Towards a Model of New Zealand School-Based Teacher Professional Development

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INTRODUCTION

There is universal agreement that the underlying purpose for professional development is the enhancement of teaching and learning practices for the benefit of learners. There is less agreement, however, about how, when and what development is most effective. Part of the difficulty lies within the complexity of education itself. Education is subject to political, cultural and societal forces, and the fashions of educational research. Impinging on the learning of young people are multiple factors, such as the influence of the family, socio-economic factors, ethnicity, culture, peer group pressures, prevailing educational systems as well as the teachers working within them. The emphasis on each of these factors has varied in educational research over the decades, with, in recent times, greater focus being placed on the influence of the teacher (for example, Haycock, 1998).

In the 1980s and early 1990s there was a skills-based emphasis on teacher development where it was thought that conveying a particular approach to learning, along with sufficient coaching and support to the teacher, would ensure quality practice. Transfer to practice was found to be problematic, however, and the skills-based approach was criticised by a number of writers for conveying undue certainty and predictability in education, a field subject to continual change. Indeed, arguments were mounted about de-skilling the work of teachers (Apple, 1996), neglecting the personal development of teachers (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999), and divorcing on-going learning from the context of change (Apple, 1996).

There was also the realisation that teachers were not an isolated variable. Joyce and Showers (1995) argued that there were four elements impacting on teacher development: influence of government policy, regional directions, school-wide influences and the disposition of the individual teacher for ongoing growth. In other words, the effectiveness of teachers was thought to be subject to former and current educational policies, to regional systems (such as provisions for pre- and in-service opportunities), to the learning culture of the school and its openness to change, and the individual teacher's pedagogical knowledge, skills and dispositions towards learning.

Thus, the context in which schools and teachers work is a complex one. This paper explores one part of this context, professional development of teachers. The notion of professional development is a problematic one however. As Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) argue, 'What it means to be

professional, to show professionalism or to pursue professionalization is not universally agreed or understood … what counts as professional knowledge and professional action in teaching is open to many interpretations' (p. 4). Debates have occurred over several decades and are yet to be resolved, particularly given the implication of power, status, and control. Nevertheless, some foundational understanding of the constituents of professionalism is required in order to ascertain factors that contribute to the efficacy of teachers' work. To this end, an argument by McCulloch, Helsby and Knight (2000) is useful:

> Occupations such as teaching are becoming more professional, new skills are required, achieving good relationships with client and other stakeholders becomes more important, a more extensive knowledge base has to be mastered and more complex decisions need to be made. Rather than being deprofessionalized, it could be argued that teaching is being reprofessionalized although the new professionalism is different from the mythical professionalism of forty years ago.
>
> (p. 110)

Key elements in the above quote relate to new skills, achieving good relationships, having an extensive knowledge base and making complex decisions. Acquisition of a knowledge and skills base is gained through active ongoing professional learning, through experience in and reflection on classroom-based practice, deepening theoretical and practical content and pedagogical knowledge, and involvement in professional communities of learning where teachers engage in meaningful dialogue. However, these combined elements have not traditionally been part of the teaching community, which has been characterised more often by isolation, individualism and craft-based practice. Sachs (2003) provides an interesting analysis of professionalism and argues a distinction (yet subtle overlap) between an 'old teacher professionalism' and a 'transformative professionalism'. In essence, she argues that old professionalism is characterised by 'exclusive membership' (only open to teachers and not the wider educational community), and 'conservative practices, self-interest, external regulation, slow to change and reactive' (p.11-12).

In contrast, transformative professionalism is characterised by 'inclusive membership, public ethical code of practice, collaborative and collegial, activist orientation, flexible and progressive, responsive to change, self-regulating, policy-active, enquiry-oriented and knowledge building' (p. 16). Inclusive membership implies the involvement of all people concerned with a learner's development, such as parents, teacher educators and academics. For teachers to be open to the views of other partners in the learning process requires a disposition of humility and reflective integrity, to acknowledge the limits of personal judgement and perception, the realities of the human condition, and the value of including the perceptions of others (Bottery, 1996). Such beliefs are prerequisites to meaningful self-reflection, knowledge building and collaboration with others. Elements of trust and risk-taking are involved, along with values of respect and reciprocity, if teachers are to be open with one another about aspects of their practice that need

transformation, and disposed towards creative problem-solving. Through such dialogue, communities of practice can emerge, thereby transforming the work, thinking and identities of teachers as professionals.

To be effective, communities of teacher practice require groups of people who can meet on a regular basis, have common interests, engage in effective communication processes, recognise and value the expertise of all parties involved, include people with a range of interests and expertise, prepared to work collaboratively and to continually improve practice. Sachs (2003) argues that,

> the experiences of teachers demonstrate the power of grassroots and local school and profession-oriented strategies. For interest and passion to be sustained, the activist project must be local in its focus, but at the same time some implications regarding changing practice or educational innovation may have more widespread application.
>
> (p.154)

One approach to local transformative professionalism is school-based professional development practice.

METHODOLOGY

Little is known about successful school-based teacher development in New Zealand. This paper synthesises a decade of research by the author in more than 500 New Zealand primary and secondary schools. Elements of effective professional development practice have been analysed and are presented in this paper.

With the exception of the 1992 project, all of the projects were nation-wide research/evaluation projects (see Table I). Each of the projects was independent of the related professional development programmes, although the researcher provided formative feedback to lead teachers in the Professional Development Funding Pool and the action research nature of the AtoL project resulted in ongoing feedback and dialogue with providers. Each of the studies has been of a predominantly qualitative research design (case study, and one action research study), with the main data collecting tools being questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, document analysis of planning and milestone reports. The context for study related to teacher professional development on curriculum charter objectives, Special Education, assessment, school-based projects, and School Support Services. Data analysis techniques included the use of SPSS to collate and analyse quantitative questionnaire data, and for qualitative data a process of inductive analysis, derivation of analytic coding categories, and coder consistency tests (Richards, 2005) for projects involving more than one researcher.

Table 1: Key Features of Five Research/Evaluation Projects Funded by the Ministry of Education

	Purpose of Project	Participants	Research Design	Data Collecting Tools
Achieving Curriculum Charter Objectives 1992 (sole researcher)	Determining effectiveness of a range of PD models	Project facilitators Principals Teachers (85 schools)	Evaluative case study	Project facilitator interviews Interviews of principals and teachers
Professional Development Funding Pool (school initiated professional development projects) 2000 (sole researcher)	Provision of formative feedback to schools on process and product of PD; accountability for financial support	Principals Lead teachers 40 schools 4 clusters of schools (15 schools)	Evaluative case study	Questionnaire Document analysis: proposal, planning and milestone reports
Evaluation of School Support Services 2003 (team of 3 researchers)	Determining national areas in need of research and development	Directors (6 providers) Advisers (90 advisers)	Evaluative case study	Adviser questionnaire Interviews of directors Semi-structured group interviews of advisers
Evaluation of SE 2000 Policy and Professional Development 2000 – 2002 (team of 12 researchers)	Determining effectiveness of policy and PD provision	Lead teachers Teachers (1500 questionnaire responses)	Evaluation	Questionnaires
Assess to Learn Professional Development 2003 – 2005 (team of 2 researchers)	Improving national professional development provision on assessment for classroom teachers	Project directors Facilitators Principals Lead teachers Teachers (average 160 schools/ year)	Action research	Teacher/principal questionnaires Teacher/principal interviews Facilitator interviews Facilitator and researcher observations Document analysis of planning and assessment records Reflective discussions

The remainder of this paper proposes a model for professional growth based on successful school-based professional development in New Zealand schools and is structured around the following questions, each considered in turn:

1. Why engage in professional development?
2. What works in New Zealand?
3. How might professional development be organised?
4. When is it effective?
5. What attributes are desirable for professional development leaders?

WHY ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: RATIONALE AND PURPOSE?

Involvement in professional development can be the result of various factors, such as school-wide innovation, requirements by the Education Review Office or Ministry of Education guidelines, senior management decree, ongoing teacher growth or the need to raise student achievement. According to Sparks (2003), effective professional development deepens participants' understandings, beliefs and skills. For many teachers engagement in professional development also enhances job satisfaction as teachers seek to do their best in the classroom and to improve student achievement. Evaluation of Special Education 2000 professional development indicated that the majority of teachers perceived benefits of professional development as being: increased knowledge and information, greater awareness of available help and support, and increased confidence (Kearney & Poskitt, 2001). Teachers mentioned how professional development increased their repertoire of practical ideas and strategies, and helped in the identification and assessment of learners with special needs. However, 28% of 1500 questionnaire respondents indicated little increase or difference made to their confidence because they already had the knowledge, expertise or confidence, and that courses in this particular project either offered nothing new or were insufficiently specific and practical.

Teachers have varying requirements for professional development and it is important therefore that professional development programmes *adapt* content and delivery to suit the individual needs of teachers and schools. Moreover, teachers need to be involved in analysing their own professional needs and determining the content, pace and style of professional development if they are to develop their expertise, altruism and autonomy (Bottery, 1996), and enhance their professional identity. To what extent might programmes be tailor-made to suit teacher needs and what factors contribute towards successful school-based professional development in New Zealand?

WHAT WORKS IN NEW ZEALAND: CONTENT?

The selection of a relevant project is an important phase in effective school-based professional development. Where schools focus on topics related to classroom practice, teachers are more likely to be interested, and

committed, willing to experiment with strategies and transfer theoretical understandings to classroom practice (Poskitt, 2001). This is in contrast to programmes related to administrative or organisational concerns. Joyce and Showers (1995) also argue that the closer the focus of professional development is to learning and teaching in the classroom, the more effective is the professional development.

In the *Assess to Learn (AtoL)* professional development programme evaluation (Poskitt & Taylor, 2005), it was schools who gathered and analysed student achievement data and selected a professional development focus based on the data analysis that perceived greater relevance to their professional development programme. Staff who engaged in discussions based on what the results showed, what teaching strategies teachers used, and sought information (such as through facilitator support, accessing relevant research literature and visiting other schools) about what they might do differently, developed greater commitment to the programme. A combination of theory and practice also seems to be appreciated by teachers and principals, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Principals' Views on Professional Development Content

How does involvement in Professional Development 2004 (specific project named for respondents) compare with other professional development you have been involved in?	
B. Content (91 respondents)	
19	Excellent - helpful ideas for everyday teaching (addressing our needs), practical examples and strategies to implement in classroom
19	Relevant/up to date
15	No response
12	Facilitator ascertained staff needs and worked from there
10	Good – research based; contributed to professional reflection
8	Higher expectations to engage in professional reading and lift practice
7	Practical/lots of discussion
5	Set own direction identified through school needs
3	Fair/of some value
3	Good balance between theory and practice
3	Deeper understanding/more rigorous
2	Formative assessment
2	Difficult/frustrating
2	Can be applied to all curriculum areas
1	Little new knowledge
1	Variety of topics covered
1	Content expanded over two year period; incorporated into teacher practice
1	Not fully delivered
1	Follow-up with observations and feedback ensured all staff gained knowledge

Questionnaire respondents cited that they appreciated relevant and new ideas that could be incorporated into classroom practice, the ascertaining of staff needs and adjusting content according to teacher needs, balancing theory and application to practice (such as having the opportunity to access and engage in professional reading) and engaging in staff discussions.

Respondents had varying needs and perceptions, however, with a minority indicating lower satisfaction with the programme, largely through perceptions or experiences of incomplete delivery, or a mismatch of needs and expectations in the professional development programme.

When a *theoretical* component is included, development is achieved at a deeper level (Ingvarson *et al.,* 2005; Poskitt, 1992). For example, in one New Zealand school, six of the seven staff enrolled in a particular university paper that related to their development focus. Staff conversations became more professionally oriented and teamwork developed as they helped one another with assignments and understanding educational theory; in essence a community of learners. A greater level of commitment to the project was evident, and teachers gained professional qualifications at the same time as extending their practical strategies in the classroom. Qualifications based-incorporated programmes seem to have a double spin off, for the school and the teacher.

In research on a professional development project with a focus on development of classroom teacher assessment practices (Poskitt & Taylor, 2005), teachers stated that they particularly appreciated the professional development being applicable to other curriculum areas and initiatives, linking classroom and school-wide practices together, and that ongoing changes and improvement resulted in focused teaching and children being more involved in their learning. These factors can be generalised to guide any chosen topic or context for professional development. Having the capacity to:

- Apply general principles to other curriculum areas
- Make connections between classroom and school-wide philosophies and practices
- Focus on improving learning and teaching (and assessment)
- Improve administrative systems such that time and attention can be devoted to learning and teaching.

While the focus of this section has been on the content of professional development and the realisation that increasing the theoretical understandings of staff is an important goal of professional development, translation of theory into practice is necessary for improving learning and teaching. In other words, the *process* of professional development is also important (Guskey, 2003; Southworth & Conner, 1999).

HOW MIGHT EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BE ORGANISED: PROCESS?

In spite of research showing the importance of using a *planned* approach to professional development (Guskey, 2003; Poskitt, 1992), some schools neglect to do this. Having a framework for the professional development helps teachers to feel more secure in the direction they take and generates feelings of relevance and progress. Effective professional development processes begin in the planning phase. In analysing successful factors in 44 school-based professional development projects (Poskitt, 2001: 5), nine factors in the planning phase were identified as being pivotal to sustainable development (see Table 3).

Table 3: Process Factors Contributing to Sustainable Development

1. *Personnel* – attention given to personnel involved, including suitability in terms of expertise, interest, ability to lead or remain committed to a project
2. *Workloads* – allocation of reasonable workloads, particularly for those leading the project
3. *Teacher Release* – transparent systems of teacher release for all involved in the project
4. *Difficulties* – difficulties recognised; e.g., creative use of release time
5. *Communication* – communication considered, including avoiding overload, but keeping relevant people informed
6. *Support Staff* – provision of support staff to deal with administrative details
7. *School Commitment* – commitment by the school to the project's priority, despite competing school demands
8. *Early Reservations* – reservations made for consultants/providers/technicians and venues as early as possible
9. *Data Collection* – collection of relevant data prior to, during and after the project to monitor differences.

Awareness of these factors and the use of 'advance organisers' in managing professional development programmes results in sufficient time being allocated for important tasks – starting in a timely fashion and allowing the project to continue effectively. Having access to the decision-making authority in the school is an integral component of planning, to ensure that processes can be approved and actioned at senior management levels. To plan the actual development, effective frameworks encompass: some needs analysis, a description of the present situation, some desired future outcomes, an action plan (this is especially successful when it is related to a timeframe), some built-in evaluation and a recognition of the continuity of the cycle of professional development. In the needs analysis phase, key questions that can be asked of staff are:

- Where are we at?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- How do we know we are getting there?
- How will we know we are there?
- Now what – sustain, deepen or move on to a new area?

Those schools where the professional development processes were more widely understood, indicated higher satisfaction with the contract and greater confidence to continue development (Poskitt, 1992). Nonetheless, the facilitator or leader's role in leading teachers through a process is not easy (Duke, 1990; Fullan, 1990; Hopkins, 1990). Teachers are geared towards action-packed time slots and practical classroom considerations. To spend time on seemingly theoretical considerations or content they think they are familiar with (such as reviewing current programmes) tries the patience of

most teachers (Ramsay, Harold, Hawk, Marriott & Poskitt, 1990), unless teachers understand the relevance of it in informing the direction and focus of the professional development programme.

Teachers tend to value more the *how* rather than the *what* of development (Poskitt, 1992, 2001). In other words, the curriculum content can be less important to them than the process, such as development of confidence, and wider repertoire of skills (especially in classroom management and pedagogical strategies). The content is necessary, however, to provide a context in which skills and concepts can be developed. Borko (2004) posits that teachers must have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach as well as relevant pedagogical strategies. Whether content or process is emphasised may well reflect the career stage of a teacher and their evolving professional identity. As Sachs (2003) argues, 'Identity cannot be seen to be a fixed thing; it is negotiated, open, shifting, ambiguous …' (p. 125).

Deepening teacher knowledge can be integrated into a process of developing a community of learners as these three brief examples from New Zealand schools illustrate (Poskitt, 2001):

a) One school supplied professional readings to staff with a timetable and discussion group structure in which professional dialogue occurred (such as quality circles), for part of the regular staff meeting. Teachers were rostered to present summaries, or to locate relevant readings to share with staff, thus building in elements of accountability while contributing to development of a community of learners.
b) Another school used a 'leap-frog' model where each staff member was released in turn from teaching duties for a fortnight, in which they had to upskill themselves on some aspect of ICT, create a resource and present it to the next staff meeting. During the fortnight, the teacher met daily with the principal, who acted as a mentor for the teacher and as a coordinator of potential experts providing access to information or technical assistance. Frequently these experts were other staff or students within the school. With the expectation of presenting to other staff, the teachers were motivated to develop new knowledge or skills of their own and those of their colleagues.
c) Some schools used cascading models, where a small group or department of staff began with an innovation, and after a period of development served as the 'trainers' or 'lead teachers' for other groups of staff within the school.

Simple ideas such as these can create powerful motivation for teachers to adopt and adapt new practices. These approaches also demonstrate how the individual interests and needs of staff can be incorporated within a school-wide focus or initiative.

WHEN IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVE: TIMING, DURATION AND APPROACH?

Few schools appear to effectively monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of their professional development programmes (Poskitt, 1992, 2001). For example, when principals were asked, 'What monitoring procedures have

been put in place to determine whether development is taking place?' interview comments such as the following were received:

> *Well, our aims aren't very measurable. We'll know when we've reached the end of the project because it will be September. I believe that you've got to have faith in schools.*
>
> *I suppose we will do some sort of informal check and we will certainly have some regular discussions.*
>
> *I don't know. No idea…*

To be effective, evaluation needs to be well planned (asking effective questions and seeking relevant answers), explicit about related goals and specifying ahead of time the evidence that will be used to determine whether those goals were met (Guskey, 2003). In other words, clear teacher learning goals help focus teachers' attention on the ultimate goal – improved teacher and student learning. Throughout the professional development process, data need to be gathered to monitor learning of teachers and students, using a range of information such as questionnaires, analysis of meeting minutes and teacher planning, observations of classroom programmes and interactions between students and teachers, and achievement and interview data. Further analysis of information can be used to determine the effectiveness of the overall programme and identify new areas in need of development.

Variation does occur across schools and projects as to the ideal duration of a professional development programme. In a recent survey of professional development relating to curriculum change, school participants signalled their perception of the ideal duration (Poskitt & Taylor, 2005). The majority of participants indicated that two years seemed desirable since the first year was devoted to staff learning about the content and process, and the second year to refining and embedding skills in practice. Teachers wanted time to trial, reflect and improve their practice, understanding of it and their teaching programmes.

Time is needed for teachers to personalise information before they can change their ideas or behaviour. Glickman (1981) argues that *successful teachers* are *thoughtful* ones, contending that the ability to think about what they (teachers) do should be the aim of professional development. A thoughtful environment, therefore, must provide teachers with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in a thoughtful manner; it must encourage adult cooperation, personal reflection, feedback and on-going dialogue (Ingvarson *et al.,* 2005). Some authors argue the need for 3-5 years for successful professional development (Wood, McQuarrie & Thompson, 1982; Stoll & Fink, 1996) due to varying phases of the change process. As Gusky (1990) points out, 'If support and follow-up activities are withdrawn after a year in order to devote resources to yet another innovative strategy, the first strategy's true effects are not likely to reach many students' (p.12).

Traditionally professional development expertise has been sourced outside of the school and through variations of in-service courses. Whilst one-off courses can be beneficial in meeting specific needs of individual teachers, their long term benefit can be limited, through inadequate time and support to integrate changes in the classroom or the sending of personnel to courses

who already have the necessary skills and knowledge, or who have less enthusiasm for learning than other colleagues. Unless there is a plan those often in need may be missed. For example, in research on the professional development of teachers in the SE 2000 project (Kearney & Poskitt, 2001), findings suggested that 'teachers with responsibility for special needs tended to represent their school at in-service courses or modules offered by the professional development contractor, whilst 'regular' classroom teachers were either superficially involved in the whole-school phase or received minimal or no involvement in specific modules' (p.19). The teachers who were in most need of the development tended to not be offered the opportunity.

In-service courses offered in evenings/weekends or school holidays can allow non-specialist teachers the opportunity to attend courses without offending the established system in the school, although this approach may challenge teachers' work:life balance. Such opportunities may be worthwhile when being introduced to new curriculum or expansion of teachers' repertoires of classroom management strategies.

Finally, because teachers need time to experiment and work through a process of mutual adaptation to personalise a new innovative strategy, support during this time of adjustment is important in order to integrate the new knowledge and skills into classroom practice. Participants in the AtoL contract, for example, indicated that the *way* AtoL was delivered was a critical factor in its success (Poskitt & Taylor, 2005). Questionnaire respondents mentioned tailoring of the programme to suit the school needs and the facilitator coming to the school, valuing opportunities for the whole staff to discuss and share ideas, working with other teachers (to observe practice, discuss and problem-solve issues together), having a facilitator conduct in-class observations and provide feedback, the provision of practical ideas and strategies for use in the classroom, attendance at periodic interactive workshops and seminars to inspire and enthuse them, and provision of good resources such as professional readings and planning sheets. Having on-going contact with a facilitator was considered essential for keeping on track, to ask questions and consolidate ideas and practice.

WHAT ATTRIBUTES ARE DESIRABLE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERS?

Outside Facilitator

Employing an outside facilitator brings new skills and perspectives to a professional development programme. Often this person brings a network of other consultants and resources to support the school's programme, such as College of Education or University staff, private consultants (such as ICT support) and teachers from other schools. Inductive analysis of the data indicated that effective facilitators had a range of knowledge, process and interpersonal skills (Poskitt, 1992).

The combination of knowledge, process and interpersonal skills determined the effectiveness of the facilitator (see Table 4). Absence of any category of skills resulted in ineffective facilitation. Perhaps of greatest importance in leading adults through a process of change is the category of interpersonal skills, requiring an acute sense of timing and group dynamics.

Facilitators *negotiate* their role within the school context (Poskitt, 1992). Where they successfully do so (either through incisiveness, perception or with the benefit of wide educational and life experiences) they are able to accomplish changes in attitudes and in practice. Interpersonal skills, albeit predominant, do not suffice alone. An awareness of the process of change and its phases, such as feelings of discomfort and insecurity until new beliefs and practices are established, is necessary in order to lead teachers through a professional development process.

To do so effectively requires knowledge of adult learning, school culture and educational theory, particularly related to pedagogy. Facilitators who gain most credibility and change in their schools are those with a strong theoretical base, and esteemed teaching success (Poskitt, 1992).

Inside Facilitators/ Lead Teacher

A contact person or leader is useful for a) brokering the professional development process in a school and for organising the development process with the outside facilitator (where one is used), or for b) leading a school-based professional development programme.

The selection of this person is critical to successful professional development. Although more often selected from the school's senior management team, interpersonal skills are more important than position power. The inside facilitator needs to have credibility amongst the staff, organisational skills and inspirational enthusiasm. Their link is important with an outside facilitator (where one is used) as an inside interpreter of the school culture, as well as an on-going contact within the school. In some schools it is appropriate to have a relatively inexperienced teacher leading the process while in other schools it is necessary to have the principal. For larger schools, a team approach can be more successful.

Professional Development Committees

Setting up committees for professional development appears to be a viable option for larger schools and overcomes several problems of having only one person responsible for leading a professional development project. A committee or team can diminish particular people's tendency to dominate, pool and share expertise and interpersonal skills, share the workload by delegating tasks to people with particular expertise or interests, enhance informal and formal communication through representation of various sections of the school, and enable continuity should a particular person depart the school.

However, teamwork is challenging and requires special interpersonal skills. The optimum size of the committees or teams depends on the degree of representation required and the duration of the project.

Table 4: The Knowledge, Process and Interpersonal Skills of an Effective Facilitator

Knowledge	Process Skills	Interpersonal Skills
• wide view of education (not just one school, or school sector) • theoretical base of education • clear vision and development direction • information/resource provider or broker • understanding and knowledge of staff development and adult learning • ability to work cross-curriculum • understanding of pedagogy and learning strategies for adults	• run effective meetings (achieving something; not wasting time) • provide administrative support for teachers • clarify ideas – ability to pull threads together/incisive • tap networks and human resources • role model desired skills • identify issues • ask key questions • resolve conflicts • guide teachers in developing a process model for development	• listening • giving positive feedback • gaining trust • sensitivity • patience • credibility (previously known or known of; highly regarded in education) • visionary – driving force • enthusiasm and motivation • neutrality/objectivity • letting go (not holding on to power) • perception of and willingness to work within the school culture • reflection on own feelings, motives & actions • partnership and cooperation • risk taking • professionalism – supportive but maintaining distance/independence • flexibility/ interactive • reliability

TOWARDS A MODEL OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This paper has explored five core areas that underpin a possible model for effective school-based professional development. Professional development is a complex process involving the incorporation of multiple factors. Each school contains a unique combination of personnel, individual and collective needs, yet research discussed in this paper has identified a number of generic factors that can contribute towards effective professional development. In addition, these factors can be drawn together to develop a model of New Zealand school-based teacher development.

Effective professional development contains several interrelated phases:

a) At the onset, clarity about the *rationale* and *purpose* for the professional development is needed to develop commitment to, and understanding of, the need for change.
b) The *process* and the *content* of the professional development need to be planned collaboratively, based on systematic data collection and analysis of student and teacher information. Not only do such data provide a focus and motivation for development, but also reference points against which to gauge achievements in the professional development.
c) Continuous data collection in relation to specific goals enables judgements to be made about the *effectiveness* of the professional development process and the programme content, providing information for ascertaining current and future professional development needs.

Of note, factors affecting the successful progress and completion of professional development initiatives include the *attributes* of the personnel leading the development, where consideration of knowledge, process and interpersonal skills is required (see Table 4).

The *duration* and *timing* of the development are critical factors, with at least two years being necessary for significant change. Teacher change and student learning are most likely to occur when professional reading of educational theory is combined with the modelling of appropriate new behaviours, with opportunities to practice new behaviours, and with feedback and on-going coaching and support from a community of learners (Borko, 2004; Ingvarson *et al.,* 2005; Stringfield *et al.,* 1991).

In sum, New Zealand schools who use a model of professional development such as the one proposed above, and who carefully plan and monitor their professional development programmes, are establishing an environment that increases the likelihood of achieving success for both the professionals and learners in their care.

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