identifying key themes in the early stages of research quite difficult and delayed my process of analysis because the inferences and interpretations were subjected to my own understandings. This can prove difficult if there is a need for clarification after the fieldwork is undertaken. Cohen, Manion and

Morrison (2013) mention the authenticity, availability of documents, inference and interpretation as key factors when using documentary research. For example, returning to the research site to clarify meanings in the documents can be discrediting to the policy holders and myself as the researcher. In an attempt to gather as much data as possible, I had to be patient and make careful interpretations of the received documents before completing the fieldwork, to avoid returning for additional information. Once the policy documentation was received, I could begin to analyse all documents, including the transcripts of the interviews with teachers and educational leaders systematically.

Method Two: Semi - Structured Interview

There are many different types of interviews that have been introduced by various scholars (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Montoya, 2012; Tracy, 2013). The interview can differ depending on the goals of the research, the participants, and the researcher's epistemological stance (Tracy, 2013). The most appropriate type of interview for this particular research was the respondent interview. These interviews usually involve participants who hold similar subject positions and have similar experiences, which attend to the relevance of the research objectives, and are a valid method of data gathering when attempting to understand similarities and differences of a particular subject (Tracy, 2013). As a result, all teachers and leaders needed to have at least two years' experience in school where they had undergone a process of appraisal.

Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand people (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Therefore, the interview schedule (see Appendix 1 and 2) is a pivotal part of the initial process in order to obtain the most efficient and desirable data. The extent and type of answers and ideas from the participants influenced the direction of this study (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007) and reinforced the suitability of the research questions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) state that the interview is recognised by this context and good interviewers are sensitive to the fact that interaction can influence response. Therefore, ensuring that leading questions to provoke a specific

response were avoided. I understood that the interactions during the interview would lead to further discussion, therefore I included predetermined questions, knowing that some supportive questions would be used following particular answers given; hence the use of the semi-structured interview. Interviews can vary in structure and can be focused on a given set of predefined questions that are covered in turn (Hinds, 2000). Semi-structured interviews produce a wealth of valuable data, but likewise, such interviews require a great deal of expertise to control and a great deal of time to analyse (Bell, 2010). I had to be very deliberate in my role as the interviewer, so that the conversations were not being deflected from the main points.

An interview is much more than an interesting conversation. Specific information is needed, and the methods need to be devised to obtain that information. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used because the issues under examination often benefited from development or clarification. When the researcher requires a deeper understanding, particularly if the question is potentially sensitive, or may need further development or clarification, the semi-structured interview is an appropriate method of data gathering (Hinds, 2000). Throughout the duration of each interview personal experiences were shared, which in turn provoked further investigation. This allowed a more authentic interview in terms of a natural and honest response, whilst venturing into deeper meanings and clarifications surrounding specific questions. This is a huge benefit of the semi-structured interview and was precisely what was needed for my study. It allowed me to reinforce the notion, to examine respondents' intentions and beliefs (Bell, 2010).

To obtain an accurate measure of this kind of analysis, a pilot interview was undertaken with one of my teaching colleagues, to render any issues prior to the participant's interviews. A pilot test provides important information about the process of the interview, such as the length of time taken, and any questions asked that might be too ambiguous (Kervin, et al, 2006). As a result, relevant changes were made before the actual research was administered for this study. From this, it seemed evident what type of themes may emerge during the interviews. However, in each case there were different and varying degrees of

information that were discussed. The inferences from the data retrieved helped to synthesize the information into patterns of meaning, which in turn leads to a coherent picture of the research findings (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013).

Choice of Sample

Owing to the nature of this small-scale study, the target sample of participants used to conduct this research was drawn from two primary schools who have undergone management changes since 2013. During the first year of Principalship, there are several organisational details that need to be addressed, so that there is a clear direction and understanding from the leadership of the school. For example, principals are responsible for setting a school vision, planning instruction, managing the building, human resources, as well as appraising and developing teacher's skills (Bohn, 2013). The selected schools for this study were appropriate to conduct research because each principal had been working closely on updating performance management policies and procedures, since taking over the leadership of their prospective schools. Upon meeting and discussing the main idea for this research, it was apparent that both principals had observed a variety of appraisal styles, understandings and misconceptions amongst the staff within their new school. As a result of this notion, it was a prime opportunity to investigate the nature, practice, meaning, and process of goal setting within teacher appraisal between both schools.

I had an assumption that the participants would have varying degrees of teaching experience, which later became a requirement for my research because this had to be evident, in order to gather a range of perspectives. Therefore, three teachers and two senior leaders per school were interviewed. It was also assumed that leaders would know more about school protocols and administrative duties, which would generate a deeper analysis of each leader's responses pertaining to their own school, their policies and their colleagues. Sufficient data was subsequently provided, to compare and contrast the results from the teachers' and leaders' interviews, as well as the documentary evidence. The same questions were posed during each of the teachers'

interviews, which enabled a clear insight into the process of goal setting and the understanding of the process amongst the teachers. Additional questions were seldom needed, as each question was open-ended and allowed for a great deal of thought and responsive ideas. Vogt & Gardner (2012) state that the number of in-depth interviews with informative interviewees is of greater value than conducting more interviews with less comprehensive information, which justifies the interpretive perspectives for this study. Furthermore, the responses obtained from the interviews within each school conveyed the research aims and questions; outlining the original assumptions about the significance of goal setting in teacher appraisals. There was a slight difference between the teacher's and leader's questions based on the perceptions of their roles (see Appendix 1 and 2). The main difference was the question about the policies and procedures, which I felt would provide more evidence from the leader's perspectives.

The rationale needed to be clearly communicated to the participants before the undertaking of this research, including the kind of data required, how much control the researcher needs to have during the interview process, the choice of interviewees and the number of questions asked (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). Therefore, in the first instance, a meeting conducted with the Principal from each school was initiated. This resulted in a self introduction to explain my rationale and to discuss the potential participation of the teachers and leaders. Both principals were open to the idea of discussing the rationale for this study amongst their staff, which meant that the participants felt secure by way of principal support, as this was an invitation expressed by them. The first three teachers from each school, who were interested to participate and fulfilled the criteria, were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix 3) and a consent form (see Appendix 4). This provided a detailed explanation about my research and the involvement of their participation. Possible dates and settings to conduct the semi-structured interviews were offered and once these details were finalized, the interviews were arranged.

Choice of Setting

It was paramount from the outset that the participants were made to feel comfortable and assured that this process was one of interaction and discussion about educational practice. Each interview was in the form of a one to one session with a set time of one hour allocated for this appointment. This was pre-arranged via email to organise the most convenient time and place for the participant. The school office was generally the most suitable venue for most participants within each school. This allowed for a more personal and familiar setting for the participant, in order for them to feel most comfortable. In each case, the teachers were released from their classrooms to participate in the semi-structured interviews while the principal covered their classes for the time taken. This released any burden of feelings about the time taken to participate in this research and the participants were more likely to feel at ease, as well as being supported to take part in this study from their senior leaders.

Researchers have responsibilities for building a reciprocal relationship within the interview process by honoring the responses of the interviewees and openly acknowledging the potential emotional effects (Tracy, 2013). In particular, there was one participant who was quite nervous and this was evident from the outset. Therefore, in addition to the information sheet (Appendix 3), a careful and thorough explanation was provided by me, with no expectations of right or wrong answers. Any information was indicated by me as valuable, no matter how little or how much information was provided, knowing that this would provide exactly the type of information I would need. After this initial explanation it was apparent that the participant was more concerned that they were unable to provide any valid data for this study. Coincidentally, this was exactly the kind of data required, and as such this became one of the most profound interviews, providing scope for further questions and clarifications. This substantiates that the result is as much a product of this social dynamic, as it is the product of accurate accounts and replies (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Had it not been for the understanding of such concerns from the participant, I may have received far less information in terms of closed answers if I had not probed further for each response with a gentle and approachable tone.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The analysis of results is fundamental within research because it provides a transformative process where the raw data is turned into the results from the study (Lofland, 2006). Once I had acquired the documentary evidence and the transcripts from each interview, I was able to begin the process of interpreting the results of my findings. Considering how to interpret the extensive content of my data proved to be a daunting experience. A systematic, thorough and mindful exercise was necessary to undertake this task. I needed to understand the themes and figure out thematic codes. Nonetheless, prior to any type of coding, I simply needed to read the raw data I had been presented with. Therefore, I began by reading through the evidence from School A.

The initial investigation of documents obtained from School A involved a comparative look at the content of each school policy with the transcripts from the leaders and teachers. This conveyed similarities and differences, which was then used to correlate these findings. Correlation is a comparison between two sets of information and this can prove to be quite difficult in qualitative data because there are no predetermined criteria (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). As a result, themes needed to be established to analyse the findings and create a criteria based on the research questions.

The next phase of my analysis was to extract the main ideas that focused directly to my research questions, so that I could justify their place in the findings. According to Lofland (2006) initial coding is beginning to examine the interview transcripts line by line, identifying key words and ideas. This is proceeded by 'Focused Coding', which enables the researcher to select the predominant themes, identify the links and justify their inclusion in the results. Focused coding helped me to determine the specific outcomes of each piece of data for School A. Bell (2010) reinforces that such coding allows the researcher to cluster key issues in the data and provides a pathway towards drawing conclusions.

The initial coding I used for this study involved a thematic process. This involved a systematic method of highlighting the key words that emerged from each

interview question from each participant's response (Cohen et al, 2013; and Bryman, 2012). These codes assign units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They were attached to the data and were of varying size, such as words or phrases. These codes were listed categorically against the data they were received from. For example, the documents from School A were referenced as AD1, which identified 'A' as the school, and 'D1', as document one. The leaders were subsequently referenced as AL1 and AL2, with 'L' representing the 'Leader' and the digits representing the number of leaders. Likewise, the teachers were referenced as AT1, AT2, and AT3, which identified 'T' as each of the four teachers. Once the patterns from the initial coding were listed I referenced them in a table of results (see Fig. 3).

KEY THEMES	REFERENCES TO IDENTIFY SUBJECTS					
	AD 1	AL 1	AL 2	AT 1	AT 2	AT 3
Raising Achievement	1	4	2	3	5	1
Targets	1	5	0	0	0	0
Professional Development	4	3	1	2	4	4
Observations	0	1	3	8	7	3
Goals	4	5	11	35	11	8
Data	0	2	3	6	4	2
Students	1	2	2	14	8	11
Matrix	0	10	2	0	0	0
Teaching as Inquiry	0	1	5	2	4	1
PLG	0	1	4	4	0	3
CoL	0	1	1	0	0	0
Policy	3	4	0	0	0	0
Charter	1	4	0	0	0	0
RTC (PTC)	3	3	2	0	0	1
Feedback	1	0	0	3	3	0
Accountability	4	2	0	0	1	1

Figure 3. Initial Coding for School A

I counted the number of times each theme was mentioned in the document and the interview, which became the key themes. These results provided an interesting perspective of key words and clearly painted a picture about the language used within the school. It was also useful to see how the teacher and leader's responses were compared when observing the number of times that

goal setting was mentioned. However, this was the only observation I could obtain. I wasn't trying to collate quantitative data, therefore, figure 3 was only useful when constructing an initial pathway of results. It helped to provide me with some momentum in the process of analysis and provided links within the language and the key words. Nonetheless, my process of analysis needed some adjustments to acquire a more substantial body of evidence.

After establishing Figure 3, I reconsidered my method of interpretation for the initial coding. This was because I relooked at the interview schedule (Appendix 1 and 2) and the relevant themes for my research were clearly evident in the questions. I needed to channel my thinking and organisation more coherently. I continued to ask myself what was the purpose of this research? What was I aiming to achieve? Subsequently, I studied my research aims and questions and then I observed the interview schedule and separated the questions into three main categories.

- Understandings of appraisal – *cycle, policy, criteria,*
- Understandings of performance goals – *values, purpose,*
- Support and strategies to strengthen goal setting practices – *professional development, strengths, challenges.*

These categories related back to my research aims and questions. Although there are themes outlined within Chapter Two, Literature Review, these are not directly linked to the categories found in the raw data, but they do form a greater conceptual understanding with some commonalities.

The themes were then used to filter the responses into a cohesive, relevant, data gathering outcome. The information documented in the policies identified what was happening within the school and the responses from the participants were expressed in the same way using the same three main categories. Once my analysis had shifted from initial coding, to focused coding, I was then able to use the specific comments verbatim that applied to the three main categories. Consequently, the transcripts and documentary evidence from School A,

needed to be re-examined to provide a clear insight into the process of goal setting within teacher appraisal. I was then able to ascertain the key findings.

The references used to identify the subjects from School A (see Figure 3) were now specifically used verbatim and these references proved to be somewhat confusing during this stage of my analysis. Therefore, pseudonyms were used for the remainder of the findings for School A. Moreover, I had undergone a process of trial and error in the form of my own interpretation of findings. I had learned what was effective and what was necessary. As a result, I was able to speed up the process of analysis when it came to scrutinising the findings from School B. This was a fundamental process and enabled a more efficient method of analysis without the need for an additional table of results for School B, as this was no longer necessary. Although, it really helped to format a structure and organise my thinking when interpreting all of the raw data from School A.

School B was only coded concurrently for the performance management policy, which was referred as BD1 and the appraisal document, BD2. The leaders and teachers involved from School B were not identified in the same way because I had already established a system where pseudonyms were provided from the outset. Following this method of data gathering, I was able to establish whether the performance management policies reflected the practice when comparing the transcriptions from the interviews. I was also able to easily compare the responses from both leaders and teachers from each school. As a result, I had acquired a categorical description of findings that related to my initial research aims and questions.

VALIDITY AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Validity is an important factor for effective research and is a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Validity was important for my study for the purpose of research integrity and verification within the data gathering process. "Research integrity manifests itself through ethical actions, which involve the application of knowledge skills, and attitudes" (Elliot, Fischer, Grinnell, Zigmond, 2015, p. 35). It is about

upholding the highest standards when engaging in research (Nichols-Casebolt, 2011). For example, the sample size for this study could potentially allow negative information shared by participants to be tracked back to them. Therefore, it was paramount from the outset that each participant was fully aware that this research involved two schools with only five educators. It was clear that their participation would be anonymous in the results and their comments completely confidential. As a result, there was an honest, open and candid approach amongst each participant involved in my research.

There was also the possibility that the questions could stimulate concern for the participants if they thought that they couldn't provide answers because their school system is not adequate. For instance, if they had not bought into the school appraisal process, they may have had a very different agenda. Fortunately, the interview schedule (Appendix 1 and 2) did not allow for personal attacks on their school systems because the questions were directed towards the individual's practice and understanding. The initial title and explanation of my research determined an open ended approach with a view to examining their current processes. Incidentally, three of the interviewees were keen to learn more from me about advice on goal setting processes within appraisal. Consequently, this process verified the practices already conducted within their respective schools, as well as highlighting areas for improvement and consideration. Ultimately, if this research was going to help practitioners, then engaging in this type of dialogue at both the level of question posing and the interpretation of the findings was going to enhance the validity of the results (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrillo & Berger, 2000) and proved to be a credible source of investigation.

The rigour of qualitative research is robust when researchers make decisions that increase the validity of method application, data analysis and trustworthiness of interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur that qualitative data validity can be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness, participants, the scope of data achieved, the extent of triangulation, and the objectivity of the researcher. The main idea was to gather sufficient evidence to obtain a clear picture of what was happening

within the appraisal system of each school and how goals are specifically used within teacher appraisal. This validity indicates the authenticity of the data and whether the researcher is measuring what they set out to measure and is vital for interpreting research (Kervin et al, 2006).

Capturing an accurate display of the participant's responses from the transcription and providing opportunities to check their responses was vital for securing validity. Transcriptions had to be shared with the participants. Bryman (2012) refers to this as respondent validation and this was a fundamental part of the research process. This was to ensure that the respondents were satisfied with what they had said and what the transcription included based on their answers. Words can sometimes be added, omitted or misconstrued, which can alter the meaning of the answer, and deems the interview invalid (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). This can cause ethical issues with the participants. Therefore, all transcripts were returned to the participants for the purpose of checking the data, to ensure that the transcript is a trustworthy and valid source of information.

The influence of the research process on who produces knowledge, and who is seen as an expert, as well as the resulting changes at the level of school practice are also part of an expanded and more political view of validity (Brizuela, et al, 2000). This was a consideration during the research being undertaken because the scale of this study cannot determine the same results for all schools. Collecting data from two schools produces limitations when extrapolating the evidence, and as such generalisations could be interpreted within the results. However, a reasonable degree of validity can be assumed within the parameters of this field of research. There is a limited criterion for validity because the research is derived from moral, practical and personal beliefs or perceptions amongst the researcher, the participants and the local context (Brizuela, et al, 2000).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical treatment of participants in research is a fundamental principle that is at the heart of modern research practice (Kervin et al, 2006). Ethics ensures that data is collected with informed consent, as well as protecting the participant's personal details, identities and wellbeing (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). Practicing ethics in qualitative research also requires consideration of procedural rules. The ethics procedures carried out to gain permission to conduct research, as well as the means of collecting data is a process of investigation, which stems from the initial research question (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). The aims and questions surrounding this study and what type of information is displayed are key considerations when exploring the ethical obligations during my research. For example, the intent of this research was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of goal setting in teacher appraisal. It was not a judgement of whether one school is doing a more effective job than the other school. Comparisons will be addressed, but not to the detriment of the school.

The specific ethics of the context being studied is closely connected with research participants (Tracy, 2013) because essentially they are the ones working at each school and must surely have a loyalty to the protection and safeguarding about what they choose to share during the interview. Ultimately, the researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). It was explained clearly to each participant that names will not be identified and a consent form (see Appendix 4) was signed by each person, to ensure that they understood this notion and agreed to it. Moreover, pseudonyms have been used throughout this study, to ensure complete anonymity for the respondents and the schools. This protects the individuals, as well as the school. Therefore, at no point will the subjects be identified (Bell, 2010). This ensures the protection and confidentiality of participants, as well as the actual research site (Kervin, et al, 2006).

It was conveyed to each participant within the information sheet (see Appendix 3) and prior to the commencement of each interview that the only people to obtain access to the documents used during this research shall be myself and

my supervisor. All interview transcripts were sent out to the participants for verification of accuracy giving them a time period in which to withdraw their comments or make alterations. In each case, the respondents were given the right to withdraw up to one week after receiving the transcript. This was extremely important, as there could be cultural or social sensitivities that participants may feel less obliged to share, once the transcripts have been read. Researchers have very important ethical and legal responsibilities (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013) and must adhere to these rules for the purpose of conducting an ethical research project and maintaining confidentiality. The information sheet (Appendix 3) and consent form (Appendix 4) not only provide the rights of the participants, but also the responsibilities and the protection of the researcher's position within the study (Bell, 2010).

Informed Consent

When conducting research on people, I needed to seek permission through informed consent. Wilkinson (2001) states the basic notion of informed consent: if you want to do research on people, you should seek permission first. He goes on to suggest that informed consent provides autonomy for the subjects, as well as the protection and wellbeing of those participants. A study cannot be conducted without informed consent or gaining permission during the initial stages because this would be unethical and breaches the rights of any of the participants that would likely be involved. Therefore, to overcome this requirement, permission from the Principal of the school was sought, in order to conduct this research from the outset. An official meeting was arranged to explain the research and the reason for conducting it. The information sheet (Appendix 3) for each participant was used, which outlined the rationale and the process of this study, as well as the consent form (Appendix 4), which provided each participant with a clear, purposeful and signed agreement, which was completed before the data collection began.

Participants must be fully aware of their involvement and the extent of the research. They must ensure that they agree to the participation of the study to avoid any feelings of harm (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). For example, information

about subjects could be presented without the respondents' consent, which can cause feelings of betrayal, lack of trust and misleading notions about the research. Informed consent provided information about the aims and purpose of my research and the manner of data collection (Kervin et al, 2006). A study cannot be conducted without informed consent or gaining permission during the initial stages because not only would this be unethical, but also breaches the rights of any of the participants that are involved.

Transparency and honesty were key considerations for the undertaking of this research practice, ensuring that all ethical boundaries were covered. For example, as Wilkinson (2001) suggests, the main focus of ethics is treating others with respect and understanding. Therefore, as a researcher there needs to be an element of open mindedness, but more importantly an honest and appreciative approach. It is difficult to find a balance between complete objectivity and putting the participant at ease. However, Bell (2010) suggests that honesty about the purpose of the research and integrity in the conduct of the interview will help alleviate any inequalities, which was exactly how this research was undertaken. Achieving research integrity requires creating a research environment that openly recognises and engages any ethical challenges (Elliott, et al, 2015).

When conducting interviews, there can also be inequalities in the power of both researchers and respondents (Vogt and Gardner, 2012). Participants may feel inferior to the interviewer and researchers must be aware of this to avoid harm. Quite often, the only time we have interviews is when we are applying for jobs, therefore interviews can be regarded as a judgement of character or that the interviewer knows more about the subject discussed than the interviewee. Given this notion, the epistemic positions are central to the choices that researchers make about the methods and strategies they use to investigate the social world (Scott, 2010). Therefore, to avoid any feelings of inequality, I assured each participant that they were extremely valued in the process of this research. I explained that I was also a teacher and could relate well to their experiences and their knowledge of classroom life, appraisal processes and goal setting procedures. This certainly helped the participants feel at ease and

immediately allowed an invitational tone of discussion surrounding my research questions because I could relate to their experiences.

Qualitative research depends on the need to collect, interpret and make judgments about data that cannot be measured, such as what people say and do, how they say it and why (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Ethics is a prime focus for the ways of seeing and ways of knowing. "We like to think we perceive the values we expect to see, but equally we may not be aware of how we are perceived by others" (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013, p.22). For example, when constructing accounts during the interview and transcript process, researchers can literally guide the responses. Therefore, the most suitable and accurate process of recording the responses from the participants was an audio recording application on a personal device. According to Clough and Nutbrown (2007) audio recordings are the best way to obtain interview data. Therefore, before the analysis was undertaken, the researcher must ensure that these words ethically belong there (Tracy, 2013). Subsequently, once the interviews were transcribed, the document was sent back to the participants for them to read and check, so that they were confident that the information they had disclosed was true and accurate, which limits any form of deception surrounding the results.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the findings from the data collection. The sources of data used in this study were documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews from two schools. The documentary evidence from both schools included the performance management policy, as well as other forms of evidence to explain the appraisal process.

Research Participants

In total, there were ten interviews conducted. In each school I interviewed two leaders and three teachers with experience in the appraisal process at their school. The evidence was then utilised to analyse specific data about goal setting in teacher appraisal. As explained in Chapter Three: Methodology, the research participants were each given pseudonyms to protect the identity of each individual, as well as ensuring anonymity from the reader.

Structure of Data Presentation

The structure of this chapter is organised into sections, which present the evidence from both schools separately. The two schools are identified as School A and School B. The findings are set out for each school under the following headings:

- Presentation of Findings for School
- Documentary Evidence
- Interview Evidence – Leaders' Perspectives
- Interview Evidence – Teachers' Perspectives
- Summary of Evidence for School

This structure enables a coherent presentation of findings for each school. I have presented the documentary evidence, which was analysed first, followed by the interview evidence for the leaders and teachers. The data for each

method: documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews is organised according to the following categories:

- Understandings of appraisal
- Understandings of performance goals
- Support and strategies to strengthen goal setting practices
- Key Findings

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FOR SCHOOL A

School A is a state primary school in Auckland and caters for students from five to eleven years old. The findings from this school only includes documentary evidence from the performance management policy for teaching staff and the Principal. The interview responses are collected from two senior leaders (the Principal and the Deputy Principal) as well as three teachers, one of whom is a team leader and this particular participant provides evidence from a teacher's perspective and a leader's perspective. In School A, the Principal has led the school for the past three years. Prior to the Principal's appointment there was no direct evidence of an effective appraisal system. Since the Principal was appointed there have been considerable changes to the performance management process within this school.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The performance management policy is the only documentary evidence gathered for this school, which includes *"attestation and appraisal"* of teachers and of the Principal. This document also contains the policy on professional development, which also links to any professional goals or programme goals. The policy is structured into six sections: rationale, purpose, guidelines, disputes, funding and conclusion. My main concern for the analysis of this document was to identify performance goals and how they are used within the process of appraisal.

Understandings of Appraisal

The initial introduction of this policy begins with the rationale and clearly states the *"need to evaluate regularly the quality of teaching and learning at all levels relative to our goals and objectives as expressed in the school charter and the NEGs (National Educational Guidelines). The aims will be to foster staff professional growth by providing support and development opportunities that will enable them to achieve their personal and professional goals"* (AD1, p. 14). This demonstrates the language of goals used as a key facet of the performance management process. The use of the term "goals" in the first sentence is relative to the school-wide goals, which are identified in the charter. There is a clear distinction between the personal and professional goals, as a result from the support provided by the school within the context of professional growth. The process of appraisal in this document is clearly linked to performance goals.

Understandings of Performance Goals

The purpose of this policy is stated within five listed sentences and makes reference to feedback and key objectives.

1. *To give feedback to the staff about their work performance*
2. *To negotiate performance agreements and key objectives for the year to come*
3. *To attest to teachers meeting the relevant professional standards and subsequent progression to the next step in the salary scale*
4. *To maintain high standards of teaching and learning*
5. *To provide a basis for continuous career development (AD1, p. 14).*

These key objectives are synonymous with professional goals and are implied that they are annual goals. There is reference to the RTC (Registered Teacher Criteria), which are referred to as the professional standards and form a significant part of the appraisal process. Following the 'purpose' section, there are 'guidelines', which are also listed as five main points. The first specifically states that the *"Principal has the delegated authority to implement the appraisal policy" (AD1, p. 14)* which answers the second question within my interview

schedule (see Appendix 1 and 2) and was also confirmed amongst all participant's responses from this school. There is no direct link with professional goals within the guidelines of the policy, but reference to the professional standards is reiterated. For example, this link is expressed in the following statement in the policy, "*The basis for formal appraisal will be each teacher's job description, which will include appraisal against the requirements of the relevant professional standards as determined in the current Primary Teachers Employment Contract*" *(AD1, p. 14).*

The concluding paragraph emphasises the necessity of performance appraisal, which seems intended to explicitly reinforce that this forms part of *"each teacher's job description", as stated in the guidelines of this policy (AD1, p. 15).* Interestingly, it describes the possible perspectives of those concerned with the appraisal process using specific language that may or may not have been used as a critical piece of evidence in the following statement. *"It is not intended to be judgmental or concerned with 'rights' or 'wrongs'. It is concerned with 'what can I do better as a staff member' so that the quality of the school programmes and the level of student achievement is continually improved" (AD1, p. 15).* This statement implies that previous experiences may have led to the inclusion of such explicit terms.

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

The document continues with the Principals performance appraisal and is structured in the exact same way. There is a specific mention of professional goals, which is linked to the Principals *"job description and assessed against the performance indicators and any further goals" (AD1, p. 15).* Another example is noted further in this document under the section of professional development. Within the operational policy of this section, it states *"appropriate resources will be allocated to achieve the programme goals" (AD1, p. 16).* Therefore, it is evident that there are specific mentions of goals within the performance management policy of this school, although the terminology of goals is not entirely clear and the guidelines do not provide any further detail about them. However, there is also useful evidence to suggest that support is provided through the provision of resources, which could include PD.

Key Findings of Documentary Evidence for School A

The first key finding within the policy identified links between school-wide goals and personal and professional goals. However, it was not specific in terms of performance goal setting or how this looks within the organisation. The evaluation of quality teaching and learning at this school states that it is relative to the goals that are set within the school charter, although it does not state how these goals relate to teacher's performance goals. Another key finding from this policy states that professional development opportunities will be available to assist teachers in achieving their personal and professional goals.

INTERVIEW EVIDENCE – LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

It was apparent when interviewing both leaders respectively, that the performance management procedures were still a working progress. Both leaders expressed that there has been a great deal of implementation regarding the whole appraisal process over the past two to three years and that there is still much work to complete in order to reach a point of effective performance management, which includes *"shared understandings of quality teaching" (Abigail).*

Understandings of Appraisal

There is evidence from the perspective of both leaders within this school that determines a necessary need for change to occur, since there was very little scope of a clear understanding of appraisal. As one leader stated:

> *Our appraisal system is in 'working on' form at the moment. 2 years ago we used the teacher's criteria and appraised teachers on observations - both formal and informal - on the criteria on a termly basis. This year we are using Teaching as Inquiry (TAI) as the basis of our appraisal. PLG (Professional Learning Groups) meet every 3 weeks. Middle leaders visit teacher's rooms for informal observation and student voice. Teacher's appraisal is based on information from the leader of the group (Kelly).*

There is evidence of a cycle for the appraisal process, but one which implies that there are experimental measures in place and new systems to establish. There is a clear line of instruction from the leaders to the teachers with regular meetings held and lots of discussion about the observations and evidence from the students, which emphasises the fulfilment of the criteria. This is shown in the comment from the other leader interviewed:

> *By the time the end of the year comes around, all the information that we need in order to say that teachers have met The Professional Standards and RTC is available, but your appraisal doesn't pass or fail on that by percent, you pass or fail on the improvement that you have made to your practice based on the matrix (Abigail).*

The new matrix devised by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) has helped to align the purpose of appraisal and the quality of teaching and learning undertaken by introducing specific criteria. Abigail said, *"We have a matrix that we've devised […] and focuses on the strategies that teachers need to inquire into their practice to raise achievement" (Abigail).* These examples have provided the evidence of accountability from a ministry perspective with clear links to the RTCs. There is evidence of further reading and guidance from ministry objectives and models amongst the SLT, which is helping to direct the pathway for the appraisal process and the understandings surrounding it. There is no specific hierarchy identified from the leader's perspectives, however, there are suggestions of accountability and an expectation amongst the SLT and the PLGs from the teachers. As one leader suggests that within the process of performance management *"there is quality assurance"*.

The links between the practice of appraisal and the policy of appraisal are still very much in the process of amendment, which indicates limited understandings across the school about the process in its entirety. This is a result of what came before the appointments of the leaders within this school and the continuous process of improvement, which is currently taking place. There is an awareness that these policies are not in perfect working format,

while strategies and implementations are in the foresight. The following statement clarifies this main point:

> *Our policies were written at a time when the principal was very sick and the board had really strayed into management rather than governance. The current board have taken these policies and tried to strip out procedures and leave behind policy. Our policy is still very process driven and does not make links between appraisal and raising practice or achievement. I think it represents a very defensive relationship between the board and the principal and a board being aware of a lack of process at a management level (Abigail).*

Another leader within school concurs with this message and states that the appraisal policies and procedures are still being developed in terms of emphasizing the focus for the improvement of pedagogy. Kelly states that it is *"at a limited level still - although each term we are developing more of an idea that everything we do, including appraisal, goals etcetera, are there to improve teaching and learning…still a way to go though"* (Kelly).

Understandings of Performance Goals

The understandings and use of performance goals within this school is developmental. As the changes have happened within performance management across the school, there are signs of a pathway to set goals. The goals are determined *"from teaching as inquiry goals set by teachers at PLG meetings each term. Middle leader goals are set each term as well in discussion with me" (Kelly).* The initial performance goals stem from the targets that come from the charter. The teachers will then use this information to focus on specific areas using the matrix. *"Our matrix is a little untested but we think that it is evidence based enough so that the observation of planning and practice by a middle leader will have agreement with teacher self assessment but that's not tested yet" (Abigail).* Any evidence that is untested does not provide a clear understanding of performance goals across the school. However, the value of this process is apparent.

The value of goal setting in teacher appraisal was defined *"so that teachers are aware of the importance of appraisal and how it inevitably leads to student outcome" (Kelly)*. It was also mentioned that *"the value of goal setting is that it keeps us honest and it keeps us learning as an organisation not just as a set of individuals" (Abigail)*. The strength of goal setting within this school is referred through the use of the matrix. For example, one leader expresses the importance of their matrix with regard to goal setting. *"I think that the matrix organisation keeps us moving in the same direction, but the flexibility means that teachers can set goals that are appropriate meaningful and achievable by them…it's not one size fits all" (Abigail)*. The process of performance goals is also conveyed to be reflective by the other leader. *"Teachers set their goals in a small group situation, with teachers from different teams so goals can be kept real and to the point. Teachers reflect on their inquiry and goal at the end of each term" (Kelly)*.

The key points raised when asked about the challenges of goal setting within this school were matters of trust, worthiness of the process and the quality of the goals being set. One of the leaders provides an example about the lack of quality, *"teachers here form relatively low level inquiries and so goals are at that same low level" (Kelly)*. The first leader expresses a profound and honest answer, which provides the leader's perceptions very clearly:

> *The biggest challenge is to build a culture of trust whereby teacher's appraisal is a part of raising practice and so raising achievement is not something that happens to you at the end of the year, and it's not about passing and failing it's about improving your practice (Abigail).*

Both leaders recognised that their current procedures of appraisal and goal setting are on the road to improvement and the link between these procedures and student achievement is identified and reinforced throughout the process with specific reference to the matrix tool. This is evidenced in the following statement, *"Achievement outcomes are explicit as a goal - performance goals are on their way to becoming explicit - but we need to test that matrix first"*

(Abigail). Unfortunately, the matrix was not available for me to analyse, hence the exclusion of the aforementioned document in the documentary evidence. This informs me that the matrix is - as suggested by the leaders – a testing document that needs to be utilised within the school, before I can make any authentic assessment of its use in practice.

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

Each leader respectively discussed the PLGs and the support provided within the school. In addition, to the PLGs, there was also the mention of the CoL (Community of Learning), which is focused intently on specific goals and within this community, the focus is writing. Any professional learning undertaken is within school and led by the PLG leaders or an external provider and is linked with each teacher's performance goals. Support provided to teachers is based on the ability to take that learning further. The school recognises that the teachers need a great deal of internal support to understand the processes and expectations within appraisal, goal setting and pedagogy. For example, the first leader emphasises that, *"Teachers are supported through professional learning groups with the middle leader. Courses are available - but these tend to be for teachers who are performing at a higher level on the matrix - proving to us that they manage their own professional learning really well"* (Abigail).

Key Findings of Leader's Perspectives for School A

One of the key findings from the leader's perspectives is that the responses concur with the terminology of the policy document, stating that performance goals are determined from the school charter. However, their interpretation of their appraisal system is based on set criteria and focussed on accountability, without any specificity of development for performance goals. Another key finding was that both leaders agreed that performance goals were reflective and linked to PD. Although they were resolute in agreeing that improvements were needed within their current system of appraisal, which included the understandings within the purpose of goal setting amongst the staff. Traditional methods of appraisal were being used, such as teacher observations and checklists, however the use of PLG, student voice and TAI was being sought

to improve the process of performance goals and teacher appraisal. This is still an area of development and improvement. It was identified that the implementation of the matrix should aim to improve the process of setting and managing performance goals within each teacher's appraisal program.

INTERVIEW EVIDENCE – TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

The three teachers involved in the semi-structured interviews all had experience in the appraisal process and each of them had been part of teacher observations, as part of their performance management system. One of the teachers had the experience of leadership, which provided an alternative perspective from both a teacher's viewpoint and a middle leader.

Understandings of Appraisal

There were distinctive differences between the three teachers in their initial understandings of the appraisal process. The first finding I noticed was that there wasn't any specific reference to the matrix from the teachers, which was mentioned regularly by the leaders. Although, there was some discussion about certain criteria. Again, this made it quite clear that the matrix was still in its infancy stage. Kate recounted that *"we don't get given the criteria. We just get someone to come in and assess and then afterwards we get to see what they've had a look at and what the purpose was".* She also mentioned that the process varies within the school. On the other hand, Suzy states that the appraisal cycle has recently changed and there is a continuous review about how to improve the current practice. She goes on to explain the process in the following statement, *"So we begin with our school goals and then we're all involved in the appraisal cycle, doing observations, meeting with teachers and helping to set goals. Every fortnight the team do walkthroughs and also an observation to get new ideas" (Suzy).* However, Kate admits that "*Part of my job is to go into classrooms and do appraisals, but I do them in my way and how I think an appraisal should go" (Kate).* She goes on to suggest that this process involves observations and adds that "*we have staff meetings and we say this is what we should be seeing in your classroom, and then I'll say to the teachers this is what I'm looking at" (Kate).*

The varied understandings of the appraisal process were reinforced by Bella who could not describe the process well from her own experience. Therefore, I had to pose a different angle on this question. I decided to investigate whether she had previously had an induction at the school because there were misunderstandings and uncertainties about the process from her perspective. As a result, she gave this account, *"Yes, very briefly but it was at the same time as two beginning teachers so it was different…they needed lots of basic things that I could figure out" (Bella).* Consequently, I asked if any goals were set at that time and she replied, *"No… the class was quite demanding. It had a lot of special needs and RTLB involvement, they probably thought they didn't wanna overload any more" (Bella).*

All three teachers provided a different account of the appraisal process from the beginning of the school year to the end, but all concurred that the Principal and the management control the timeframe of the appraisal process. There was no indication that this would be a negotiable concept. The teachers provided limited detail surrounding the question about who controls the timeframe of the appraisal process. It seemed to be the expected normality that the Principal and management would have the overall control of appraisal at this school.

When considering the criteria for the appraisal system, two teachers felt somewhat involved in the process. One teacher suggests, *"It's something we're all working on with the middle leaders and the senior management … they know that they wanna change a few things" (Suzy).* Nevertheless, Bella did not perceive herself to have any involvement. These comments reinforced the changes that continue to happen and have already occurred, in order to improve the current systems. The main point raised by Kate was the relativity to best practice and how the teachers can improve their practice within school by observing, discussing and questioning with a focus on feedback. She explains that the benefits of the appraisal system from the teacher's perspective was *"having someone else give you feedback" (Kate).* This was a prolific finding in terms of the relationships amongst the staff. There was a clear understanding that relationships were open and honest throughout the appraisal process. For

example, another teacher adds that, *"Having the regular contact with […] and having that fortnight meeting just means that you're keeping on top of it and you're constantly getting feedback. You can ask questions if you're unsure, you can get advice on things. Their doors are always open" (Suzy).*

All three teachers agree that the continuous conversations and active involvement in the process of appraisal is one that is of huge benefit and demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring that this is happening and its results will create improvements along the way with pedagogy. One teacher expresses this ideal in the following statement, *"I feel like I can speak to them freely. I definitely feel like I can always go and ask them" (Suzy).* The following point is also a discernible factor to consider in terms of the perceptions of feelings about the appraisal process, especially when comparing to the research discussed in the Chapter Two, Literature Review. This factor is accentuated by another one of the teachers':

> *So when I go into a classroom and I think of the criteria I email the teacher and I say the purpose of my visit is this thing here and that's the only thing I'll be looking at, so they know why I'm there and they're not worried or stressed or nervous or anxious (Kate).*

The emphasis of having positive relationships and feeling comfortable amongst colleagues is also reinforced by Bella who explains the notion of feeling safe and comfortable without thinking that others will pass judgement if questions are asked that may seem obvious to others:

> *I think the little groups are good. Not that it's a huge staff but it's bigger than the schools I've been in before and sometimes it is hard to get a word in…but when you get to these smaller groups I start to know these […] better and I don't feel like such an idiot saying, "I tried that, it didn't work. What do you think? What can I do next? (Bella).*

The specific mentions of the PLG groups have also had a huge impact in the appraisal process and have helped to guide and strategically emphasise the

value of appraisal and providing feedback to improve practice. One of the teachers' compares this practice to her past employment regimes:

At my previous school it was like a meeting at the end of the year, this is it, sign it off, whereas this time it seems to be lots of little things in-between. We break up into our learning groups and we try things and report back, so it seems to be going on all the time rather than just at the tail end (Bella).

One of the final comments to mention in terms of the understandings of appraisal is the validity of the process. Suzy mentions that accountability has a great deal of significance, *"I think it's really important because I think you have to be accountable" (Suzy).* Overall, there is a great deal of understanding about the appraisal process and how this fits into this school is an ongoing process of revision and improvement to better suit the needs of individuals across the school.

Understandings of Performance Goals

All three teachers were able to provide evidence of data, including the RTCs when explaining how performance goals are determined within their own appraisal. The TAI is also mentioned as part of the strategic direction of performance goals. Kate begins by detailing the use of the RTCs as a basis to form goals, but she explains that one goal would suffice, *"maybe one goal done together, like collaboratively would be better than two separate goals" (Kate).* Bella notes that performance goals are evident, but the intention is a little unclear:

I think we have personal goals because there's teachers' inquiries hanging over everybody and you're always being prompted about what do you do for these particular target kids? So you've got that in mind and it's also measured against the teacher registration dimensions but you don't really think about that at the time (Bella).

On the other hand, one teacher explains her understandings of the purpose, which involves a process of '*Teaching as Inquiry*'. *"We do an inquiry of target children and we collect the data of those inquiry kids over the year or the term, it's term by term, to see their progress" (Suzy).* This account seems more applicable to the statement within the policy and shows a more clear understanding of the purpose. In contrast, another teacher discusses her understandings: "*In a previous school it was more like a school-wide goal and then when you met with the principal that was just given, there it was and then you were allowed to pick a personal one underneath" (Bella).* Despite this description being from a previous school, School A appear to be managing a dual approach of accountability and development.

There is an expectation within the PLGs that evidence is provided and based on the performance goals from the RTCs and the target students, this becomes a large part of the appraisal and goal setting process. One of the teachers' explains how this system works effectively, *"Keeping the evidence along the year then helps when you do meet and discuss your performance goals cos you've held that evidence throughout the year" (Suzy).* There are also systems being put in place using Google docs and charts to track the evidence of particular students, which also provides evidence of the impact that these goals are making a difference to student achievement. This data is then used to *"determine whether we're meeting our goals or what we need to change" (Suzy).*

When examining the value of goals amongst the teachers, there was only one teacher who had mentioned the use of SMART goals. Kate makes particular reference to these types of goals as a noteworthy method of application. For example, *"it has to be specific and manageable and all those things, otherwise you're not gonna achieve it, so there is value in goals, but it has to be done properly, I think" (Kate).* She also goes on to suggest that *"one good goal is better than five mediocre goals that you're probably not gonna achieve" (Kate).* It was also an important factor to note that *"no matter where you are you should be working towards some sort of goal" (Suzy).* All three teachers recognised the value of goals and mention that there is a need. It was discussed with each

teacher that the students also have goals, therefore it's important for the teachers to also be working towards their own goals. It was also credible to convey the following statement, *"it's got to be personal to you as well and relevant to you, especially if you had a hand in picking it" (Bella).* This was a plausible opinion and one which is described throughout the Chapter Two, Literature Review.

Gathering evidence to show how teacher's practice is reflected is an expectation of the RTCs and the encouragement of TAI is fundamentally the most appropriate way of setting goals as part of teacher's appraisal. Therefore, the impact of these goals and how they link to pedagogy and student achievement is one of the most difficult, yet rewarding feedback received. One teacher recognises this in the following statement, *"That's why you pick the goal because you're hoping that the children will achieve better than they did before you got them" (Bella).* Another teacher highlights the benefits of setting goals in the following example:

> *I definitely think setting my goals then keeps me on task of what I need to be doing which then is normally based round the children so they're always benefitting from it. I definitely think it improves their outcomes for sure. Having the inquiries really hones in on those target children so you've always got them in the back of your mind all the time to be making sure that they're progressing as well (Suzy).*

Kate specifically mentions the term of raising student achievement and reinforces that this is the big focus for the school and this is where the teacher's goals stem from. The concept of shared goals was also endearing to note, as she would openly share her own goals with her students with the intention of the students helping her achieve her goals. There is a clear pathway of setting goals in a way that determines strengths and challenges along the journey of appraisal. One teacher mentions that, *"When we review our goals, we always have to show evidence of how it's affecting the children, if I don't, well then that's not a very good goal or I'm doing something wrong in my goal" (Kate).* There is a definite intention that outlines the necessity of performance goals as a means of reasoning what surrounds the purpose of raising student

achievement. One teacher reiterates this precisely, *"If what we're choosing to do is not about the children then it shouldn't be a goal" (Kate).*

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

From the outset there seemed to be a varied perspective about whether goal setting in teacher appraisal was being used effectively. However, upon analysing the comments and comparing the data, there is a distinct value in the process, but there are elements of progression that need to be addressed amongst the teachers. Although, from the leader's perspectives, this is unequivocally an area of awareness and a continuous process of implementation. From the teacher's perspectives, the recommendations are succinct and agreeable in many respects.

One aspect that was really noticeable was the need for clarity in the process of goal setting in teacher appraisal. This included the timeframe, as well as the understanding about how to set goals. One teacher suggests that *"when you set the goal there should be a clear process and I don't think at our school, we have an exact clear process that everyone's on board with and everybody's following" (Kate).* Another teacher made it quite clear during the interview that there were some misconceptions. *"I don't know if it's visible enough. I wonder if I know enough about it and the process, what will happen at what sort of time interval" (Bella).*

The final question in the interview schedule asks about recommendations on how to improve the current process of goal setting. The answers provided from the teachers, was to adapt the responsibilities of the leadership team when working alongside the teachers. For example, the current regime does not enhance the middle leaders position when observing teachers and providing feedback, but rather detracts from the focus of individual teachers and their performance goals. One of the teachers' makes the following recommendation:

> *Maybe at the beginning of the year it would be good to have the learning leader that's in charge, not in charge, but oversees the certain teachers to be involved in the goal setting as well cos they're normally the ones that then go and observe and feed back to senior management. It'd be*

good to get that triangulation working between those three people (Suzy).

The relationships amongst staff surrounding goal setting and teacher appraisal is an area worthy of careful consideration. It is important that there is an element of trust, which has been evident across this study, especially as each teacher relies on the feedback from others and the observations about their practice. This is a fundamental part of the appraisal process and one which carries a great deal of research and understandings discussed in Chapter Two about the most effective way of implementing this particular application. One example of any form of professional development is through the regular meetings of *"those professional learning groups which is helpful" (Kate).* This reinforces the necessity of productive working relationships.

In addition, there are several opportunities available for teachers to explore, in order to benefit from receiving assistance for professional growth that will inevitably help to fulfil performance goals. One teacher notes, *"we get to go to courses that we see benefit within our own classrooms. I go to a lot of the literacy ones and then feed back to the staff" (Suzy).* There is a definite agreement that the SLT are supportive in their role of helping teachers achieve their goals. Another teacher emphasises, *"the hierarchy just bend over backwards to stand in and take a class if you want to go and observe somebody or leave the school and observe somebody else. They all seem to be very willing to assist" (Bella).* A final comment to compliment the support available at this school is that *"we have lots of things that we can pull from, that can enhance our own practise and work towards the goals" (Suzy).*

Key Findings of Teacher's Perspectives for School A

Initially there were mixed understandings about the appraisal process amongst the teachers and there was very little evidence specific to goal setting. One of the key findings about the process was the aspect of feedback during PLG sessions and this was highly valued when the focus was discussed around student achievement, which reinforced the understanding that performance goals stemmed from raising student achievement. The second key finding was that positive relationships were reinforced as a strength for performance goals

and professional development. The teachers acknowledged that support and PD was readily available within school through PLGs and this helped the process of goal setting within teacher appraisal.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FOR SCHOOL A

The responses from School A were varied in nature; presenting a range of perspectives from the documentary evidence and the teachers' and leaders' interviews. When considering the interview schedule (see Appendix 1 and 2) the respondents were asked to explain the process of their appraisal cycle from the beginning of the school year to the end. The leader's perspectives were able to provide a succinct journey, whereas the teachers struggled to articulate this process. Initially, there was no evidence of goal setting used within appraisal. However, as the interviews were underway and the conversations began to unfold, there was some identification of the use of performance goals within teacher appraisal, as teachers discussed their evidence of student learning and how this was impacted from their performance goals. There was a mix of discussion surrounding the use of goals and how they were set and determined within the appraisal system. This led to the realisation that improvements were needed within the current systems of policy documentation, procedures and fluidity amongst the staff, so that shared understandings and a common language is used throughout the school. More importantly, there is a clear need for the process and understanding about how to set performance goals, in order to align with the school charter. Furthermore, evidence and procedures need to be strengthened in a much more succinct and comprehensive way, to allow for clear understandings about goal setting in appraisal, the regular use of TAI, and recognising these needs to improve pedagogy and raise student achievement.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FOR SCHOOL B

School B is also a state primary school in Auckland and caters for students from five to eleven years old. The findings from this school include documentary evidence from the performance management policy, as well as an appraisal document. The interview responses were again collected from two senior leaders (the Principal and the Associate Principal) as well as three teachers,

although these teachers did not have any additional responsibilities or leadership. The Principal has led the school for the past three years and within that time, there have been changes to the performance management process.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence from School B was slightly different to that of School A because the only policy provided for performance management was for the principal and this was documented all on one page. It was noted that this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, likewise with that of School A, but with the *"objective of ensuring that every student at the school is able to attain his or her highest possible standard in educational achievement" (BD1).* Upon collecting this evidence, it was noted that the teachers may refer to this policy, as the rationale is the same for the Principal as it is for the teaching staff. Therefore, the language was concurrent for teachers and Principals alike, which gave the impression that teachers could refer to this document, even though it was titled *'Principal's Performance Management Policy'*. The underlying objective was based on the achievement of students.

The remainder of the policy is sectioned as 'Guidelines' and is numbered from one to eleven. Each numbered statement forms part of the process for the appraisal of the Principal. It includes the timeframe of meetings with the Board Chairperson and states that the *"board chair, delegates and consultants may gather information from staff, parents, or any other relevant members of the larger school community who can provide feedback on how the principal has performed. Evidence may include surveys, self review, teaching observation, interviews, focus groups or documentary evidence" (BD1).*

The additional documentary evidence provided from School B was the *"Appraisal Document" (BD2)* for teachers. This document is specifically designed as a checklist using the RTC (Registered Teacher Criteria). The document has been adapted for the purpose of the school and the way they want their teachers to understand the RTCs and the use of them. It is designed

like a matrix with the RTCs in the left sided column followed by the key indicators as stated exactly from the original RTC official document.

Understandings of Appraisal

The school have introduced their own reflective questions for the appraisal document, which forms a type of appraisal self assessment tool. There are many of these tools available online and schools could use and adapt these as necessary to suit the needs of their establishment. School B have used the reflective questions as a guide to complete their own understandings and evidence in the final columns. The reflective questions are different for each of the twelve RTCs and are specific to the criteria and key indicators and are used as a guide for thinking about their own pedagogy.

Within the appraisal document, the final columns use the same questions for each of the twelve RTCs. This is an area that teachers complete on their own, using the criteria, key indicators and reflective questions as a guide to provide evidence of their teaching practice. There are two guiding questions for teachers to refer to and complete. The first asks *"what quality practices take place in your setting that connects with this criterion?" (BD2).* The second asks *"what would you regard as valid evidence for teachers to demonstrate these quality practices?" (BD2).* It is important to note these findings within the documentary evidence for this school, as this forms a large part of their appraisal process as well as their professional goals. This is evident and referred to within the interview responses because these reflections have been noted to form their performance goals, as discussed during the interviews.

A final consideration for this document is the language used within the introduction. For example, the front page of the document is introduced with the school vision, which clearly demonstrates the main objective and the commonality amongst the teaching staff about the purpose of this process. Another key factor to consider in the findings of this document is the definitions of appraisal, which is used as a heading before certain criterion are introduced. For example, the first section relates to the RTC heading: *"Professional*

relationships and professional values" (BD2). It states that *"appraisal is about inquiring into the positive impact I have on the whole school learning environment" (BD2).* After criterion one to five, a new page introduces the next RTC heading: *"Professional knowledge in practice" (BD2).* The appraisal definition here states that it *"is about providing evidence of my level of adaptive expertise in meeting student needs" (BD2).* These definitions can indicate a reflective tone and provides a foundational expectation that the teachers at this school are monitoring and evaluating their practice regularly.

Understandings of Performance Goals

There was no evidence within the appraisal policy that goals are set from the Principal or from the teachers. However, there is reference to a performance agreement that contains performance goals using different language, such as performance objectives. For example, the policy states that *"The principal will be reviewed on the criteria set forth in the performance agreement: performance objectives, professional standards, learning and development objectives" (BD1).* It could be argued that the term 'performance objectives' in this document are referred to as performance goals. Consequently, for the purpose of this study I would be identifying these terms synonymously.

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

There was no evidence for support or strategies of any goal setting practices stated within the policy or the appraisal document.

Key Findings of Documentary Evidence for School B

The major finding within the documentary evidence for this school indicated that the policy (BD1) was very limited in terms of appraisal for teachers because the document was only intended for the principal. Furthermore, performance goals were not evident for teachers in documents BD1 or BD2. It was identified that the appraisal document (BD2) related fully to the RTCs and was used as a reflective self assessment tool for appraisal, however, it excluded any language or evidence associated with performance goals.

INTERVIEW EVIDENCE – LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

The leaders of this school are very similar to those of School A; cognisant of the changes that need to occur surrounding goal setting and teacher appraisal within their establishment. As a result of this awareness, last year, two senior leaders had professional development in appraisal and how it can align with the RTCs. Subsequently, the information gained was used productively to set up new systems across the school, as one leader mentions, *"this year, there's been a bit of a shift in the appraisal cycle" (Debbie).* Both leaders were confident to discuss the procedures surrounding appraisal and the inclusion of performance goals was evident in both interviews, which is described throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Understandings of Appraisal

There is a very distinct pathway of the appraisal cycle in School B. It is channelled from the Ministry's expectations and the guidelines of the RTCs. The charter is unpacked at the beginning of the year to determine the school wide goals and the alignment of performance goals is then rendered as a result of the data from the previous school year, and the targets set for the current year. The shift that Debbie talks about was outlining the difference between what has happened within the appraisal process in previous years compared to what is happening now. The traditional format of setting a goal at the start of the year, having a review mid year, then signing off at the end of year is something of the past. Both leaders discuss the changes in the process in the following statements:

> *This year what's happened is that we have decided to set a personal professional goal, as well as a school wide. Now, the school wide goal comes from end of year data and that was around writing for particular areas in the school. We are concentrating on not just the school wide goal but a personal goal for ourselves – that goal has to tie in with one RTC and that's your focus for the whole year (Debbie).*

> *It really starts with unpacking the charter and looking at the learning goals that are set for that year, especially in relation to the need-to data. We have a discussion about how you own your data and who are the faces behind it and then you might discuss a school wide focus so that we have a school wide goal, but the teachers would set their own practice goals directly from the need-to data (Lucy).*

Throughout the process of appraisal, there are observations undertaken including four minute walkthroughs. For each type of observation, there are various criteria to check and monitor, based on the performance goals and the conversations beforehand. One leader mentions, *"it's all collaboratively done and co-constructed in that way and they know when we're coming in to do an observation and there'll be a range of observations for different things" (Lucy).* The other leader adds further detail about the process:

> *Middle of the year I'll have probably a more one-to-one conversation with my team individually, and then in between middle and then end it'll continue with the four-minute walk throughs or any other observations to target their practice, so then we can use that information into practical things in the classroom (Debbie).*

There was an obvious pattern of regular conversations with the teachers, led by the SLT. A constant review of performance goals is evident in a variety of ways, including a system known as 'chat and track', which is explained in this statement:

> *We have what we call a Chat and Track session where I get them in and we just talk specifically about their progress towards it [the goal], how they're feeling about it, if anything needs to change or if any areas of professional development come up (Lucy).*

Both leaders felt that the overall control of the timeframe for the appraisal process was managed, but equally shared by the *SLT "and it's very collaborative" (Lucy).* However, there were opposing views on who was

involved in the criteria for their school appraisal system. Lucy was strong in her response, when she agreed that it was the ministry who were involved in the criteria and this was due to the fact that they are specifically using the RTCs as their guiding practice, *"but we put our own flavours in there" (Lucy).* This response directly links with the documentary evidence (BD2) where the format is taken exactly from the RTCs, but the school have added their own reflective questions. Debbie was interpreting this question about the ownership within the school setting *"so it's just really the leadership team, but that criteria I share really openly with my team so we're all on track" (Debbie).*

Lucy explained that *"an appraisal does not need to be scary or challenging, so long as you can have an open conversation about it".* This was also reinforced by Debbie, as she described the regularity of the conversations and the way it is conducted throughout the school. For example, *"they know that on the agenda there's always going to be a space for talking about your appraisal, so I think it's quite a normal thing to talk about" (Debbie).*

When I asked the question about the policy, and knowing from the findings of the documentary evidence that the policy was limited in its description and audience, it was recognised that this part of the appraisal system was an area that has been overlooked. Interestingly, one leader admits, *"I don't really know how to answer that question because I haven't actually seen the appraisal policy as such. I don't know why" (Debbie).* This comment is better understood because the policy is not currently as important as the pragmatic elements of appraisal, as the other leader explains in the following statement:

> *In practice we're well ahead of the policy because we're doing it and we're reacting to it, so I think the policy documents just need a bit more modernising in terms of the changes in assessment, the changes in professional development that's out there around understanding the impact of your teaching on learners (Lucy).*

There is certainly a distinct focus on the realistic aspect of the appraisal process at this school and the policy documents can be easily shelved without being

looked at. However, *"after this year I think it will be more improved"* (Debbie) because the shifts that have happened have proved to be successful in terms of the overall process, the purpose and the practice. There are some really good things happening across the school, but *"I think we need to re-evaluate the appraisal policy as a team, so that we know it, and look at the procedures that we've put in place for this year"* (Debbie).

Understandings of Performance Goals

The leaders were emphatic in their descriptions about their understandings of performance goals. It was very evident that there was always a reference to performance goals throughout the appraisal process and this was discussed in great detail. Initially, the performance goals are determined from the RTCs. The teachers discuss in a collaborative manner what they want to focus on next, but there is an awareness that the implementation of these goals is still a work in progress. One of the leaders describes the conversational process in this comment:

> *Their performance goals are really based on what it is they really want to try and work on as their personal, professional goal and then also from conversations that I have with them, from the observations and also four-minute walk throughs as well (Debbie).*

The value of goal setting in teacher appraisal was answered with ease from both leaders. They both had similar feelings about the importance of this practice. As Lucy explains, there is a great deal of emphasis on the relationships amongst the staff and the trust that has to be apparent for effective practice within the entire process. There is a great deal of value expressed by Lucy, as she lists a comprehensive range of concepts surrounding the values:

> *Open communication, collaboration, using data to sharpen up the picture. The value of working together, the team working together on it, the sharing of information, the sharing of struggles, the sharing of strategies and solutions – that's actually a big, big value in our school*

but also it's the respect that you have for the teacher as a professional and that they need to have regular rigorous feedback in order to improve and to improve the learning for it. I think respect is a huge one – respect but honesty. Relationships are really important. Trust is the big one (Lucy).

While Debbie also holds the value of goal setting very highly, she provides a variety of reasons why there is a need for goal setting in teacher appraisal with particular reference to the ownership and responsibility of the teacher:

I really see the relevance of having the goal because you are having to prove yourself whether or not you have reached that goal… you're taking more responsibility of yourself, alongside your […] team, but really it's you making that effort to make sure that you're on track. It improves your pedagogical method if you're in the classroom and it improves your systems if you're in the management team as well… and it makes you want to go and look for more information (Debbie).

The evidence of goal setting is documented on a Google document and is constantly being added to. The audience are the team and/or senior leaders, who are then able to provide comments or details to support and add value to the process. This is a form of tracking for the teachers to evidence their data and practice. Linking teaching practice with student outcomes and performance goals is apparent within the tracking process, which is described in this comment; *"it's recording those things but also being very mindful of your performance goal and if it's not regularly talked about then you're going to stay off track" (Debbie).* This notion reinforces the specific feedback that's provided within this practice, and is described further in the following statements:

What you're actually doing is you're giving yourself feedback… you're valuing that evidence by putting it straight in there [Google docs] and then sharing it with the board (Lucy).

I'm tracking myself alongside my appraisal document that I'm working on, as well as tracking my students in my class. I can see from that whether or not I'm making the links into pedagogical practice. Because you're looking at the target students who are below and suddenly maybe in term two they become at or they move to at, you sort of have a look at what pedagogical method did I put in place in order for that to happen? (Debbie).

Lucy adds that *"the charter will have its own outcomes but the overall outcomes are the learning outcomes for our kids and the way they can talk about it… and the emotion that they feel about it – that whole picture".* This brings back the initial purpose of the practice, which is directly linking to student achievement.

After discussing the values of goal setting in teacher appraisal, I asked about the specific strengths of this practice within School B. Again, there was much emphasis on the open to learning conversations and the accountability aspect of the student achievement data, which is apparent in this comment, *"the strength of having the goal is that every team meeting that we have, we open with data from our students" (Debbie).* Lucy agrees by stating that *"the number one strength is that it's open for everyone to see" (Lucy).* There is a high degree of transparency and honesty within this school and the bottom line is integrity. Debbie mentions this point as a positive aspect of the group interaction, *"the conversation is really relevant and current and you get different perspectives on what else you could possibly do for next steps" (Debbie).* The other leader explains additional benefits of their goal setting practice in this next comment:

The other strength that I really like about our goal setting is we're continually adding to the outcomes so everything's a work in progress all the time and it doesn't just sit in the charter… those contributions are happening all year…Our other strength is closing the credibility gap between what we say and what we do, so if it's in the charter, if it's in the appraisal document, we actually are good at staying on that track and not getting side tracked (Lucy).

Lucy goes on to suggest that the language used is also a very significant aspect around goal setting. The question about how goals are constructed is a very viable point to consider. The method and application of the whole process is not easy, but certainly a plausible area that can inspire and motivate others, as she explains here: *"I think the holistic way of us planning and the unification of the team is all supported by that strong goal setting and actually it comes right down to the wording" (Lucy).* She also mentions that the staff particularly like to use *"simple, but inspiring wording" (Lucy)* as this can raise the aspirations of teachers and make them feel that this is a challenge worth considering. Debbie also adds that *"you are having to prove yourself whether or not you have reached that goal. It's no longer just a tick box" (Debbie).*

Leading on from these strengths are the challenges teachers face when constructing goals, and this is relative to the previous comments because one of the initial challenges, is actually choosing a goal and deciding upon its relevance. For example, Debbie talked about the difficulty with identifying a goal in the first instance and then choosing an area within the RTC and *"finding one [RTC] where it fitted their original goal" (Debbie).*

Interestingly, both leaders identified challenges of goal setting within their own appraisal procedures. Debbie admits that the teacher's and team's goals are *"quite strong, but I think with leadership team, I think it needs to be strengthened a lot more" (Debbie).* This was echoed in a similar way by Lucy, although she was quite explicit in the specific area that was a challenge, which was the administration part of the process. For example, she highlights that *"working with the teachers is the easy part and getting them in to talk about their teaching and their learning, that's quite a celebration and we all really enjoy that, but it is the paperwork stuff" (Lucy).* The administration is the most challenging aspect of the process and cannot be avoided, as this forms the evidence required for the appraisal cycle.

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

The professional development administered within this school has been a collaborative process, using their own staff for the most part. There are available options to consider external avenues of professional growth, but recently the focus has been internal: *"In terms of professional development for teachers, they have been using each other at the moment" (Debbie).* Lucy provides some very valid reasons for this method of PD:

> *Some of the best professional development is the stuff that's done in the staffroom because you've got the open flow, the trust, the trusted environment and you can really lift the carpet a little bit more there. Plus, they're attuned to the discussion (Lucy).*

Both leaders felt that the teachers had sufficient support and a range of strategies amongst themselves as professionals to be able to confidently agree that internal PD was more effective within school for goal setting and teacher appraisal. She adds that *"If it's actually done in your school and you're reminded of your setting, those have been the most successful professional developments" (Lucy).*

Key Findings of Leader's Perspectives for School B

The major finding from the leader's perspectives was the succinct understanding of their personal journey within the appraisal process. Leaders within the school had benefited from professional development surrounding the RTCs and teacher appraisal and there was a clear pathway that showed school-wide goals were set at the beginning of the year from the previous year's data and performance goals are determined from this, which included the use of the RTCs. Another major finding identified the collaborative processes in place, to support the attainment of performance goals using open to learning conversations. Strong and trusting relationships were encouraged and maintained during the appraisal process and the language of performance goals was used regularly amongst staff. Although, the policy was limited in

terms of the language of performance goals, it was agreed that this document was in need of revision.

INTERVIEW EVIDENCE – TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

In general, the teachers had a great deal of information to share about their entire appraisal process and how goal setting is used within their establishment. There was a clear understanding and a coherent pathway that was evident throughout each teacher's responses.

Understandings of Appraisal

All three teachers were able to explain and agree on the cycle of appraisal thoroughly. There were references about the systems being changed, but overall, each teacher responded with very similar answers about the current process, which is a very comprehensive and collaborative practice. The answers from the teachers also reflect the responses from the leaders, which provides an impression of common language and shared understandings. The following statements from all three teachers explain their interpretation of the appraisal cycle:

> *The appraisal cycle is based on our goals, the goals that we set, personal goals and there's also school wide goals. These goals need to be considered throughout the year, from the beginning to the end, even after your appraisal process has been finished, to check how far you've gone, what's holding you up, who's involved, who can help you with it, what can the management do, what can other colleagues do in order to help you with it? Then we collect evidence – that's a process – you collect different types of evidence. It could be child's voice, parent's voice, it could be your own planning, your changes in planning (Riley).*

> *We sit down with […] individually and we work out what goals that we've already thought about so at the end of the previous year we sometimes set a goal for the next year and then sometimes we set another goal or a different goal… Then we have meetings through the year called chat*

and tracks where we talk about our goals and how we're going to achieve them (Brooke).

We have an appraisal document and that is given to us at a staff meeting, …and then we write down our goals and everything on it. At some point in time, we have an interview with a senior leader so we'll sit and she'll tell me if she thinks the goal is okay and she'll go through the process and see where I am on that, on the continuum. That's how it starts (Lola).

The continuum that Lola refers to is the RTCs; specifically the appraisal document (BD2). This is presented and discussed at the beginning of the year and teachers look at the criteria to see where they are placed and what they need to improve on. The teachers felt that this was a set criteria, although they each thought that they all still had some inclusion within the criteria, because it is further developed to form part of their own performance goals. For example, one teacher mentions that the criteria is *"set down and we just have to follow it, just got to follow the appraisal. It comes straight from Ministry because it's the RTC" (Riley).* However, Brooke feels that *"we do set down the criteria",* because she explains the process of how they're going to achieve their goals and what those will look like.

Interestingly, all teachers concurred that the timeframe for the appraisal process was controlled by themselves, as individuals. There was a great emphasis on the ownership and responsibility of the timeframe, while also some evidence to suggest that there is a regular tracking system, which involves the SLT. One teacher adds: *"There is some sort of catch up and follow up but it's really teacher based" (Lola).* This catch up is further explained by Riley, who states that:

The collection of data and evidence is happening all the time throughout your appraisal process but what really happens is management has time periods when they call you in. We have a chat and track stuff where we come in and say, "This is how far we are with our personal goal (Riley).

The general consensus is definitely teacher driven for the process of appraisal. There are elements of inclusion from the SLT, but more often the middle leaders and the teachers within the teams are the ones driving the individual performance goals. Riley adds that *"we evidence whatever we are doing on that Google docs to keep track of it"*. This is reinforced further by Brooke, who mentions that SLT may *"schedule the meetings that we can have through the year, but it's up to us to do everything…the rest of it is basically up to us"*. *"There's not much follow up from management until the end of the year, in all honesty, which in a way is nice because you're not feeling as though you're being nagged upon" (Lola)*. This adds another dimension because the teachers generally do not feel like the tracking system is an arduous task, as one teacher suggests, *"it's just tracking you all along the way" (Riley)*.

The appraisal cycle is still reviewed at the end of the year in a formal manner, which brings in the definitive reflections. One of the teachers begins to describe this stage: *"Then the next part of that process is at the end of the year when you present all your data collection" (Lola).* Another teacher adds: *"We talk about what we've done and look at has it met the criteria of what we were trying to do, have we met our goal?" (Brooke).* The data gathering methods to prove the evidence for the teacher's appraisal has so far been an effective form of communication and collaboration, especially the continuous input of evidence into the Google doc, as one teacher mentions, *"it's fabulous cos all I do is put evidence into it. For me, that's now become very meaningful, and it makes you more accountable" (Lola).*

Overall, the understandings of the appraisal process at this school are driven with clarity and positivity. It is described by one teacher as, *"beneficial because it doesn't judge you as a teacher, it just gives you an indication, cos sometimes you don't know your shortcomings" (Riley).* Another teacher reiterated the benefits of the professional conversations in this statement:

> *I think it makes you get involved with professional discussions with your*
> *peers because of our leaders at this school, who are very goal orientated*

and I'm not a goal orientated person… I think it keeps you interested and I think it keeps you trying to improve yourself as a teacher (Lola).

There is certainly a heightened sense of self awareness and accountability from the conversations amongst the teachers. One of the teacher adds that, *"I also do lots of communication and networking with other teachers in different areas" (Riley).* This has helped to promote new ideas and develop confidence to try new things, which is reinforced further by Lola, who thinks that, *"it's all about improving yourself and keeping you accountable. I think that's what it is" (Lola).* While Riley adds that, *"you need to review and reflect otherwise it's not good teaching" (Riley).*

The appraisal systems are managed well at this school and it is not something to be afraid of because the constant discussions amongst the teachers allow for constant feedback and reflection. Brooke states that *"it's very unified – we all know what we're doing, what each other's doing".* She goes on to explain further about the benefits of goals in relation to teacher appraisal and makes a concluding valid point:

> *We have goals for the school here but it's our personal growth that we're looking at. That does benefit the school and all that sort of stuff and you do the school goals as well but these, I think, strengthen the school as a whole (Brooke).*

Understandings of Performance Goals

The understandings of performance goals have surfaced regularly throughout the understandings of appraisal, which signifies a strong link between the two aspects. There was a range of examples used to demonstrate the use and understandings of performance goals at this school. The lead question used here was to determine how the goals were set with regard to their teacher appraisal, which provides details about the relevance and significance. One of the teachers' states, *"our school wide goal this term was about feedback so I just linked mine to that because it was easier and it didn't add an extra burden*

on the workload" (Lola). The teachers also consider the dynamics and capacity of their students, as highlighted in this comment: *"We might think over the holidays, that's not gonna work this year for my class. Then we set the goal and we give it to […] and talk about the benefits of it and how it's going to help" (Brooke).* The teachers are cognisant of their goal relevance, as reinforced in this statement:

> *For instance, if you had one of your goals as your current learning in the class and how you are assessing that against the national standards, you can have the current learning and match it against the national standards and say, "Maybe this current learning is not happening, they're not getting it." So you change [your goal], you move the benchmark, either go up or come down (Riley).*

The duration of the goal is also considered. For example, one teacher said, *"sometimes goals, as you know, don't finish that year so it could be a continuous goal or you might add something different into the goal to change it slightly" (Brooke).* The performance goals set by the teachers are perceived to be significant because one teacher states, *"I know two kids are way well below in reading but I'd like to see 99% at or above… I've got something to aspire to so it's giving me that aspiration" (Riley).* The links between the performance goals and the student outcomes is a worthy display of accountability and responsibility. This is highlighted in Lola's response:

> *Mine is feedback, so for this year, hopefully, the student outcomes is the students benefiting from the worthwhile feedback so I've done it very, very focused in reading and writing for this up until this point. I can definitely see the children all moving up levels - most of them probably (Lola).*

When observing the interview schedule (See Appendix 1) for teachers, one of the questions I asked was to explore the perceptions of the value in goal setting. It has been evident from this school that there is a great deal of value in goal

setting as part of the appraisal process. Two of the teachers list some very powerful comments:

> *I think it focuses you on to where your weaknesses are as a teacher. That's a really hard thing to admit – that you're not strong in an area. To set these goals and have them constantly referred to and talked about and things like that, it makes you aware that you are actually really responsible for your upskilling and how it's gonna affect the kids in your class (Brooke).*

> *I suppose it makes you look at new methods. This year, because I've chosen a goal that I'm really finding effective in my new entrants, it's been very worthwhile. I think it keeps you a bit more focused and it makes you a bit more accountable. I suppose that's the value of it (Lola).*

The focus of goals and the direction of their teaching practice is emphasised further between two of the teachers. One admits, *"I'm just so focused on goals now. It's that future focus all the time" (Brooke).* Whilst, the importance is stated well for the teachers, it is also noted that there is distinct benefit for the students as a consequence of a much more detailed and structured practice, as stated by Lola: *"I think it has a big impact on their learning, especially if you're doing it properly" (Lola).* The first teacher describes the process as beneficial for herself, as well as the students in the following statement:

> *It really does focus you a lot more and you start adding in more and more goals for yourself that you didn't realise you were doing as well. The students are always benefiting for the better. They don't believe it at the moment but they'll come out and go to intermediate and college a lot stronger than if I didn't bother with any goals. If I just walked in and did my job, I don't think it'd be so good for them (Brooke).*

The process of goal setting in teacher appraisal at this school indicates that it is working extremely well. As a result, two of the teachers specifically mention that without the performance goals, there is a limited substance to your teaching

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practice. For example, one of the teachers' admits, *"it's really hard when you don't have a goal and you don't know where you're going" (Brooke).* Furthermore, it is critical to mention at this point about the ownership of the goals. When asked about this, Lola explained a very valid point: *"Our goals are owned by us, which makes it more likely to achieve it. If goals were given to us, we would be much less likely to do it" (Lola).*

Support and Strategies to Strengthen Goal Setting Practices

The support highlighted at this school is evident in the professional relationships, the collaborative methods of inquiry and the digital formation of evidence and feedback. One of the teachers' emphasises, *"there is plenty of support and we have a Google docs document where we put in whatever we are doing" (Riley).* Two of the teachers also reiterate that the support at this school is productive and meaningful in the following statements:

> *We have professional discussions and we show that we are accountable, but we don't feel pressured. Senior Leadership team are very approachable, so if we need something and need help we can get it (Lola).*

> *If we're interested in doing something extra, we come and talk and see if we can go on it if it's an outside course or if it can be brought up in the staff meeting cos you'll guarantee if you're thinking that way then four or five other people are. Also, talking to other people, you get feedback from them (Brooke).*

The SLT are described by one teacher as thought provoking in their approach to support teachers. For example, Riley explains that *"management will help us to lift the bar and say, what do you need? Where do you need help? What can we do?" (Riley).* The support at the school is valued by all. Lola admits *"it's going really well, there's no pressure here. We feel really comfortable that we can get help or assistance when it's needed" (Lola).* She also mentions later in the interview that, *"if you've got something and you go to them with it, they'll*

take it seriously and they'll provide some support or some extra help. They're very interested in helping you better yourself" (Lola).

All of the teachers describe the professional development as an ongoing process at the school. For example, Brooke thinks that *"you're constantly on the lookout for how you can strengthen it so you look for your own PD as well" (Brooke).* While Riley includes that she understands the strengths of her colleagues in the following comment: *"I also do lots of collegial support. I know the teachers that I can tap into and go to them" (Riley).* The supportive environment is a key factor that contributes to the satisfaction of the appraisal process. Lola describes this example with vehemence:

> *Absolutely brilliantly and non-threatening. They don't come in and say, "Where are you? Where's the evidence?" You can tell it's a process, they accept the process and as long as by the end of the year, you feel that you've achieved it. It's all about how we feel about ourselves, they're not using it as a judging tool but because of that attitude, you want to do better. It is wonderful here (Lola).*

There is further evidence by all three teachers that the ongoing PD is effective, as they provide specific examples of the scenarios that take place within the school. For example, Brooke states that *"PD doesn't seem to end, it's not a one-off here. It seems to be a continuum and if we need something to strengthen, we just ask for it and we get it".* Another example to emphasise the collegiality in the practice is noted with a specific process of engagement from Lola: *"I put a little photograph of effective feedback and the very next day, she had obviously read it, made a comment on the Google doc and brought me a reading. To me, this has been the most worthwhile" (Lola).* In addition, Riley discusses the notion of continuous learning and feels comfortable to use her release time effectively, to upskill the areas that she needs to improve in. She mentions that, *"I do use my CRT, I use most of it for my PD where I identify it" (Riley).*

One of the teachers speaks very highly of the SLT, in particular the Principal. She comments about items that she would like to address in her classroom, to assist with her professional goals. The Principal is very receptive and encourages new ideas. There is a general sense of valued expertise and professionalism amongst the staff here, which is explained in the following statement:

> *Sometimes it's not the money, it's, you've got experts here and some schools you go to, they don't value expertise or whatever cos you could be new or something, so they don't know you. Here it's almost like our expertise is valued and if we've got something to say, we're given the chance to say it and we can lead whatever (Brooke).*

All three teachers could not provide an initial response to my final question, which asks about recommendations to the current practice of goal setting within their school. Riley suggests not, but then ponders for a moment and considers the following:

> *Maybe a short term goal and a long term goal, I think that would be good. A short time, give it a timeframe and then if that short term hasn't been achieved, convert it to a long term (Riley).*

Again, Brooke didn't seem to think so, she stated that *"I'm personally satisfied with what I'm getting".* Lola considers this possibility, *"Time is given for discussions and checking in with SLT to check we are on track. At the end – have we achieved the goal? Maybe this is something we could do better!"* (Lola).

Key Findings of Teacher's Perspectives for School B

There are thorough understandings and strong links between the appraisal process and performance goals amongst the teachers at this school. Teachers are conversant with their evidence of performance goals and how they relate to student achievement through regular tracking systems, professional

discussions and the use of RTCs. In general, the teachers are satisfied with their appraisal process and believe that it is teacher driven because accountability and responsibility is understood through regular feedback and reflection about their performance goals. Performance goals are valued highly due to the ongoing PD and the professional relationships in place that offer supportive and collaborative methods. However, the conclusion of goals at the end of the appraisal cycle is an area that could be improved.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FOR SCHOOL B

Overall, the perspectives from the leaders and teachers were fairly unanimous in their descriptions. The narratives from the transcripts identified clear processes and understandings about performance goals in teacher appraisal. The policy documentation was not referred to by the teachers and was not observed by one of the senior leaders, which demonstrated a lack of use at this stage. However, the leader's are aware that changes need to be made to the policy documentation, but the focus has been much more located around the practicality and the routines of goal setting and appraisal on a termly basis. The appraisal document was used far more efficiently than the policy and this made sense to the teachers and leaders because it forms the guiding principles of the appraisal process in accordance with the Education Council. The teachers and leaders certainly reinforced the need for performance goals and rated the process very highly. The value of goal setting in teacher appraisal was supported by the efforts made as a staff, to allow for open, trusting relationships, to share feedback and seek assistance to attain their desired goals. Systems are in place to ensure that professional development is available and support is always accessible.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings from the previous chapter in relation to the literature on goal setting and teacher appraisal. The discussion focuses on the main themes explained in Chapter Two, Literature Review and draws conclusions based on the evidence provided in the research findings. As a result of these conclusions, there are implications for practice and recommendations suggested for middle leaders, principals, team leaders and teachers about the use of goal setting within teacher appraisal.

Discussion

This discussion of findings is organised into four sections, which clearly states the main focus of this study and relates back to the original research aims and questions. In the previous chapter, the research evidence from the schools was organised separately. This chapter will merge the findings of both schools and discuss the conclusions concurrently. Linking the literature with the key findings will provide comparisons and contrasts of all relevant material and is outlined in the following way:

1. The purpose of goal setting in teacher appraisal.
2. The practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal.
3. Strengths of the purpose and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal.
4. Weaknesses of the purpose and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal.

THE PURPOSE OF GOAL SETTING IN TEACHER APPRAISAL

School Policy and School Charter

The research findings in both schools define key objectives within their performance management policies which identify the purposes, but suggest very little scope for goal setting and more emphasis on the appraisal aspect.

Both schools indicated that their policy was rarely referred to and was in need of change. The leaders from both schools described the process of setting goals as a means of unpacking the charter at the beginning of the year, which matches the evidence within the literature and guidelines from the Ministry of Education. According to the Education Act (1989) section 61 (4):

> A school charter must include the Board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities, and targets in the following categories: (b) the Board's activities aimed at meeting both general government policy objectives for all schools, being policy objectives set out or referred to in national education guidelines, and specific policy objectives applying to that school (p. 112).

The literature also states that the purpose of performance management is to develop and utilise skills, knowledge, training and talent in ways that maximise learning outcomes for students (MoE, 2013). Both schools understand the link between the policy and the charter, as well as the notion that their practice does not necessarily comply with the policy. In both schools, the practice outweighs the policy.

Appraisal Versus Performance Goals

There is some evidence in the research findings that suggests performance goals are used explicitly in these schools, as described within Chapter Two, Literature Review. There is an awareness of performance goals, but a compliance measure of teaching practice still remains evident. The evidence in the literature suggests that the purpose of appraisal is often compliance based; making teachers accountable for their performance, and using appraisal information for staff development and progression (Cardno, 2010). There are still the assumptions that any idea associated with appraisal is a judgement of performance, rather than a guidance map for the continuous improvement and development of quality teaching to raise student achievement. However, there were distinct comments made about the purpose of goal setting I teacher appraisal, which was directed towards the dual purpose of accountability and

development. Even though, Rudman (2002) believes that performance appraisals make people uncomfortable because of the word appraisal, which implies that judgements will be made. The perceptions from the majority of teachers and leaders did not appear to imply any cause for judgement. Unfortunately, these assumptions are embedded amongst many educators and this is where the changes about the concept of performance appraisal needs to improve. Cardno (2012) suggests that it should be about teaching and learning, which was clearly evident in this study.

In all accounts there is recognition about the purpose for goal setting in teacher appraisal, although the inference amongst all of the responses can mislead the results of understanding the purpose by leaning too heavily on the focus of teacher appraisal, rather than goal setting. Performance goals may be mentioned and discussed throughout the findings, but not in such depth that relate to the real purpose and understanding of setting performance goals, even though the literature suggests that specific goals make it clear to the employee about what they are expected to do (Latham & Locke, 2013). This is mainly because teachers have been accustomed to this measure of accountability as a process for a number of years. Historically, it was a consumer approach in education permeated by a belief of managerial accountability, within the foundations of performance appraisal and management (Codd, 2005). Rudman (2002) clearly states that there is much more about the purposes of performance appraisals, which includes setting performance goals, providing feedback on performance results, determining performance-based rewards, identifying professional development needs, assisting with career and succession planning, as well as decision making. While appraisal forms a large part of the performance management portfolio within schools, it was originally set out to clarify job related expectations, and provide teachers with feedback about their performance (Cardno & Piggot Irvine, 1997).

Too Many Goals?
The key findings suggests that there are misconceptions about the purpose of goal setting in teacher appraisal. This is mainly due to the fact that there are so

many goals used within schools. Even though my research focused specifically on the goals used within teacher appraisal, there was the understanding and inclusion of the school wide goals, as well as the terminology of performance targets and key objectives. Bendikson and Robinson (2013) also found this variance in the number of goals problematic in their research, which makes it difficult for educators to identify what are the most important goals. This is reinforced by Hoyle and Wallace (2005) who say that goals are a problematic concept because distinctions are evident between operational goals of individuals and organisational goals. In both schools, the leaders could articulate the school-wide goals that stem from the Charter, but the teachers referred mainly to their own performance goals with the intention stemming from the Registered Teacher Criteria. Both teachers and leaders alluded to the reference of the *Teaching as Inquiry* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) tool.

The 'Teaching as Inquiry' Tool

A major finding was that both schools were using the '*Teaching As Inquiry'* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) model. The responses from some leaders and teachers demonstrated that the purpose and understanding of goal setting in teacher appraisal was by utilising the '*Teaching As Inquiry'* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) model, while also referencing the use of the '*Registered Teacher Criteria'*. Goal setting has been defined as a "method of directing the efforts of individuals and providing a standard against which performance can be assessed, which is fundamental to performance appraisal" (Yearta, Maitlis, Briner, 1995. p.237). The *Teaching as Inquiry* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) model places importance on teachers by prioritising what and how they teach. It is based on the needs of their students and making evidence-informed decisions about strategies that are most likely to work in meeting those needs, then checking how students responded to the teaching. However, this can be a critical aspect of effective pedagogy as described by Aitken and Sinnema (2008). For example, there were some inconsistencies across the research schools. Some of the respondents discussed the use of *Teaching as Inquiry (TAI)* while others failed to mention this strategy. Some authors (Benade 2015; Education Review Office 2011, 2012; Sinnema & Aitken 2011) have argued

that the concept of '*Teaching as Inquiry*' (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) is neither universally understood nor consistently practiced. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the purpose of goal setting in teacher appraisal, to raise student achievement is a justification for the use of '*Teaching As Inquiry*' (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008), nor is it a shift from accountability to development, but rather it still remains an equivocal process of understanding and implementation. Consequently, the strategy of using '*Teaching as Inquiry*' (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) could be assumed to be a development blanket that cushions the preconceived ideas of compliance. However, the results from the teacher's perspectives who were using TAI regularly were very positive about the use and impact the process had on their own practice.

PRACTICE OF GOAL SETTING IN TEACHER APPRAISAL

The practice of goal setting in the research findings shows clear pathways that provide timeframes, a quantity and a subject to focus on. Both schools are demonstrating a collegial approach, which exemplifies the collaborative approach to raising student achievement. Some teachers are naming students, which demonstrates the specificity of their performance goals. ERO (2013) suggested that appraisal is more likely to improve the quality of teaching and learning when goals are specific, challenging and focus on teaching and learning. According to Locke and Latham (2013), specific goals eliminate ambiguity and define what constitutes an acceptable level of performance.

Perceptions of Practice

The leaders' perceptions were sometimes contradicted by the teachers' perceptions because there are uncertainties surrounding the expectations and requirements of the whole process. This was described in the context when there were several observations that took place at any point within one school. Some teachers' experiences did not seem to provide any real clarity around the observation aspect of teacher appraisal or relativity to teachers' performance goals. This process seemed to be inferring a compliance approach and the need for support, reason and clarity was omitted. The examples from the respondents illuminate the assumptions of the dual purpose of teacher

appraisal; accountability and development (Cardno, 2012). This suggests that the teachers and leaders are experiencing conflicting interests of this dual purpose. As Cardno (2012) asserts, "when appraisal occurs in a system that integrates accountability and development in a framework of improving teaching and learning, the key activity that must occur is dialogue at all points of enacting the system. It is through productive dialogue about establishing expectations, observing practice, setting and monitoring development goals and reporting achievement that possibilities for change are explored" (p. 90). These practices were evident, but according to the teachers, the systems were not succinct because there was limited clarity in the process.

Benefits of Feedback

A major finding in the practice was from the teachers and leaders in both schools indicating the use and reliance of feedback as a contributing factor within the process. Interestingly, the process and practice of any goal pursuit is best enacted when participants are engaged with others in ways where not only support, clarity and mentoring is provided but also strong feedback, honest dialogue and critique (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). This concept is supported by Rock (2007) who states, "feedback gives people information that helps them learn and grow and is central to good leadership" (p. 203). Therefore, it is within the realms of leadership that the growth occurs amongst the teachers. The conversations and the feedback provided a much more supportive and meaningful appraisal process, which was aimed at aligning the ongoing performance goals. Latham and Locke (2013) say that goal feedback provides a sense of achievement, recognition and accomplishment. Pollock (2012) makes reference to this notion as an iterative process that could transform teaching when feedback is sought, by breaking down the barriers of time and space, using twenty first century feedback such as digital devices – Google docs, blogs, email, videos. Such evidence was used in the *chat and track* example, which demonstrates the use of Google docs. In addition, Earl and Timperley (2008) discovered that "conversations structured by purposes rooted in professional learning and instructional improvement and aided by various resources, was a reasonable benefit" (p.41). This was demonstrated in the

research findings when the leaders and teachers talked about the benefits of the professional learning groups.

Changes in Practice

There have been some obvious shifts made within both schools. However, these changes have emphasised benefits, but also some misunderstandings about the process, as the responses are quite varied in terms of the practice. Needless to say this causes significant implications for the practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal and the leaders need to be aware that changes are imminent. The notion of changes in practice is supported by Benade (2015) who suggests that for teachers to change, they must see the need for change and be willing to break with the past. These systems appear to have been a considerable change for the teachers and leaders at this school and are provoking the thinking and practice that makes their teaching more meaningful. A key factor in the practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal is clear communication and a shared understanding that demystifies the apprehensive historical conceptions of a traditional appraisal. Buckingham and Coffman (2014) say that the most effective leaders had specific criteria on how they set goals and expectations, how they motivate people, and how they develop people. Piggot-Irvine (2015) reinforces that a shift in the depth of goal setting strategies can lead to greater focus, enhanced outcomes and impact. This was particularly evident within the research schools.

STRENGTHS OF THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICE

The main findings within the research evidence when identifying strengths was the collaborative methods that are applied within teams of teachers. The goal setting aspect was discussed in a positive tone amongst all of the respondents, although it is not entirely clear how this process is conceived.

Collaboration, Trust and Shared Understandings

Creating an atmosphere of improvement and development amongst students, teachers and leaders in a collaborative manner was evident across the schools. The energy and shared understandings creates synergy. This is described by

Senge (1990) when teams accomplish the shared goal; the sum of all parts will equal the whole. This concept suggests that each team member has control of some part. In this case, the parts are the achievement of students. Bennett (1995) recognises this shared concept and relates it from the individual to the organisation:

There is a common understanding among the autonomous individuals of the nature of their work, and the fields of responsibility of each person, which rest on shared fundamental values. Thus autonomous individuals share common goals and purposes which can be taken to be the goals of the organisation in which they work (p. 61).

This quote also examines the values shared across the organisation, in which case stems from the overall target to improve pedagogy through shared understandings and common goals. In some aspects of the findings the collaboration and team understanding appears very strong. At the deepest level of collaboration, there is openness that generates trust (Piggot-Irvine, 2015). The research in professional learning conversations conducted by Earl and Timperley (2008) found that "a base level of of such trust may be necessary for a professional community to emerge, but working and reflecting together can build trust and strengthen relationships" (p. 49). This has been evident as a key factor in the research findings. There has been a reliance of collegial support from some of the teachers' perspectives.

This is a significant advantage because it highlights not only the shared understanding, but also the positive effects of teacher engagement and the willingness to make changes in an open, trusting environment. When educators feel comfortable and are receptive to change they can make a leap of faith to try new things; this can be transformational for all learners (Benade, 2015). In the BES iterative research, it is stated that: "since all knowledge is cumulative and subject to change in the light of new research findings, today's best evidence may be challenged tomorrow" (Robinson, et al., 2009, p. 50). This concept is a powerful statement that all educators need to be aware of; it epitomizes the need for goal setting, to challenge our thinking and recognise

the changes that need to be made. The benefits in the research findings have shown that making these changes has strengthened and focused professional communities because it enables a willingness to "expose problems of practice to collective scrutiny and an obligation to support each other's professional growth" (Earl & Timperley, 2008, p. 40).

Improving Performance Through the Sharing of Goals

Sharing goals to improve performance demonstrates a real strength in the power of goal setting. Not only for the teacher, but more importantly for the students too. Some teachers discussed how they had shared their performance goals with their students. The discussions highlighted the effects of these shared understandings. The students were receptive and this process often helped them understand the value of goal setting for themselves. "Goal setting for both teacher and student learning is part of a cycle of evidence based assessment, analysis and determination of next steps" (Cardno, 2012, p.169). Furthermore, in the BES iterative research these aforementioned connections are highlighted in the context of clear communication. "Leaders establish the importance of goals by communicating how they are linked to pedagogical, philosophical, and moral purposes. They gain agreement that the goals are realistic and win collective commitment to achieving them" (Robinson, et al., 2009, p. 40). This evidence from the literature reinforces the impact of goal setting within the educational setting. It also reiterates that collaboration surrounding goals, is what creates enhancement of buy-in or ownership by those leading and those influenced by performance goals (Piggot-Irvine, 2015).

Both schools agreed that there is a great deal of strength and value in goal setting within teacher appraisal. From a leadership perspective, the strengths emphasise the notion of goals being shared in a participative way. Locke and Latham (2013) also mention that "it is beneficial to create goals through a participatory process instead of a directive process" (p. 296). This not only allows for shared understandings, but also creates a sense of ownership and responsibility across the team. Earl and Timperley (2008) agree that the way individuals construct meaning for themselves includes their beliefs about how

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important values and goals can be achieved under particular conditions or circumstances. In which case, the professional development surrounding performance goals is paramount, in order to attain a belief and understanding about the overall principles. Cardno (2012) emphasises that "any effective professional development system should involve what needs to be improved and why. It is about demonstrating accountability and making judgements about performance so that goals can be set and achieved" (p. 102). Piggot-Irvine (2015) resonates this message, stating that "improved performance occurs most significantly when goals are genuinely shared and aligned" (p. 36). From the teachers' perspective, they agreed that the goal setting in teacher appraisal was highly valued when the focus was surrounding student achievement. This provides an overarching element of collaboration and understanding. What's important to note is that goals are understood by, and relevant to, students, teachers, and leaders (Robinson., et al, 2009). Therefore, the strength lies in the attitude, purpose, ownership and communication surrounding the goals, which allows the development and improvement purpose of performance management systems to be a valuable process (Piggot-Irvine, 2015).

In both schools, it was evident that the criteria for setting goals was based on the '*Registered Teacher Criteria'*. This enabled a guide and a structure for the teachers' evidence. The *chat and track* method used in one school provided evidence of communication and shared understandings. This method of producing, sharing and communicating performance goals within teacher appraisal throughout the year has a huge advantage across teams of teachers. Cardno (2012) agrees that "teamwork provides the context for resolving many of the complex problems that act as barriers to the achievement of educational goals" (p. 125). The strength across both schools was the ability to support one another, allowing for open, trusting relationships, to share feedback and seek assistance amongst their teams, thus providing relevant, accessible professional development.

WEAKNESSES OF THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICE

Setting Performance Goals

One of the most prominent weaknesses that I have found throughout this study is the ability to set goals. This is one of the most significant challenges that is clearly evident across both schools. It is apparent that leaders and teachers are trying hard to make their best efforts to establish their performance goals. This has been presented in ways that either stem from the criteria within the '*Registered Teacher Criteria'*, or whether this is within the exploration of *'Teaching As Inquiry'* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) and conversations amongst their professional learning groups (PLGs). Nevertheless, there is still an underlying difficulty in setting and aligning performance goals within teacher appraisal as a means of raising student achievement.

Goal Specificity and Expectations

Another weakness is the specificity of the goal. One of the leaders recognised that teachers set low level goals. This message is regarded as a detrimental factor in the achievement of performance goals. According to Hattie (2012), when goals are too easy there is a lack of effort, which can reduce the task of setting more challenging activities. Piggot-Irvine (2015) also explains that low level order challenge, easy to achieve goals, create low level outcomes. Hence, the major concern is how to establish effective performance goals. A report issued by the OECD from the MoE (2010), quoted that New Zealand schools have a significant amount of professional independence and as a result, "it is expected that teachers will analyse students' needs, select teaching strategies, source teaching materials aligned with the national curriculum and work with individuals or groups of students in a responsive way" (MoE, 2010, p. 14). When considering the acquisition of setting goals with specific, measurable and achievable means, it is understandable that teachers and leaders are finding the process ambiguous and challenging with their already established expectations.

There is a great deal of autonomy within New Zealand schools to establish their own methods of performance management, however, this study reinforces that

this can be detrimental for the educators if they do not have sufficient knowledge or the capacity to infuse such methods of performance management styles and goal setting strategies. For example, performance management:

> requires the participation of school leaders who are skilled in interpreting test results and in using data to plan and design appropriate strategies for improvement. It also demands that school leaders involve their staff in the use of accountability data in order to strengthen professional learning communities within schools and engage those who need to change their practice (Schleicher, 2012, p. 29).

Policy and Procedure

A key finding regarding the weakness of goal setting in teacher appraisal was the policy documentation on performance management; although leaders from both schools agreed that the policy documentation was in need of change. Across each school, the policy was utilised in a minimal way. These findings made it very clear that the communication pathway about the procedures and the expectations surrounding goal setting in teacher appraisal was missing. This meant that there were gaps within the general understandings of performance management at the policy level, which made the process unclear and therefore in need of tightening up and making firm decisions about the way forward. This notion can be better understood by Cardno (2012) who says that "there is a clear indication of being knowledgeable about system-level policy and strategy that must be taken into account in developing institution-level strategic initiatives" (p. 161). Therefore, the schools in this study need to address their policies when introducing new initiatives – such as the use of *'Teaching as Inquiry'* - that are clearly making significant changes to the way in which teachers are accountable for their performance.

CONCLUSIONS

I have concluded that performance goals could be strengthened through explicit understandings on how to set goals and some comprehension of goal setting theory, including SMART goals.

Varied Practices of Goal Setting

The practice of goal setting appears to be very varied across these two schools. In one school there are mixed understandings about the process of goal setting in teacher appraisal. The perspectives from the leaders and the teachers were diverse. However, in another school the practice of TAI (Teaching as Inquiry) was used consistently with clear and shared understandings. Teachers' and leaders' perceptions have demonstrated a high level of positivity, although there is varied understandings of the concepts. The overall opinion is of a beneficial mindset. Both teachers and leaders have recognised that the nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal can strengthen the outcomes for their students, as a result of their own professional growth. The variance still lies within the leadership dilemma of accountability versus development and the teachers' commitment and understanding of the performance management procedures. It is evident that these understandings take time during a change management process, as well as a change in practice. This has proven to be underway across both schools with the '*Teaching as Inquiry'* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) process and the *Registered Teacher Criteria*, which appear as part of teacher appraisal across both schools.

Implications

The implications of this conclusion shows that when there are mutual understandings with clear policies and processes of goal setting in teacher appraisal, it is likely to be performed more effectively.

Theory and Skills of Goal Setting

Even when goal setting is being practiced in teacher appraisal, there seems to be a lack of theory and skills needed for this process. In relation to improving teaching practice, this research has proved that educators are making exerted

efforts to inquire deeper into their practice in order to raise achievement and demonstrate their own responsibility within the profession. Piggot-Irvine (2015) suggests that a surface approach to goal setting can be deemed as a quick fix strategy only concerned with gathering data to ensure that the goal is completed in an expedient way, rather than focusing substantially on considerable improvement. This could be a reflection of what is currently happening within schools, and as such deems the process an original accountability approach rather than an authentic measure of practice. There are some teachers from this research who are thinking more critically about their practice, as a result of their performance goals. This study has highlighted that there is still a compliance approach embedded within the application of goal setting in teacher appraisal, although this traditional conception is still a work in progress for change, but the direction has to come from principals and senior leaders.

Implications

As a result, if goal setting just becomes routine without leaders and teachers believing in its value or becoming skilled at goal setting, it will be seen as a tedious and worthless task, which has huge implications within the practice.

Integrating TAI into Goal Setting

This research showed that both leaders and teachers recognised that goal setting in teacher appraisal can enhance student outcomes. They have employed strategies, such as TAI, to encourage goal setting. These developments stem from the changes in the New Zealand Curriculum document, such as the *'Teaching as Inquiry'* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008), the BES iteration evidence, initiatives led by the Education Council, and the revised Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC). Current research undertaken by ERO, NZQA, and the more recent IES initiative where some of the leaders from the research schools have discussed the communities of learning (CoL) is clear evidence about the development of performance management as a means of improving student achievement. Piggot-Irvine (2015) states that authentic collaboration encompasses multiple levels of activity associated with the

importance of engaging in respectful conversations that support productive courageous interactions.

Implications

There is every chance that the TAI can be an effective tool for goal setting provided that leaders and teachers understand and utilise it fully. However, appraisal is a very personal experience and should be used individually. Therefore, educators need to be cognisant of the collaborative aspect of the TAI model, whilst tailoring their individual goals to meet the needs of their own professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The audience for these recommendations would be suited to Principals and senior leaders who are improving or developing their appraisal systems. It would also be beneficial for the leaders within the communities of learning (CoL).

Principals and leaders should establish the place of goal setting clearly within their appraisal policy, which should be shared with all teachers. They should ensure that the processes are understood and practiced consistently. An effective way to approach this would be to involve the whole staff in a collaborative review of the existing policy and procedures.

Communities of Learning (CoL) are well positioned to provide professional development for teachers and leaders to improve their knowledge and skills about goal setting, as part of staff appraisal. Across school leaders should offer workshops to include explicit understandings of goal setting theory, how goals can be established when identifying student needs, and strategies to measure the outcomes of goals on a regular basis, as well as the use of SMART goals.

CoL leaders should also provide opportunities for professional development about TAI, to improve the way it is currently being used, so that goal setting is better linked to the individual's appraisal process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research into the effects of goal setting within teacher appraisal has the potential to reinforce the advantages of this approach for the profession, as well as assist schools with a method of application within their professional development. Collaboration across communities of schools could serve as the purpose for goal setting in teacher appraisal. The challenge of testing these methods of inquiry, in order to provide teachers, leaders and students with the tools, resources, literature and support to develop their understandings and implementations could improve goal setting and teacher appraisal simultaneously. I would recommend further research to:

1. Identify the use and methods of goal setting theory in making a quantifiable difference to student achievement within performance management systems across primary and intermediate schools in New Zealand.

2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using '*Teaching as Inquiry*' as a means of measuring performance goals within teacher appraisal.

3. Examine the strategies used within *Communities of Learning* when establishing the goals within the *Shared Achievement Challenge Plans*, and how these transcend throughout the community of schools.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations within this particular study were the small number of participants and the small number of schools in which the research was undertaken. The interviewees were discussing their own practice and processes of goal setting in teacher appraisal and may have felt judgement during this method of data

collection. It could be assumed that the interviewees were being critiqued about their understanding or practice of their own performance goals or a critical judgement on their organisations appraisal procedures. Therefore, answers may be subject to bias. Moreover, the qualitative method of inquiry used an interpretative approach, which meant that I was gathering evidence directly from the respondents. However, the importance of conducting research with rigour and integrity should not be underestimated. Understanding more and more about how people learn through research is empowering for the profession of teaching and will enhance personal and professional development (Kervin et al, 2006).

In retrospect, I would use mixed methods of qualitative data and quantitative methods of inquiry, to obtain a much larger consensus of respondents. Nevertheless, this was a small scale study and the time in which I had to conduct this research can extrapolate the evidence to use in a generalized way. Therefore, recommendations for further research would be advantageous in the future to obtain a deeper analysis of the nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal and how this practice can support the achievement of students. Educational research can provide a powerful role in serving school communities, and piece-by-piece, it can lead the field towards more effective teaching and more applicable and enduring learning (Kervin et al, 2006). This was an expectation I aimed to achieve during this study.

Final Thoughts

When I set out to accomplish my thesis, it was my personal goal to achieve it within a particular timeframe, I specified my aims and questions, I managed my time and I ensured it was a realistic target. This was a process of goal setting. It was not an easy feat, and was particularly challenging, but this provided me with the motivation to achieve it. My initial reason for undertaking this task was because I had always experienced mediocre appraisal processes with generalized performance goals. When considering my goals in the past, I had minimal support or structure. During the school year I gave little thought or tending to my performance goal once it was established, until the end of the

year when I was given an appointment to review my goals and engage in an appraisal interview. Sternbergh and Weitzel (2001) echo this experience and admit that people frequently forget or ignore their goals or allow them to become a cause of stress, frustration, and a sense of failure. The reason being is that the goal isn't valued, supported or specific.

This study has taught me a great deal more about the most effective ways of achieving, owning and taking responsibility for performance goals within the teaching profession. I have been privileged to work with professionals to create meaning within the current systems of goal setting in teacher appraisal within primary school settings. I have learned more about the significance of setting realistic goals, that pertain to the students in my care and essentially make a difference to the overall achievement targets across the school. If each individual teacher was to create, maintain and be responsive for their performance goals, this would not only strengthen the possibilities of changing teaching practice through critical, reflective measures, but could also strengthen the purpose and process of the appraisal system. It could reduce the historical judgement that has always been in place within appraisal procedures and hopefully establish a much more robust and responsible measure of development, rather than an accountable measure of performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Name of Teacher: _____

Name of Organisation: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the process of your appraisal cycle from the beginning of the school year to the end?
2. Who controls the timeframe throughout the appraisal process?
3. Are you involved in the criteria for your appraisal system?
4. Explain how your performance goals are determined within your appraisal?
5. What is the value of goal setting in teacher appraisal?
6. What impact do your goals have on student learning?
7. What are the benefits of your appraisal process?
8. How do your goals link your teaching practice with student outcomes?
9. What professional development have you been given to assist you in achieving your goals?
10. Are there any recommendations that you have to improve the current process of goal setting within your school?

Appendix 2.

Interview Schedule for Senior Leaders

Name of Senior Leader: _____

Name of Organisation: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the process of your appraisal cycle from the beginning of the school year to the end?
2. Who controls the timeframe throughout the appraisal process?
3. Who is involved in the criteria for your appraisal system?
4. How are performance goals determined for your teachers?
5. What are the values of goal setting in teacher appraisal?
6. What are the strengths of goal setting within your organisation?
7. What are the challenges of goal setting within your organisation?
8. How do your appraisal policies and procedures emphasise the focus on improving teaching practice and student achievement?
9. How do the performance goals link teaching practice with student outcomes?
10. What professional development is provided as a result of teacher's goals?

Appendix 3.

INFORMATION SHEET (Teachers and Leaders)

Title of Thesis:
The Nature and Practice of Goal Setting in Teacher Appraisal

My name is Claire Dobson and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology. I would like your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course, which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to investigate the significance of goal setting in teacher appraisal for improving professional practice. My research objectives will include the purposes and perceptions of the practice, as well as identifying strategies for strengthening goal-setting within teacher appraisal. Therefore, I request your participation in the following way; I will be collecting data using an interview schedule and would appreciate being able to interview you at a time and place that is mutually suitable. The time needed for the interview will be no more than one hour and this can be conducted on your school site in your classroom or office. You will be asked to sign a consent form regarding this event and your agreement to participate in this research.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the thesis. I will be recording your contribution and will provide a transcript for you to check before data analysis is undertaken. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

My supervisor is **Carol Cardno** and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321   Email: ccardno@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Claire Dobson

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2014 - 1019**)**
This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (25/06/15) to (25/11/16). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

LETTER PROVIDING ORGANISATION'S PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

[Organisation's letterhead]

Date

Address letter to: Claire Dobson
342A East Coast Road,
Sunnynook,
Auckland, 0632

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: The Nature and Practice of Goal Setting in Teacher Appraisal

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project and I give permission for research to be conducted in my organisation.

I am aware that the researcher will be reading and analysing contents of the school policy and procedural documentation surrounding teacher appraisal and comparing these documents with the interview data.

I understand that the name of my organisation will not be used in any public reports.

Signature

Name of signatory

Appendix 4.

CONSENT FORM (Teachers and Leaders)

DATE

TO:

FROM: Claire Dobson

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: The Nature and Practice of Goal Setting in Teacher Appraisal.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered.

I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I will be provided with a transcript for checking before data analysis is started. I may choose to withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to one week after the transcript has been checked.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2014 - 1019**)**
This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (25/06/15) to (25/11/16). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Declaration

Name of candidate: Claire Janes née Dobson

This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project entitled: ***The nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal within primary schools*** is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of **Master of Educational Leadership and Management.**

Principal Supervisor: PROF CAROL CARDNO

Associate Supervisor/s: MRS. JO HOWSE.

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.
Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: **2014 - 1019**

Candidate Signature: ....Date: 17/11/16

Student number: **1394547**

Unitec

Institute of Technology

TE WHARE WANANGA O WAIRAKA

Full name of author: Claire Janes née Dobson

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):

The nature and practice of goal setting in teacher appraisal within primary schools

Practice Pathway: ....

Degree: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Year of presentation: 2016

Principal Supervisor: Prof. CAROL CARDNO

Associate Supervisor: MRS Jo Howse

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Date: 17 / 11 / 16