Teacher Appraisal and Teaching as Inquiry

Dunedin Kindergarten Assn

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This ‘framework’ identifies the four key concepts underpinning robust appraisal. It is intended to create consistent context appropriate practice.

A fuller explanation can be found in Phase One, webinars 1, 2 & 3 at [http://educationcouncil.org.nz/appraisal-teachers-project](http://educationcouncil.org.nz/appraisal-teachers-project)
Appraisal Principles:

- Ākonga’s learning and well-being are the first priority
- Relationships built on trust & collaboration
- Systems relevant to context & manageable
- Teachers’ PLD goals link to strategic plans/ goals and the Practising Teacher Criteria and Tātaiko
- Review & inquiry informed by evidence
- Observations, documents and discussions as evidence
- Accountability & ongoing professional learning
- Culture of self-responsibility
Appraisal – a teacher’s voice

This is a story of what appraisal might look like from the perspective of a teacher who is professional, and who is supported by a system and process that is focused on improvement. It is idealised and not designed to pretend to represent any one particular teacher.

My view

If I take a professional approach to my occupation, then I take a professional approach to my registration as a professional. It also means that I take a professional approach to the Practising Teacher Criteria (PTC). So, because I see things like this, this is what I would be thinking and doing.

I am there to enable all of the learners that I teach to learn. And I take that responsibility seriously; I monitor their attendance, their engagement, their motivation and their progress very carefully. I talk with them and their parents about their engagement and progress and about what I can do to support this. I talk with them, and enable them to learn, about how they can learn better – how they can become even more active, powerful learners.

I am conscious of what I am to teach – I am trained and expected to enable all of my learners to learn the appropriate curriculum – all of it, not just the bits I enjoy more or feel more comfortable with. I ensure that I have the curriculum knowledge to be able to extend the most able of my ākonga in all areas. I may have had to undertake some additional learning, (in mathematics perhaps) to be able to do this.

I am conscious of the community within which I teach, the community that I serve by teaching their children. I am conscious of my kindergarten or centre and the goals and targets for improvement that we, collectively, have set. I am conscious of my role in assisting the achievement of these goals and targets. I know what these mean in terms of which learners need to show accelerated progress or powerful learning in which parts of the curriculum. The learners also know. I take responsibility for ensuring that I learn what I need to learn in order to best ensure that my learners to reach their goals. I take seriously the reality that I am part of a team and that I need to be ready to support my colleagues and leaders in what they need to learn in order for them to perform their roles better.

I work with my colleagues to shape and refine a picture of what ‘good’ teaching looks like that maps against our country-wide description of what professional teaching looks like - the PTC. We seek indicators, descriptions, examples, pictures, videos of teaching that exemplify and enhance what we mean by the PTC and what we mean by ‘good’. We understand the basic sources of evidence that we need to go to in order to have robust evidence of ‘good practice’ and be able to compare that to our current practice. We understand that all our own teaching practice must be visible to our colleagues and discussable. We would not want it any other way.

I recognise that I cannot do all of the above if an evaluative perspective is not at the base of all I do. I need to be constantly reassessing what my picture of ‘good’ teaching and learning looks like. As part of my daily
teaching I am thinking about how well I actually understand the curriculum, how well I am teaching, how well learners are progressing. If I am really doing these things I will be able to compare my picture of ‘good’ teaching and learning with my picture of ‘what is’ in my daily practice so that I can detect ways in which I might improve. I wonder, I inquire, as to what I can do to teach better.

If I am actively doing all of the things above, then appraisal will be a natural, ongoing, central quality of my professionalism. I will have evidence of my learners’ progress, their self-regulation and powerful learning, and of my own practices. I will have discussed all of these elements with colleagues and leaders over the course of the year in planned and spontaneous ways. I will know to what extent I am meeting all of the PTC and I will have evidenced this. My appraiser will also know. We will have moved through a simple formal process.

There are three possibilities, even given the above:
- My practice might be competent
- My practice might be on the border
- My practice might not be competent.
Each then requires a different decision and consequent actions by my appraiser.

**If my practice is competent**
If I meet the criteria (of the PTC) and have been self-evaluative, then I will know and my appraiser will know. Being evaluative and taking responsibility for being evaluative is a large part of the PTC (criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, 6). My appraiser and I will jointly be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence available or that can be obtained easily, to demonstrate my competence (e.g. assessment narratives, children talking about their learning, parent feedback). We will be much more interested in deciding on challenging, interesting improvement ideas than in compiling further evidence. We will be taking a wider view of my fuller professional development and career options.

**If my practice needs improvement**
I will recognise when I am really struggling to meet any one or more of the criteria in the way my setting or centre expects of me, I will have identified this during the course of the year and my professional leader and I will have set a plan in place to provide me with the support to learn what I need. If by the final appraisal meeting time for the year the evidence shows that I am still struggling then it is the legitimate role of my appraiser to reach a judgment as to whether I meet the criteria or I need a more formal programme of support to help me demonstrate practice that meets the criteria.

**If my practice is not competent**
I will know.
**Unless** I am actually not like this and then I might not know until the final appraisal discussion. I might have told myself that I had all these qualities. I might have been able to ignore the visible gap between my performance and ‘good’. I might have misconstrued the messages my appraiser and colleague have given me about the gap. If it comes to this then I will get a shock when I am told by the appraiser that I will need to be placed on a formal programme of advice and guidance. It might be the best thing to happen to me. I need to be aware that if I am unable to meet the criteria the possible outcome is that my application for the reissuing of my practising certificate would not be endorsed by my professional leader.
Describe what good looks like

Work with colleagues to develop indicators, illustrations, rubrics, to shape a full understanding of ‘good’

Ask the evaluative question: How does my practice enact each of the RTC and overall?

Determine the perspectives and sources of evidence (necessary and sufficient) that can be used to answer this question

Use suitable processes to gather this question

Evaluate the evidence (necessary and sufficient) and what it tells me about my practice

Use the evidence to examine whether there is a significant gap between my practice and ‘good’

Answer the evaluative question by reaching a reasoned conclusion and decide on the next steps for my learning
Getting to know the Practising Teacher Criteria

Understanding and knowing the criteria is essential for appraisal to become a manageable, valuable, learner-centred process.

What is the essence of each criterion? Highlight key words (1-3)

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Tātaiako: Cultural competencies

(i) What are the five cultural competencies?

(ii) How do they feature in your practice?
Developmental Continuum for Effective and Meaningful Appraisals

Preparatory Work: Knowing and Working with PTC
- Discrete pieces of evidence
- Criteria siloed
- 12 folders/dividers
- Four Criteria per year
- COMPLIANCE APPROACH

Focus of Appraisal Discussion = Outcomes for Learners
- Holistic view of practice
- Appraisal goals
- Teaching Inquiries
- Significant examples of practice
- PTC back-mapped
- PROFESSIONAL GROWTH APPROACH
What does quality practice look like?

http://www.educationcouncil.org.nz/appraisal-teachers-project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Key indicators</th>
<th>Reflective Questions</th>
<th>Tātaiako – cultural competency</th>
<th>What quality practices do you use in your setting that connect with these criteria and competencies?</th>
<th>What would you regard as valid evidence that you could use to demonstrate these quality practices?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 6.</strong> conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning programme</td>
<td>i. articulate clearly the aims of their teaching, give sound professional reasons for adopting these aims, and implement them in their practice</td>
<td>What do I take into account when planning programmes of work for groups and individuals?</td>
<td>AKO: Takes responsibility for their own leaning and that of Māori learners</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Evidence Analysis Tools: What is important/stands out

From everyday practice: What is available as evidence?

Identification: What stands out?
What patterns can I see for me, my group of ākonga and individual ākonga/priority learners?

Reflection: What does this mean for next steps teaching and learning?

How does this meet the PTC/Tātaiako?

Evidence Analysis Tools: Sources and perspectives

Sources

Learner outcomes
PTC and Tātaiako

Curation of evidence of practice over time

Perspectives
### Analysis Tools — Types of Evidence: Necessary and Sufficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Evidence Shows</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Impact on child/student learning across the curriculum</td>
<td>- Assessment information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on the organisation’s culture</td>
<td>– Child/student Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Curriculum content knowledge</td>
<td>– Parent/whānau voice</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Actual teaching practice</td>
<td>– Colleague voice</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Interactions with other staff, parents/whānau</td>
<td>– Practice observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Teacher voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Teacher conception</td>
<td>– Short and Long term planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– espoused theory of teaching and learning</td>
<td>– Planning for Teacher Inquiry or Self Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– espoused theory of professional relationships</td>
<td>– Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Centre/classroom environment</td>
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</table>
Task

Read the example of practice, which PTC could be discussed?

Which cultural competencies could be discussed?

What evidence could be available?
Example of Practice: Erika writing learning stories

Erika has been writing learning stories about the children at her Early Childhood Education centre for three years. She finds this to be really rewarding and particularly enjoys seeing the children sharing them with their families. She always takes pride in passing her skills and enthusiasm in writing learning stories to her Provisionally Certificated Teachers.

She has found that the way she is writing the learning stories (including many photos and quotes of the children's talk) takes a long time and she often gets behind, not doing them for as many children as she would like or as often enough. She wondered if it would be beneficial to make them more succinct, and more focused on the teaching and learning. Yet she was also worried that the children and their families would be disappointed and find them less interesting.

When she discussed her thoughts at her appraisal meeting she formulated this into a goal for the next 6-9 months.

Appraisal Goal: By November 2015 I have reviewed and refined my writing of learning stories so that the children’s learning is more explicit and emphasized and better communicated to their parents/whanau

Erika planned a course of action to help her rethink what made effective learning stories. She located and attended a PLD course specifically on Narrative assessment: why assess, what to assess and how to assess. The facilitator had the teachers focus on ensuring that learning is highlighted, in particular the learning dispositions children are exhibiting. The facilitator said that if the learning stories were to be really useful as assessments, the presentation is less important than the content. Erika was not immediately convinced. She knew the parents and the children would be disappointed if the stories did not include lots of photographs. On the other hand she felt she should try to change the focus of the learning stories so that they showed learning over time and identified the next steps for teaching.

As part of the course she needed to give the approach a try and had to refocus her learning stories.

At first the children were disappointed to not have so many photographs and speech bubbles and other fun smiley faces and had shown a decreasing interest in looking at the stories. At first Erika missed this intense interest of the children in having a record of what they were doing. However, she realised it took the pressure off her and allowed her to take longer to collect information on the children’s learning over an extended period of time and didn’t feel so rushed to produce a product.

She began to see the children’s learning in a new light and to write stories that showed their learning dispositions in different interactions around the centre. Parents began to engage in more meaningful ways and many wrote an accompanying story about the child at home, or at their grandparents that connected with what they had been doing at the centre. She found this information really useful when thinking about planning possible extensions or complexities to introduce to the child’s learning.
Erika had used the cultural competencies from Tātaiako to annotate the stories showing how the children were copying the modelling from the teachers. One of the stories provided an insight to the manaakitanga inherent in a child’s interactions with younger children and their inclusion of Māori words in their speech. The child had one parent who was Māori and this was encouraged at home as well.

Erika began to use the ‘Child’s Voice’ questions to evaluate her learning stories. These helped her feel confident in what she was recording in the learning stories and the way she was tuning into the child. At the monthly staff meeting she talked about her journey with the learning stories as some of the other teachers had continued to mass produce small instances in time of a child’s participation in an event. She was really keen to help them see the children’s developing dispositions and content knowledge that went with the focus of their learning and how she had captured that in an extended story. She ended up taking a session covering what she had learnt from the PLD using the notes and handouts from that session at the next meeting and some of her colleagues were really interested in following her lead.

She offered to mentor a teacher new to their centre and. Her PCT joined in and shared her readings and assignment work from her teacher education programme. The 3 of them felt they were now a small professional learning community and decided they would like to continue to meet and show each other their assessments.

At the follow-up to the PLD with the facilitator Erika did a presentation on her new approach to learning stories and mentioned how she had formed a PLG with two other teachers. Others at the course asked if they could join as they could see similarities in what they were trying to achieve. After the session finished they set some future meeting dates.
## Evidence Analysis: Backward Mapping V1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tātaako Cultural competency</th>
<th>Whanaungatanga</th>
<th>Manaakitanga</th>
<th>Tangata whenua/tanga</th>
<th>Ako</th>
<th>Wānanga</th>
<th>Manaakitanga</th>
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<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prof</td>
<td>well being</td>
<td>Treaty</td>
<td>ongoing PD</td>
<td>leadership</td>
<td>Approp learning programme</td>
<td>Inclusive environment</td>
<td>How ākonga learn</td>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>bicultural</td>
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<td></td>
<td>relationships</td>
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<td>assessment</td>
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<td>inquiry</td>
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### Evidence Analysis: Backward Mapping V2

**Goal:**

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Teacher Inquiry is…

- Teachers continually considering what they know about their learners. They look for and use a variety of evidence as a normal part of effective and reflective teaching.

- ‘Teaching as inquiry’ is when teachers inquire into: what is most important; what strategies or approaches are most likely to work; and the impact of teaching on children.

Some key messages:

- Inquiry as a **stance or disposition** not a project
- Need to see value of the inquiry in your work
- Constantly questioning whether your teaching is successful or effective
- See the value of an inquiry mindset and not “another thing to do”
Teaching as inquiry – a cycle focused on priority learners

Using evidence

What are the priorities for my priority learners? How are they going in relation to these priorities?

What effect did it have on me as a teacher?

What are my learning needs? What therefore are my learning goals?

Planning and participating in professional learning

Changed teacher knowledge and actions

What effect did my changed teaching have on outcomes for my learners?
Appraisal conversation guide

1. The progress my ākonga have made so far this year. Especially my priority learners. How I know that they are progressing.

2. The extent to which my ākonga can talk about their learning in ways that indicate the growth of self-regulation and key competencies and that their culture, identity and languages are respected.

3. My inquiry. How it is going? What I have noticed about my changed practice and the impact on my ākonga?

4. The various sources and perspectives I have used in my evidence.

5. Reflecting on this evidence, how has it impacted on my practice and what might my next steps will be?

6. How all of my evidence provides information that will help me set my next learning goal/inquiry into practice.

7. How what I have shared with my appraiser shows how I have met the PTC and the Tātaiako cultural competencies.

8. The PTC not represented in my evidence to date and what I might need to do about this.