Feedback, Co-construction, and Shadow Coaching

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Me mahi tahi tātou, mo te oranga o te katoa.

We must all work as one for the well-being of all.

Metaphorical: In this instance, “we” includes everyone involved in Te Kotahitanga – Māori students, teachers, facilitators, and the research team. It also refers to the components of Te Kotahitanga working interdependently towards the goal of raising the achievement of Māori students.

Overview

The school-based professional development within Te Kotahitanga involves each participating teacher in a formal classroom observation, an individual feedback meeting, a group co-construction meeting, and individual shadow-coaching support each term. This module outlines the background to the feedback and co-construction meetings and provides further detail to support the implementation of these elements of the professional development in schools. Shadow coaching is also unpacked and examples shared.

In November 2013, Te Kotahitanga was recognised internationally with the conferring of an award from the World Innovation Summit for Education.
Background

The term-by-term cycle of teacher observation, feedback (and individual goal setting), co-construction meeting (and group goal setting), followed by individual shadow coaching grew out of Te Kotahitanga Phase 1. Evaluation of Te Kotahitanga Phase 1 highlighted the effectiveness of facilitated, problem-solving co-construction meetings among teachers who taught the same students across different curriculum areas. Teachers reflected on their practice, shared successes and problems, and collaboratively developed solutions. Reasons why students were successful learners in one setting but failing learners in another were openly and professionally shared. As a group, teachers determined effectiveness by reflecting on evidence from their classroom practice alongside Māori students’ participation and achievement.

These meetings were focused around how teachers could learn from each other in order to interrogate the value they were adding for their Māori students. The ways student evidence could be used to inform and support this process (formative use of evidence) was an essential part of these discussions. Specific evidence shared between teachers demonstrated how their practice had impacted on the participation and achievement of Māori students.

In Te Kotahitanga Phase 2, the process was replicated using a school-based facilitation team. In the co-construction meetings, questions were asked about how teachers could be supported to align their practice with the Effective Teaching Profile. In so doing, contexts for learning would increasingly represent a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations.

Analysis of Te Kotahitanga Phase 2 revealed that, although teachers were talking about the profession of teaching in co-construction meetings, they were less likely to be interrogating evidence that showed how their implementation of the Effective Teaching Profile impacted on Māori students. In other words, they were not consistently operating as professional learning communities (Timperley, Phillips, & Wiseman, 2003). Phases 3 and 4, therefore, emphasised the use of evidence to support teachers to reflect on how they were adding value for the Māori students in their classes. This emphasis on the use of evidence for formative purposes has been maintained and further developed through Phase 5.
Examining Evidence

An essential aspect of raising the educational achievement of Māori students is the need for facilitators and teachers to reflect on a range of specific classroom evidence. Evidence can be used to provide specific feedback and feed-forward on the next steps for learners – be they students, teachers, or facilitators.

A range of evidence is used throughout the school-based professional development, for example, the feedback meeting provides the teacher and the facilitator with opportunities to critically reflect on evidence from the observation. In addition, the sharing and interrogation of evidence of student outcomes among teachers is an essential component of the co-construction meeting.