FINDING VALUE IN APPRAISAL?
Case Studies of Teachers’ Perspectives in Two Private Schools

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ABSTRACT

The potential benefits of appraisal as a mechanism for improving performance are more likely to come to fruition if there is commitment from teachers’ that goes beyond mere compliance. This thesis set out to explore teachers’ attitudes to understand how factors within appraisal affected their level of commitment to the process. The literature review focused on the impact of appraisal on teachers and their learning within the New Zealand context. The concepts of trust and motivation were explored because of their importance to adult learning. The discussion included a review of current tensions within appraisal, such as teacher professionalism and the multiple purposes of appraisal.

The research adopted a qualitative methodology involving the case studies of two private schools, to gain an in depth understanding of the contextual influences on teachers’ attitudes. Information was gathered over three stages and involved multiple methods of data collection and analysis with a predominantly qualitative weighting. Stage one involved searching policy and procedural documents to gain an understanding of the intent of appraisal, and expected procedures. Stage two used a questionnaire to gather attitudes of the whole staff. Stage three involved focus group discussions to explore the reasons behind attitudes.

Tensions that evolved from the findings were related to assessment, ownership, qualities of the appraisal relationship, time, and trust. The research found that attitudes associated with the effectiveness of appraisal were closely aligned to the tensions between the multiple purposes of appraisal on the one hand, and ownership on the other. Existing workloads did have a significant impact on teachers’ level of commitment to the process. There was overwhelming evidence that teachers found little value in appraisal as it was currently practiced.

The recommendations that come from this research are that school leaders should consider how the identified tensions in purpose might be alleviated, and how teachers’ workload issues could be addressed. For appraisal to be effective, it needs to be positioned to capture a teacher’s inherent desire to improve their practice and do their best for the students they teach. Further research could increase understanding of the most significant factors that give ownership, and features of the appraisal relationship, that will contribute to the effectiveness of appraisal.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This thesis is dedicated to Ray for his steadfast commitment to my success. His uplifting sense of humour and positive attitude have enriched my life.
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<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>continuous improvement cycle (Leyland College)</td>
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<td>DP</td>
<td>deputy principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERO</td>
<td>Education Review Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>head of department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>information and communication technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAT</td>
<td>limited authority to teach (Teacher registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDR</td>
<td>performance development review (Turion College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>performance management (Leyland College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>professional mentoring programme (Leyland College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>senior management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>statistical package for social sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>subject to confirmation (Teacher registration)</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Performance appraisal is a mechanism that has the potential to improve the performance of individual staff and the organisations in which they work (Middlewood, 2002; Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005; Rudman, 2002). The intent of appraisal in the education sector as part of the mandated performance management system in New Zealand schools is to bring about improvement in teaching and learning, the core business of the school (Ministry of Education, 1999). While evidence that appraisal can bring about this improvement is yet to be shown (Fitzgerald, 2001), without commitment from those involved in the process, the likelihood of positive effects is idealistic. Commitment of staff towards their own professional learning is also a vital factor for developing a learning organisation or for the successful implementation of change (Scott, 1999; Senge, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). The ideal surrounding appraisal is to create mutuality between individual and organisational goals to the benefit and interest of both parties (Rudman, 2002). This research concerns itself with the impact of appraisal practices for teachers and the subsequent use of appraisal information to meet the stated objectives of improving performance.

This chapter begins by analysing the policies influencing New Zealand appraisal practices. Key terms have been analysed and then clarified to provide working definitions for this research. A brief summary of unresolved tensions that exist in current appraisal practices is given to provide a backdrop to the rationale for this research. Following the rationale for the research, is an outline of the aim, objectives and questions used to guide the research process. The final section provides a brief outline of the thesis structure.

Framework of appraisal

Performance management, performance appraisal, performance assessment, and performance review are terms that are often used interchangeably in the literature, by the Ministry of Education (MoE), and in schools. It is therefore of benefit to
distinguish between these terms in order to come to an understanding of the manner in which they have been used within this research.

Performance management originates from the Human Resources Management literature and is a broad term that encompasses a wide array of human resource activities that are interrelated in achieving success for the organisation (Rudman, 2002). The MoE (1999, p. 6) suggests that performance management has several integrated elements between commencing and ceasing employment. These are:

- Performance expectations;
- Performance appraisal;
- Reward;
- Professional development; and
- Disciplinary/competency procedures.

Teacher performance appraisal, which will hereafter be used in its short form appraisal, is then situated within the broad array of activities of performance management. The scope of the performance management framework outlined by the MoE (1999) includes the appraisal activities of self-appraisal, observation, and interviews, which may also include additional evidence collection activities; student feedback, parent feedback, student performance results, evidence from documents, and peer appraisal. In order to understand what the intent of these activities are, I have drawn a definition of appraisal from Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005): “appraisal is used to describe evaluative activity that involves making qualitative judgements about performance, once competency is established” (p. 15). Because of the link to evaluation, the intent of appraisal, in this definition, is focused on determining which aspects of performance would be most beneficial to improve. In this respect, it is consistent with a notion that learning is inherent in appraisal. Earlier approaches of appraisal were aligned with this definition in that they emphasised what this researcher terms a ‘professional development approach to appraisal’. The focus was on improving teacher performance through explicit links between personal goals to professional development (PD). This approach to appraisal had a central focus on future performance and therefore the assessment of performance had a narrow spotlight on the goals set as part of the appraisal.

Often used interchangeably, appraisal and performance assessment may be differentiated by the purpose of the inherent assessment practices. The Education Review Office (ERO) have defined the term assessment to mean the use of
“measurement and/or grading based on known criteria” (1995, p. 5), that can be likened to quantitative measures of performance. While this provides a starting point, assessment is a more complex term that can have different meanings in its everyday use. In appraisal, one such meaning is connected with the identification of areas for professional learning, commonly known as *formative assessment*. In formative assessment, it is common practice to use performance criteria as a basis for the identification of areas for improvement. Assessment at the end of the improvement programme would indicate if improvement has occurred and the extent to which this was achieved. This is commonly referred to as *summative assessment*. Where summative assessment was for the sole purpose of identifying goal achievement, the basis for evaluation would be a narrow set of criteria directly linked to goals. In this respect Middlewood (2002) describes appraisal as having a focus on “evaluation for development” (p. 122). The meaning of appraisal, in the context of this research, has been understood to relate to the evaluation of learning as described in this paragraph and from the definition from Piggot-Irvine and Cardno stated earlier.

However, assessment could also have an additional purpose associated with evaluating overall performance against set criteria, such as would be used for attestation against the *Professional Standards*. The criteria on which a teacher’s performance could be judged, the *Professional Standards*, were introduced into teacher performance appraisal through MoE policy, effective from 2000, in amalgamation with NAG 3, PMS 1 - 5, and the State Sector Act (1988). Concurrent with the introduction of the *Professional Standards*, teacher performance appraisal was also linked to annual salary increments. Teachers not yet at the top of the scale needed to meet the required standard to be entitled to their expected pay increment. In the case of attestation, judgements are made to determine the extent to which all the criteria have been met. The judgements are then used to decide whether a teacher is meeting minimum requirements and whether they are entitled to movement up the pay scale. In the context of this research the term performance assessment is understood to be concerned with the evaluation of teacher performance against the *Professional Standards*.

The introduction of the performance standards indicated that appraisal had shifted in emphasis to assessing teachers as a check that they had met a specified standard. In this case “evaluation for accountability” is evident in appraisal (Middlewood, 2002,
Couched in the rhetoric of ensuring quality and improving performance, the intent of these reforms appears to be more aligned to ensuring teachers meet minimum standards. Links between the outcomes of appraisal to pay increments corroborates the view that this approach to appraisal is a mechanism to judge overall performance and therefore has a focus on past performance. Some claim that the majority of teachers are expected to meet the standards (Mahony & Hextall, 2001). Insofar as the MoE also expects most teachers to meet a particular standard, there may be no need for further improvements to take place and therefore the connection to improving performance is somewhat tenuous.

Perhaps to reconcile this situation, professional development has been added to the performance management cycle, although it appears somewhat as an adjunct. The current MoE policy of performance appraisal encompasses two terms, appraisal and assessment: “Performance appraisal: Annual assessment of an individual’s performance against the Professional Standards ... including development objectives” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 48). Professional development, which is inherent in improving performance, is also noted as a component of appraisal. The MoE wording implies that their definition of appraisal has more than one purpose: formative and summative assessment in combination for the purpose of improving performance, and assessment for grading or judging performance.

While not a term used in the MoE documentation, performance review is given as the term often associated with the interview at the end of a cycle of appraisal (Rudman, 2002). The purpose of the performance review could be associated with discussion of a summative performance assessment related to, either goal achievement, or accountability against the professional standards, or both.

**Rationale for this research**

Current MoE policy surrounding appraisal has dual intentions of assessing teacher performance against the professional standards and simultaneously, against their developmental objectives. Research has shown that the duality of these intended outcomes of appraisal is fraught with difficulties that have yet to be resolved (Beerens, 2000; Cardno, 1999; Codd, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008; Sachs, 2003). Despite earlier assurances, current MoE policy would suggest that appraisal is now more
firmly centred on externally mandated accountability rather than a professional approach to self-development of their earlier framework.

Issues arise from the manner in which teachers are being called to account. Accountability approaches to performance management appear to demonstrate low trust in teachers (Codd, 2005; Court & Adams, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008; Olssen, Codd, & O’Neill, 2004). Such low trust systems of accountability can lead to minimalist approaches to appraisal (Fitzgerald, 2001), largely because they fail to treat teachers as professionals who already have a commitment to the students they teach and the profession as a whole. Some researchers have argued that these performance management policy initiatives have de-valued teaching as a profession (Gunter, 2001; Sachs, 2003; Vossler, 2005; Whitty, 2001). Subsequently, questions of ownership lie at the centre of tensions in the system.

There are many more challenges associated with the assessment of teachers. Appraisal is time-intensive (Beerens, 2000; Fitzgerald, Youngs, & Grootenboer, 2003; Mahony & Hextall, 2000) and accountability measures add to the time needed. Accountability measures are counter-productive to quality teaching because energy is drawn away from planning effective lessons (Elliott, 2001). Furthermore, views on what counts as effective teaching can be widely varying. It is argued that teaching cannot be accounted for in a list of limited technicist behaviours as outlined in the professional standards (Adams & Codd, 2005; Beerens, 2000; Husbands, 2001). In addition, there is evidence to suggest that classroom observations occur in an ad hoc manner (Beerens, 2000; Gentle, 2001). The combination of subjectivity surrounding ideals and unsophisticated classroom observations, give little confidence on the accuracy of data on which judgements are based.

Implementation of appraisal in schools has been problematic as a result of complexities and unresolved conflicts associated with its intentions and the achievement of those intentions. These tensions and value conflicts are likely to influence teachers’ attitudes and commitment toward their appraisal, with the potentially damaging effects on their job satisfaction and quality of teaching. Knowing the factors within appraisal that motivate teachers to improve their practice has the potential to lead to ongoing commitment in the process. Improved commitment
affects the potential for the process to influence their ongoing development as effective teachers and increase levels of satisfaction in the outcomes.

This thesis aims to add to the existing research by conducting qualitative research to get to the heart of issues around appraisal for teachers by exploring their attitudes towards appraisal as it is practiced in their school. Qualitative data surrounding teacher appraisal has been found lacking, with much of existing research focused on the effects of restructuring on principals, senior management, and teacher professionalism (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Hill & Locke, 2003). Further quantitative studies have largely dealt with perceptions around the purposes of appraisal, implementation issues, and professionalism (Fitzgerald et al., 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). 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). Getting to the heart of such issues lies with exploring teachers attitudes and behaviours to appraisal, as commitment is a vital component for appraisal to have any chance of achieving these ends. Following on from their research, Youngs and Grootenboer (2003) recommended there was a need for case study research to build on the existing work. Therefore, the research may contribute atypical findings to the existing body of research. In addition, Freebody (2003) suggests that research based on a narrative format may have more chance of impacting on practice.

Secondly, this research project is based on teachers' experiences of appraisal in large private schools in the North Island of New Zealand and to my knowledge no research on appraisal has been undertaken in this sector of education. Private schools exemplify a different context to the existing research as they need to ensure their continuity by offering something more than can be gained from a state education, to justify the money parents are willing to provide for this service. In this respect I would also expect the same demand for high levels of performance to be evident within the appraisal system. Therefore, the information gained from the research will be particularly relevant to private schools, but it is likely to also provide useful information to inform practice across the schooling sector.
Research aims

The aim of the research is to uncover the extent to which teachers find value in the appraisal practices of their school and the reasons for this. Because of the multiple outcomes that are possible, it is of interest to this research to find out whether the schools involved in the research align their appraisal systems to the goals of their organisation, to the Professional Standards, to internally mandated accountability approaches, and/or to professional development approaches. In order to achieve the broad aims, the following specific objectives and questions have been formulated to guide the research:

Research objectives

1. To describe evidence of effective appraisal in schools that is valued by teaching staff.
2. To critically analyse factors that affect school teachers’ commitment to appraisal.
3. To critique the appropriateness of school appraisal procedures in developing mutuality between individual needs and organisational goals.

Research questions

1. What do teachers value in mandated appraisal procedures?
2. Why do some factors increase staff commitment to appraisal, while other factors do not?
3. How can schools affect teachers’ commitment to the organisation’s goals through a mandated process of performance appraisal?

Outline of the thesis

The literature review in chapter 2 provides a backdrop to the research by identifying key issues surrounding the implementation of appraisal, predominantly in the New Zealand context. Tensions in appraisal have been found to stem from the dual purposes of accountability and development. In addition, accountability aspects have affected ownership with subsequent impacts on the potential of appraisal. The reforms are therefore considered in relation to their impact on teacher professionalism and learning. The literature on trust and adult learning are explored to understand the tensions and complex issues at play. Some of the existing New Zealand research, on the implementation of appraisal, is analysed in relation to the identified tensions in appraisal.
Chapter 3 provides the details of qualitative methodology that guides the case study approach to this research. Data collection and analysis methods are outlined for the three stages of the research: document analysis; questionnaire; and focus group discussion. Issues of reliability and validity are also considered in association with the outline of each stage. Ethical considerations apparent in conducting this research are explained.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the findings of the documentary analysis, questionnaires, and focus group interviews. Findings are discussed in relation to themes that emanated from the research. Relevant contextual information is given because of its significance in understanding differences between each case.

Chapter 5 compares and contrasts the case for each school, and discusses findings in relation to the existing literature. The discussion deliberates on the overall aim of the research; whether value can be found in appraisal and factors affecting teachers’ commitment.

In Chapter 6, conclusions are drawn from a consideration of the key issues surrounding the established themes and the literature. Taking into consideration the nature of qualitative research, tentative implications for theory are presented alongside recommendations for policy and practice in schools.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The structure of this chapter begins with a discussion of teacher effectiveness which lies at the heart of appraisal. Recommendations from the literature are presented on the factors that are likely to impact on teacher and student learning. Here, two concepts are discussed at some length; ownership, and relationships. Because of the significance of trust, a background is given to provide an understanding of how trust operates. In the final section an analysis of current tensions in appraisal begins to unfold. The tensions are critiqued through an analysis of similar and contrasting views presented in the literature and through past research. The tensions are presented under four main headings:

1. Teachers as professionals?
2. Dual purposes of appraisal;
3. Tensions between individual needs and organisational goals; and
4. Time as a scarce resource.

Effectiveness - the heart of appraisal

At the heart of appraisal is the notion that teacher expertise is the single most important determinant of student achievement. The government agenda on performance management claims to be concerned with improving the quality of teaching and subsequently, outcomes in student achievement. However, some argue 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, 2003; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008). Moreover, the concern for effectiveness is equated with measurable outputs that reduce teaching to a set of technical behaviours. Ball (2003) describes the current focus on measures of performance as a culture of ‘performativity’ (p. 216). The culture of performativity situated in the education policy reforms, including those of performance management, has created several areas of tension.

One such tension lies in the value conflicts between authenticity within practice and impressions created in an attempt to demonstrate desired performances. In this respect, Ball (2003) claims that effectiveness is valued more than honesty. Husbands
argues that at best, appraisal could be shown to lead to easily measurable factors, such as an improvement in examination results, perhaps at the expense of other desirable and important outcomes of schooling that are more difficult to track. In addition, the uncertainty, complexity, specificity and autonomy experienced in the day to day lives of teachers defies any simple form of evaluative activity (Beerens, 2000; Gunter, 2001). The conflicting value positions that are situated in the state’s approach to achieving the intended aims are likely to surface in teachers’ responses to the policies.

The evidence has yet to show that, as a result of appraisal, there has been corresponding improvements in teaching and learning (Husbands, 2001). However, Middlewood (2001) found that appraisal procedures had a number of positive effects for teachers. These were the opportunity for professional dialogue, a reduction in feelings of isolation, and the formal encouragement to become self-critical. Thompson (2001) makes the point that if the mandated policies of the state remove the isolation of teachers and fast track schools towards a culture of professional discussion and collaboration then it will have a positive impact on teacher culture and development. There appear to be more who have argued that the mandated policies have the opposite effect because they foster a culture of distrust and compliance (Codd, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2008; Whitty, 2001). Whether it is possible to show that appraisal improves teaching goes beyond the parameters of this research. However, improving teaching is of fundamental importance because, foremost, the skills of teaching are crafted over time. Further to this, teachers need to keep abreast of research that impacts on what should be learned and how it should be learned. Consequently, what is of central interest in this research is teachers’ perceptions of the effects of appraisal on their motivation to improve their classroom practice, because the desire to improve is a precursor to improving practice.

It follows that motivation may be considered central to the success of appraisal. It can also be argued that appraisal is a strategy to motivate staff towards improvement (Rudman, 2002). The education reforms are based on the assumption that legislated standards are required to bring about improvement (Smyth, 2007). As Macky and Johnson (2000) comment “effort is the prerogative of the individual. No manager can make someone or force someone to be motivated” (p. 320). Corroborating this view, Sikes (2001) claims there is little evidence to show a top-down approach leads to
improved performance. Sach (2003) believes that for the professional standards to be effective, teachers must have ownership in the development of these standards. Therefore, it comes down to whether the standards are owned or imposed. In contrast, Gentle (2001) claims that hierarchical structures are not necessarily worse than flat structures. More importantly, the key for genuine school improvement is identifying ways in which teachers are motivated to change when an evaluator is not present, because of the autonomy teachers have in their own classrooms.

Classroom observation of teacher performance is particularly problematic in that teachers willingly put on a show of expected behaviours for the appraiser and then, while no one is looking, continue in ways that made most sense to them as a teacher. And of course, no one is looking most of the time. As a result, some have argued that the performance management process leads teachers to “play the game” so that “authenticity within practice is sacrificed for impression and performance” (Ball, 2001, pp. 214 - 215). Where appraisal is perceived as a valuable activity it will indicate a level of commitment that goes beyond compliance and therefore demonstrate a teacher’s ongoing commitment to quality teaching throughout their career (Sergiovanni, 2005). One of the ways forward is to understand the aspects of appraisal that bring value to teachers, particularly as motivation stemming from the practices that are valued, is more likely to lead to the learning that is desired through appraisal.

The fundamental purpose of appraisal lies in helping teachers to learn. Situated within appraisal is an expectation that teachers will undergo learning through some form of professional development. The assumption that teacher professional development will result in student learning is rarely tested. However, the international evidence that does exist suggests that attempts at teacher professional development can have either no effect or be counter-productive for the students involved (Robinson & Timperley, 2007). Using a process of backward mapping with data from a best evidence synthesis of international literature on teacher and professional learning, Robinson and Timperley (2007) determined the specific leadership factors that contributed to teacher learning and improved outcomes for students. A summary of these leadership factors are:

1. Providing educational direction/goal setting;
2. Ensuring strategic alignment;
3. Creating a community for improved student success;
4. Engaging in constructive problem talk; and
5. Leadership through selecting and developing smart tools.

Their findings suggested that the co-construction of goals by teachers and their professional developers lead to the highest gains for students. Moreover, having a common set of principles was also important. Collaboration between teachers is, therefore, seen as an important factor in developing the effectiveness of teaching practices in the classroom, a point also supported by others (Mahony & Hextall, 2001; Middlewood, 2002). Collaboration is also needed to develop collective responsibility and accountability amongst teachers for student achievement and well-being. Further to this, discussions between teachers needs to focus on the relationship between how they teach and what students have learned. This step identifies the need for learning to take place. The benefit of appraisal is the opportunity for giving and receiving 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). Engaging in this type of problem talk also means examining the existing beliefs and practices that may be contributing to an identified problem. This type of deep learning creates a condition that brings with it uncertainty and feelings of insecurity affecting self-concept. Defensiveness can arise because these situations may be perceived as either threatening or embarrassing.

For learning to occur it is necessary to have a critical friend who is able to overcome defensiveness and examine the values that contribute to issues. To bring about meaningful change that goes beyond superficial or structural changes, attention must be given to creating a supportive environment (Scott, 1999; Senge, 2000). Otherwise, self-protection and holding back are more likely to be evident (Sergiovanni, 2005). Moreover, the need to be a critical friend while being collegial demands expert interpersonal skills and an intimate working knowledge (Beerens, 2000; Cardno, 1999; Piggot-Irvine, 2003a). According to Smyth (2007), the consistent message that emanates from his own research is that “trusting and respectful relationships in schools and classrooms is the indispensable and single most crucial element to learning” (p. 228). Without a trusting relationship, the capacity for collaboration, learning and improvement is severely limited.
Understanding trust

There is some agreement that both trust and distrust are learned and are contagious (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000; Robbins, 2005). However, these writers also note that trust is not easily defined, though characteristics of trust are ubiquitous in the literature. The essential characteristics of trust are dependence, vulnerability, and a sense of optimism about a positive outcome (Six, 2005). Trust is present when something is expected from someone else and there is hope that this expectation will be fulfilled. But at the same time there is vulnerability because there is no certainty that expectations will be fulfilled, and such a situation is likely to lead to negative consequences for the truster. In other words, there are risks associated with trusting others.

There are different typologies about how trust is developed. A common theme amongst several of these is that there is a continuum between total trust and total distrust. Furthermore, while some theorists (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000) argue that dispositional trust may be a contributing factor, all would appear to agree that trust is learned and the presence of learned trust renders dispositional trust less important. Bottery (2004, p. 103), claims that trust is generated in three different ways:

1. Through perceptions of agreed values and value priorities
2. Through perceptions of integrity that someone will do as they say
3. Through perceptions of competence

Furthermore, trust is strengthened through constant reinforcement in everyday encounters that involve placing trust in individuals. Trust is also depleted through lack of use, that is, by not placing trust where it could be. Thus, learned trust is the result of past experiences that have been positive. Where past experiences grow to be more predictable, the associated impact on either trust or distrust will be greater.

There is support for the tenet that familiarity may not necessarily be needed for trust to occur (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). Some situations appear to fast track the trust process. For example, the term role trust is used to explain why swift trust is possible. "Role trust" lies in the shared understanding of the "cultural role" and "value codes" inherent in organisations (Bottery, 2004, pp. 106 - 107). "Relational trust" is another term used for the same concept (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 69). In a similar schema, Dibben (2000) explains that the "comprehensible situational
cues" resulting from shared understandings of roles or values would lead to higher levels of trust than would normally be expected in this situation (p. 52). In other words, familiarity is present not from a long standing relationship, but from the definable role of the person and commonly held expectations associated with that role. In as much as schools are structured by defined roles, the concept of role trust has potential to influence the appraisal relationship.

Bottery (2004) and Six (2005) both identify three levels at which trust is situated; the micro or individual level, the meso or organisational level, and the macro or societal level. Trust has the potential to span across these levels by way of the larger units being perceived as a “persona”, but the locus of the trust is still based at an individual level (Dibben, 2000). How trust operates at the micro level has already been outlined. At the meso level, trust operates as a belief in the culture and ethos of the organisation. It would seem that trust acts as “a lens through which people and proposals for change are interpreted” (Bottery, 2004, p. 113). In this respect, a person’s belief about an organisation will influence their attitude to both the people in it and their actions. Trust in the government and its policies occur at the macro level in a similar fashion to how trust operates at the meso level. Meso and macro levels of trust function as “role” or “relational” forms of trust as previously defined. Table 2-1 provides an example of how trust is interconnected between levels. The column headers in bold type indicate the locus of trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Macro</th>
<th>Meso</th>
<th>Micro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>One government’s perceptions about another.</td>
<td>School’s perceptions about government.</td>
<td>Individual’s perceptions about government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>Government’s perceptions about schools.</td>
<td>One school’s perception about another school.</td>
<td>A teacher’s perception about their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Government’s perceptions about teachers.</td>
<td>A school’s (e.g. Trust Board member or Principal) perception about its teachers.</td>
<td>One teacher’s perception about another teacher.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

There are several fundamental difficulties associated with trust (Six, 2005). Firstly, there is no certainty that trust will be honoured as trust deals with expectations, not
probabilities. Secondly, in most circumstances trust is learned incrementally, however, violations of trust can be more catastrophic as hurtful experiences can be more vivid and easily remembered. Thirdly, trust is an interpersonal, interactive and reciprocal process. Trust requires something from both parties in the transaction; firstly, that trust is placed by one party and secondly, that trust is fulfilled by the other. Dibben (2000) also points out, when violations of trust become predictable this leads to distrust, and it is not yet known whether this situation is recoverable. One final issue is that trust often occurs only at the subconscious level, unless it is forced into consciousness. This makes trust situations all the more challenging because the influences are not transparent.

Trust is a condition that fosters co-operation or a willingness to fulfil the trust expectations. Trust is “an attitude or disposition from which people will act towards each other in particular ways” (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 192). High trust relationships rely on internal accountability resulting from a sense of commitment, loyalty or duty; “trust can liberate people to be their best, to give others their best, and to take risks” (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 90). Low trust relationships rely on external accountability through contractual compliance based on hierarchical or other controlling mechanisms. When trust is present it offers the potential for more than when it is not, but it also holds a risk that bottom line expectations will not be met.

A climate of trust is a necessary condition of learning because trust provides the security to deal with uncertainty, unpredictability and risk (Bottery, 2004; Middlewood, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2005; Six, 2005). By the same token trust supports creativity, innovation and risk-taking to enhance radical change. Trust may also affect a person’s motivation to change or learn, but in a somewhat different way. Trust operates at the personal level to boost individual morale, maintain self-esteem and increase feelings of self-worth (Bottery, 2004). This state emerges when a person perceives they are trusted. If this is so, perceived trust may be linked to feelings of job satisfaction, and hence motivation, through its ability to increase feelings of self-worth (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Robbins, 2005; Rudman, 2002).

One off the three conditions Bottery (2004) has identified to be necessary to generate trust is particularly important for relationships at the meso (organisation) and macro (government) levels. The condition most likely to affect these trust relationships is the
alignment of values and value priorities, because of its compelling association with role expectations. In this respect, trust can decline as a result of differences in perceptions of values, and related priorities held by the individual, the organisation, or the state. Differences in values and value priorities are likely to surface as tensions rather than conflicts, due to the unwitting nature in which both values and trust operates. To understand factors within appraisal that affect learning, it is therefore important to explore underlying tensions as possible sources of conflicting values.

**Tensions in appraisal**

There is a plethora of evidence to suggest that tensions are evident in the implementation of appraisal. One area of tension arises from differences in assumptions about what motivates people. These assumptions are reflected in the way that teachers are asked to be accountable for their work. Timperley and Robinson (1998) have identified three forms of accountability: bureaucratic democracy (such as through legislative control); communitarian democracy (such as participative decision-making by parents and students) and professionalism (whereby teachers are accountable to their own self-regulating and self-disciplined body). Tensions exist between notions of professionalism and either form of democratic accountability (Olssen et al., 2004). This is commonly recognised as a struggle for control from within (professional accountability) or from outside (democratic accountability). State policy is currently situated in democratic forms of accountability through legislative control and the audit functions of ERO.

**Teachers as professionals?**

The notion of teachers as professionals is a subject over which there has been much debate. The discourse has centred around the changing nature of teachers’ work as a result of education reforms. Codd (2005) has coined the phrase that teachers are ‘managed professionals’ because the education reforms have increasingly led teachers to be under the surveillance and control of the state. At first glance, the concept of self-managed schools gives the impression of a move away from low-trust, centralised forms of control. However, the impact of reforms has resulted in very immediate surveillance and self-monitoring through the process of audit by ERO (Ball, 2003; Court & Adams, 2005). It is argued that state reforms have lead to a
perception amongst the public that the professional status of teachers has been eroded, leading to a decline in autonomy, respect and trust accorded to teachers (Codd, 2005; Gunter, 2001; Olssen et al., 2004; Whitty, 2001). Much of this concern appears to be centred around the tensions between professional and democratic forms of accountability.

The reforms were initiated under the guise of increasing teacher accountability to the public they serve. However, Fitzgerald (2008) claims that the accountability measures employed by the state are in conflict with this notion of democratic accountability. Rather than ensuring teachers are accountable to the public, the current systems of surveillance merely ensure accountability to the state while simultaneously damaging public confidence in teachers. Similar to Fitzgerald’s views, Codd (2005) argues that teachers should be accountable but this needs to be a high-trust form of democratic accountability based on moral responsibility rather than surveillance.

*It involves accountability to client beneficiaries and professional peers and is achieved … by procedures which enable teachers to communicate their values, interpretations and judgments to others, making public the reasons and evidence which provide the grounds for holding them* (p. 203).

Furthermore, clear definitions of the terms ‘professional’ and ‘professionalism’ seem to be elusive and contested. To add to the confusion, some have claimed that the reforms have resulted in a redefinition of the term professionalism (Mahoney & Hextall, 2000). The impact of education reforms has added fuel to the debate concerning whether these terms should be applied to teaching (Gunter, 2001; Vossler, 2005; Whitty, 2001). Nonetheless, as Mahoney and Hextall (2000) point out, it has remained “a powerful concept-in-use, and as such it persists as an object of attention and a component in educational discourse” (p. 101). Accordingly, teaching is considered a profession as a result of its concept-in-use, if for no other reason.

In keeping with the notion that professionalism may be defined by its concept-in-use, it is worth reviewing the research findings on New Zealand teachers’ perceptions of their professional status. In a qualitative study of twelve Waikato teachers from four primary schools, Hill and Locke (2003) found that the teachers in their study still classified themselves as “professionals” and related this to “being accountable,
having advanced qualifications, having the interest of learners at heart, and having a
degree of autonomy to make decisions within certain boundaries” (p. 92). The
findings alleged that teachers perceptions about their professional status had not
changed, although the researchers pointed out that their definition of professionalism
had evolved from the research. This was also a small scale study and therefore
cautions should be taken in generalising from the findings.

The findings do appear at odds with Bottery’s (2004) view on how trust operates at
the personal level. In his view it would be reasonable to expect that the government’s
unwillingness to place their trust in teachers is identifiable as an issue affecting
teachers’ feelings of self-worth and morale. The reasons why these teachers
continued to classify themselves as professionals, within the bureaucratic framework,
were less clear. The researchers alluded to two possible reasons why they thought
this may have been the case. One view was that teachers may be reluctant to
acknowledge the erosion of their professional status. Another view was that the
erosion of professional status had occurred at a subtle, discursive level that defied
articulation. They felt this was perhaps compounded by references to teachers as
“professionals”, when it was in the state’s interest to do so. Further possibilities may
be found from considering the impact of trust as a multi-level concept. On the one
hand, by devolving responsibility to schools to perform the audit functions directly
affecting teachers, this may deflect the source of distrust to school level.
Alternatively, the distrust of the government may be buffered by the trust that exists
within the organisation. The questions that remain unanswered from this study draw
attention to the need for further research on the impact of reforms on teachers.

On the assumption that teaching has been or could be defined as a profession,
Thompson (2001) argues that the question of ownership remains central to whether
the culture of performance management re-professionalises or de-professionalises
teachers. At the heart of the debate lies a question of ownership of accountability
(Codd, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008; Olssen et al., 2004); to whom should teachers be
accountable? Ownership is important not only for its potential to re-professionalise
teachers, but in its capacity to motivate. As Sergiovanni (2000) suggests, individuals
are intrinsically motivated when they experience personal responsibility for their work
and the outcomes, a view that is consistent with theories on motivation (Evans, 2001;
Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Robbins, 2005). It follows from these arguments that
securing ownership is a factor that may determine the success of appraisal. The current climate of decision-making by policy makers that occurs without consultation would seem to be at odds with the degree of ownership needed to re-professionalise or motivate teachers.

Middlewood (2002) found that the process of self-reflection within appraisal had a significant influence on feelings of ownership. As reflection on classroom practice is likely to occur beyond the parameters of appraisal, perhaps the autonomy teachers have in their own classroom provides sufficient ownership to render other aspects of appraisal as less important in their teaching lives. In contrast, Robinson and Timperley (2007) found that teacher ownership of goals was not a necessary condition for teacher and student learning to occur. The key features needed were that the teacher believed the goals to be important, and teachers felt they had the capacity to achieve them. While it does not negate the need for ownership, existing research appears ambivalent in regards to the degree of ownership needed to make appraisal successful.

In some cases, it would appear that a sense of ownership may be readily secured by offering only partial involvement in the process. In this respect, New Zealand research by Grootenboer and Youngs (2003), involving 456 teachers in a postal survey, found involvement in the review, and reflective practices of the school appraisal system, provided sufficient impetus for teachers to feel a degree of ownership. These teachers perceived the appraisal process to be akin to a professional rather than bureaucratic approach despite being aware of the bureaucratic, external and mandatory requirements situated within the system. The researchers found teachers wanted to be accountable for their professional work. While instances of ownership were apparent in the cases cited above, the level of ownership required to contribute to teacher professionalism is a contested matter.

It has been argued that the bureaucratic measures adopted by government to ensure democratic accountability present the view that teachers cannot be trusted to regulate their own behaviour (Codd, 2005; Court & Adams, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008). Elliott (2001) sums this up by saying: “the more pervasive the gaze of audit the less trust invested in the moral competence of its members to respond to the needs of the people they serve” (p. 201). Sikes (2001) argues this point further to say the
The underlying assumption behind performance management policies is that something is wrong, and he alleges these policies firmly cast teachers as the cause of the problem while deflecting other contributing factors. In addition, there may be tensions based on conflicting value positions inherent in these policies. The underlying values behind the managerial ideologies elevate the position of teachers as individualistic, ambitious and personally motivated above those who stress teamwork, collaborative practice and a non-competitive orientation (Gunter, 2001; Mahony & Hextall, 2001). This may cause tension for those who hold opposing views based on their notion of what works in improving teaching (Ball, 2003; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Smyth, 2007). Lastly, it has been argued that performance management policy has more to do with economic efficiency rather than the espoused values of effectiveness or ensuring quality, therein falsely portraying an image of the government as a “responsible and rational consumer” to the public eye (Mahony & Hextall, 2000, p. 72). So, a tension is created between teachers’ perceptions of what teachers value and the state’s concern for economic rationalisation (Codd, 1999).

Values that lie behind policy are not necessarily made explicit and even if there is an attempt to do so, they are in fact espoused values that may or may not be translated to values in use. Therefore, while an awareness of these possible values is important, there are some further questions that should be asked. In the first instance, consideration needs to be given to whether the views described in the previous paragraph are also held by teachers. Even when these views are held, the way teachers are influenced by them in their response to the policy may well differ. As noted earlier, tensions evident in value conflicts have the potential to translate to changes in trust relationships between individual teachers at the micro level, with the state policy makers at the macro level, if not also with their organisations at the meso level.

It seems feasible that teachers are called to account for what they do. But, to whom should they be accountable, and how? Sikes (2001) argues that “the development of true quality in teaching is conditional upon teachers being trusted to engage in the process free from the unremitting gaze of audit” as the developmental process is essentially invisible to audit (p. 108). Management practices designed to ensure quality for the business world are therefore not easily transferable to the education sector. There is considerable support for the view that current management practices
are destructive to ensuring quality in teaching. Smyth (2007) challenges leaders to “have the conviction and courage to stand up for what they know to be true about schools” and to confront policy makers, demanding them to show how reforms make a difference to what really counts (p. 224). In respect of this, some have argued that alternative perspectives on accountability need to be considered as a way forward, to reconcile the divergent positions of the democratic, and professional, forms of accountability (Codd, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008).

A common suggestion has been to shift the unit of accountability to departmental or school level (Fitzgerald, 2001; Gunter, 2001). Adding to this suggestion, Elliott’s (2001) view of accountability requires teachers to engage in evidence-based research to show how “the impact of their teaching on learning has been used to further develop practice” (p. 208). From his perspective such responsibility could fall on the profession, as a whole, to engage in the type of research that both informs practice and make teachers accountable to the public they serve, rather than at the personal level of individual teachers, as is the case in the current policy. In this respect teachers as a professional body are being called to account. They are given a measure of trust but not unconditional trust.

**Dual purposes of appraisal**

Another area where tensions are evident in appraisal stems from an attempt to use it for dual purposes: as an assessment activity to review past performance against objectives with a link to remuneration; and as a developmental activity to identify areas of change that will lead to better performance. Rudman (2002) suggests that increasing the scope of appraisal is more likely to increase the potential for conflicts and reduces the possibility that the process will work positively. There is support for this view in some research on appraisal, from New Zealand (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Hill & Locke, 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). The findings draw attention to the conflict between aspects of accountability and development evident in appraisal practices. A significant area of tension stems from the dual role expected of the appraiser (Beerens, 2000; Middlewood, 2002) as the accountability aspects are likely to lead to defensiveness that hinders development.
Earlier approaches to appraisal were more in line with a professional form of accountability because they did not require hierarchical management structures, and these approaches were focused on goals for improvement that were, by and large, selected by the appraisee (Fitzgerald, 2001). This developmental, or 'professional development approach to appraisal' as I defined in the Chapter 1, also has its critics (Beerens, 2000; Middlewood, 2002). There is general agreement that the core issues have been:

1. Weaker teachers who are insufficiently challenged;
2. Links with improvement in student achievement that have been difficult to ascertain;
3. Teachers who are comfortably competent who may not improve or may decline in their performance; and
4. The variable capacity to accurately self-assess.

It has been argued that these issues do not appear to be unique to the professional development approach to appraisal and to a large degree, result from ineffective interpersonal skills that fail to challenge issues (Cardno, 1999; Piggot-Irvine, 2003a). Balancing criticism and support is a challenge for the appraiser even when the appraisal is only focused on development. The data collected for appraisal is important as a springboard for new learning. The role of the appraiser has a significant bearing on the degree to which the collected data contributes to professional learning. Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) have asserted that at the core of these problems lies the capacity of the appraiser to act as a critical friend, simultaneously challenging and supporting. Training has therefore been recommended by them, as a condition likely to enhance success. They maintain that the appraiser should always be more experienced or an expert in the area for development.

Tensions arise where assessment information is used for both identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as judging performance for other purposes. When the appraiser is expected to act as judge and helper, dilemmas are created that are often unresolved (Cardno, 1999; Fitzgerald, 2001). Hence lies the challenge, as teachers are unlikely to indulge in high-risk behaviours for learning, and may be less willing to acknowledge areas of weakness, or to set challenging goals, for fear of retribution when their performance is under the spotlight. The MoE’s policy on appraisal declares that appraisal is most effective when it occurs in a supportive environment...
where there is a high level of communication and trust, yet the dual purposes inherent in appraisal are more likely to erode trust.

Furthermore, in the case where appraiser judgement is to be used as the basis for pay increments or promotion, disagreement over differences in opinion take on a different dimension. This is exacerbated by the existing power relationships inherent in the hierarchical structure of the organisation. Further issues have been identified surrounding the subjectivity of judgements and the ad hoc nature of collecting evidence of teacher performance within the field of education (Beerens, 2000; Gentle, 2001). Teaching defies ready measurement therefore, claims about the lack of valid evidence to support judgements seem to be justified. However, it has also been argued that teaching is a complex activity that is not reducible to a set of teaching behaviours (Adams & Codd, 2005; Gunter, 2001; Sachs, 2003). Therefore, the technicist approach, based on a narrow set of criteria to evaluating teaching, becomes a contentious matter. Elliot (2001) argues that judgments about performance need to be based on tentative insights, rather than conclusive evidence, because of the complex nature of teaching. Perhaps the ideal is unattainable.

Piggot Irvine and Cardno (2005) consider that one of the most effective developmental practices for teachers is self-evaluation. This appears to be consistent with theories on adult learning (Terehoff, 2002) because adults need to see a purpose for change before they commit to learning. However, the capacity for self-evaluation varies. The role of appraiser, then, becomes a mentoring role, challenging the appraisee to become “self-reflective, self-evaluating and self-directive” (p. 137). In this case, the subjective judgements of appraisal are used as a basis for dialogue between an appraiser and appraisee to initiate learning.

**Tension between individual needs and organisational goals**

It appears that appraisal also presents a challenge to schools in balancing the needs of the organisation with the concerns of the individuals (Fitzgerald, 2001; Harris, 1999; Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005). The issue presents itself if individual goals do not link to the priorities of the organisation. In this case, teachers are unlikely to receive the necessary resources in order for development to take place. Tensions are most likely to surface in professional development requests for the pursuit of
higher qualifications or career advancement where it may be difficult to justify this in terms of its link to school goals (Gentle, 2001).

In contrast, Rudman (2002) postulates that appraisal is the mechanism by which mutuality can be achieved, meeting the needs of the individual and the organisation to the benefit of both parties. To understand how this mutuality would take shape is difficult and perhaps exists as an ideal rather than a reality. Middlewood (2002) claims that mutuality is gained due to teachers considering their needs within a sense of responsibility to the organisation. For instance, teachers might feel a duty or obligation to align their goals to those of the organisation. The significance of this is because duty and obligation are both strong motivators, and are simultaneously more sustainable (Sergiovanni, 2005). Beerens (2000) describes the relationship between individual needs and the goals of the organisation as a push-pull relationship where sometimes individual needs will act as the driver for new organisational goals and vice versa. Given there appears to be little research to substantiate these tenets, they would seem rather idealistic. In addition, funding for professional development is a limited resource, with any cash outlay determined by the power structures within the organisation. In these circumstances, it is difficult to perceive that mutual benefits will be achieved in all cases.

Some researchers found that links between appraisal and professional development needed to exist if there was to be any subsequent change in classroom practice (Fitzgerald, 2001). Moreover, the credibility of performance management also rests on the ability to deliver professional development that had been identified in the review statements (Gentle, 2001; Middlewood, 2002). A situation could arise where those responsible for the funds are not made fully aware of the needs of the individual, or how these funds could contribute to their development. Clearly, both of these situations could have a detrimental effect on the teacher’s motivation to improve practice.

**Time as a scarce resource**

Highly structured systems for monitoring what teachers do and evaluating their teaching behaviours in a standard way, to ensure they teach the way they are supposed to, is a highly time-intensive management practice. The mandatory requirements of appraisal place a great strain on school resources without promising
much more than basic teacher competence (Beerens, 2000). For the most part, poor performing teachers are in the minority (Mahony & Hextall, 2000), so a great deal of effort is expended for, what appears to be, the benefit of a few. Some have found, when monitoring and evaluating does work it leads to minimalist conformity (Fitzgerald, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2005). Others have found a lack of time available has lead to minimalist approaches, despite teachers’ high level of concern for accountability, and the desire to adopt a professional approach (Beerens, 2000; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). Lack of time affects the potential for achievement, and subsequently, lack of perceived achievement negatively impacts on motivation.

Performance assessment is time-consuming and the nature of gathering evidence is counter-productive because it draws energy away from the very things that lie at the heart of good teaching (Mahony & Hextall, 2000). Where time spent on appraisal is seen as beneficial, both to the teacher and their appraiser, it will be given a higher priority. On the other hand, not making or prioritising time for appraisal can also be an indication about a teacher’s lack of capacity to engage in appraisal at a critical level, due to having too many reforms to implement (Fitzgerald et al., 2003; Hill & Locke, 2003). The culture of performativity leads to a contradiction in that the increases in time and effort essential to improve teaching are offset by increases in time and effort required for monitoring of this work (Ball, 2003). Therefore, it would seem that performance management takes place at the expense of good teachers’ work, because for most teachers it promises little more than a source of irritation, deflecting them from their real work.

Conclusion

Questions currently exist as to whether appraisal makes any difference to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Two factors have been identified as key to the success of appraisal because of the impact on learning, namely, the appraisal relationship, and trust. These concepts are understood to be interrelated and necessary conditions for learning. However, multiple tensions are discernible in appraisal which are likely to be compromising its effectiveness. While the literature provides many explanations, the multiplicity of tensions leave many more questions unanswered. How these tensions operate to influence teacher commitment is not always clear.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

The research design, as shown in Figure 3-1, involved case studies of two private schools using mixed methods to gather predominantly qualitative with some quantitative data across the three stages of the research:

- Stage one - collection of appraisal policy and supporting documentation;
- Stage two - collection of predominantly quantitative data by means of a questionnaire; and
- Stage three - focus group discussions.

Figure 3-1  Diagram of research methodology

The chapter begins with a rationale for the qualitative research paradigm and case study methodology that underpinned this study. This is followed by the particulars of sampling methods used for the selection of schools. After that, each method is dealt with independently. Details of related data collection tools and analysis techniques
are outlined including issues of validity and reliability. The method of triangulation used to construct each case, is then outlined. The final section summarises important ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

**Research methodology – case study**

Qualitative research methodology is particularly suitable for gaining in depth knowledge of a research issue within the context of educational organisations (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 2002; Davidson & Tolich, 1999; Stake, 2005). Educational organisations are described by Freebody (2003) as “uncertain, complex, messy, with fleeting properties, which call for distinctive research processes to description, understanding and explanation,” (p. 81). Morrison (2002) corroborates this view in the following comment:

*Thus the world of the educational researcher is different from the world of the natural science researcher – all educational research needs to be grounded in people’s experience* (p. 18).

In a ‘constructivist’ view, human behaviour is deemed to be contextual and socially constructed; there is a complex interplay of social norms and individual choices at the core of human behaviour, people understand reality in different ways. Context is significant in how humans interact with each other. Patterns of behaviour within educational organisations are as a result of the culture that prevails and are also partially determined by power relationships within the organisation. This contextual view of reality has been a factor in choosing to conduct in depth research as case studies in a limited number of contexts, rather than conducting research (whether qualitative or quantitative) across a wide range of schools (Bassey, 1999; Freebody, 2003; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003). Qualitative research allowed me to study the complexity and interplay of many variables associated with attitudes towards appraisal. The subjects’ perspectives were central to the research, which is consistent with an interpretive perspective, and a constructivist view, of reality (Blaikie, 2000; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2002; Morrison, 2002).

A shortcoming of qualitative research is that it does not provide the ‘factual’ data on which theory can be founded (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Davidson & Tolich, 1999). The intent of this research is to induce meaning from patterns of behaviour,
from which tentative propositions are made as foundations on which further research may be based (Bryman, 2001). The main point is that research should be tailored to best answer the research questions. Since the purpose is to explore the personal meanings and implications of performance management systems, personal accounts and stories are appropriate to develop thick descriptions of teachers’ attitudes and behaviours associated with appraisal. The qualitative approach provides the opportunity for the researcher to consider ways in which life histories, personal idiosyncrasies, and circumstances affect perceptions and influence responses. Moreover, triangulation of the data through multiple sources, and case comparisons, enhances the validity of findings to overcome the limitations associated with case study research (Freebody, 2003; Yin, 2003).

The term case study, in the context of this research, refers to the manner in which the data was selected and analysed to inform the research. Schools were selected as the unit of analysis with teachers as the embedded unit of analysis (Yin, 2003). The three stages of the research were then carried out within a single school context making up a single case. Through case study, this researcher is concerned with elucidating the unique features of each school, commonly known as the “idiographic” approach (Bryman, 2001, p. 49). A case study provided contextual data to support the qualitative research methodology with “commitment to the overwhelming significance of localised experience” (Freebody, 2003, p. 81). Benefits arose from the uniqueness of each case, and the participant’s experience of the case to understand the influence of context on attitudes and behaviours (Bassey, 1999; Thomas, 2003; Wellington, 2000a). Further benefits of using two schools emerged from comparative findings that were common across the two cases, and those findings that were unique to each case, providing deeper insight into the phenomenon (Freebody, 2003; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003). This increased my ability to critically analyse factors that affected staff motivation around appraisal.

Collecting data from several sources is consistent with case study research (Yin, 2003). Morse (2003) claims that “by using more than one method within a research programme, we are able to obtain a more complete picture of human behaviour and experience” (p. 189). Most of the collection and analysis of data depended on qualitative analysis with some limited use of quantitative analysis, akin to a mixed methods design that did not have an equal qualitative/quantitative weighting
(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Gathering data by different methods over the three stages of the research increased my ability to accurately interpret the findings by integrating the multiple databases to best understand a complex phenomenon (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 2003). It was at the stage of analysing data from each school and in reporting the major findings across the schools that the integration of individual methods took place.

**Rationale for focus groups**

Within the research design, focus groups were the most important tool for gathering the data to answer the research questions. According to Davidson and Tolich (1999), “focus groups provide a powerful technique for gaining an insight into the opinions, beliefs, and values of a particular segment of the population,” (p. 130). Therefore, priority was given to the qualitative data from the focus group to develop the themes, as this methodology was better suited to explore the reasons for attitudes and behaviours around appraisal, as it was practiced (Greenbaum, 2000; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Peräkylä, 2005). While the focus group questions allowed me to verify the data found in the documents and to explain findings from the questionnaire, the primary intent of the focus group questions was to provide data in order to describe key themes and patterns related to positive and negative factors or procedures affecting teacher commitment to appraisal; to analyse cause and effect relationships related to commitment within appraisal; and to examine similarities and differences in commitment to organisational goals through the mandated appraisal process.

Individual interviews may have provided similar data, however, focus groups are less time-consuming for gathering and processing the findings, than single person interviews (Bryman, 2001; Davidson & Tolich, 1999; Fem, 2001). Moreover, these researchers claim the benefits of focus groups stem from discussions between members providing opportunity to explore opposing views to gain further insights to meanings and understandings. According to Kamberelis (2005), focus groups are also more powerful than interviews for the following reasons:

*Focus groups are invaluable for promoting among participants synergy that often leads to unearthing of information that is seldom easy to reach in individual memory; and*

*Focus groups also facilitate the exploration of collective memories and shared stocks of knowledge that might seem trivial and unimportant to*
individuals but that come to the fore as crucial when like-minded groups begin to revel in the everyday. (p. 903)

Focus groups, therefore, contributed to the richness of the information gained, more-so than would be expected from individual interviews.

Research settings

Stage 1 Sample selection

The national database of New Zealand schools was used to randomly select private schools based in the North Island with a student population over 500. The relevant schools were numbered from 1 to 18 and ordered for selection by the use of random numbers. I began the process of inviting the randomly selected schools on 11th June 2006. Table 3-1 provides an outline of key dates, actions, and results.

Table 3-1  Timeline for random selection of schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 June</td>
<td>Mail out to 3 schools</td>
<td>1 accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 June</td>
<td>Follow-up phone calls</td>
<td>1 declined by phone, 1 declined 19th July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 June</td>
<td>Mail out to 4th listed school</td>
<td>Declined 4th July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 July</td>
<td>Email next 4 schools</td>
<td>1 declined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 July to 17 Aug</td>
<td>Follow-up phone calls</td>
<td>1 declined, 2 non-replies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 August</td>
<td>Email last 9 schools</td>
<td>1 accepted, 3 declined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 September</td>
<td>Follow-up phone calls</td>
<td>2 declined, 3 non-replies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, out of a total of 18 possible schools only two schools agreed to participate in the research despite attempts to follow-up on non-responses. As a result, the schools that did participate were those that had volunteered. The schools have been named Leyland College and Turion College which are pseudonyms to hide their identity. Both schools were composite, co-educational, private schools from the North Island of New Zealand. According to the 2005 national database on school roll numbers, Leyland College had a student population nearly double that of Turion College; students spanned from years 1 to 13. In this respect, the sample did
represent schools of both a smaller and larger size within the parameters of the minimum sample size set by me. In each case, the whole school was divided into smaller ‘schools’, with all smaller ‘schools’ located on the same site. At Turion College, only the senior school staff, who taught years seven to thirteen, were involved in the process.

Data collection and analysis techniques

**STAGE 1 Document search**

**Collection of documents**

Each school was asked to provide copies of their appraisal policy, other related policies, plus the range of documents used in conjunction with appraisal such as staff manuals outlining appraisal systems and procedures. The documents provided important contextual information particularly related to the philosophical position of appraisal to add meaning to other methods of data collection (Wellington, 2000b). By analysing the documents before the focus group discussions, thus gaining a comprehensive understanding of the appraisal systems in place, I was able to spend more time in the focus group on exploring attitudes and reasons.

**Document Analysis**

Documentary analysis can be both quantitative and qualitative. In this case, I focused on qualitative methodologies using a framework for analysis cited by several writers (Bryman, 2001; Fitzgerald, 2007; Wellington, 2000b). According to these writers the documents should be assessed according to the following four criteria:

1. **Authenticity** – Do I have the most current version of documents?
2. **Credibility** – Is the document an accurate reflection of practices?
3. **Representativeness** – What is in a complete set of appraisal documents?
4. **Meaning** – What can be understood about the embedded meanings within the documents?

In order to take a critical stance to the analysis of the documents and understand the embedded meaning, I used a framework for analysis, adapted from Fitzgerald (2007). The following key questions guided the content analysis:

1. What prompted the writing of this document? Were there social, political, economic or historical reasons that may have influenced the writer and the contents?
2. What are the contents, the language, terms used and the key message(s)? What is the ideological position of the document?
3. Is the document reliable? What are the omissions? Was this deliberate? How do you know?

My initial area of analysis was to find the range of documents associated with appraisal, and to find how they were linked with other scripts within the school and to outside sources, as a collective set (Prior, 2003). I considered historical and political influences in the development of the appraisal policies and guidelines. The location of documents, the channels used to transmit the information to teaching staff, and the feasibility of ongoing access were also examined.

To understand the embedded meanings within the documents, an analysis of key words was undertaken to provide insight to the orientations, values and ideologies represented in the document as well as the intended procedures. The analysis was achieved by manually completing a word search for key words related to the research, highlighting these words and uncovering the intended meaning from the way in which the key words were embedded in the language. The words most relevant to the research questions were:

- accountability
- appraiser/appraisee
- assessment
- data gathering
- development
- feedback
- goals
- grade
- improvement
- learning
- mentoring
- motivation
- observation
- ownership
- pay/salary
- performance
- practice
- professional
- reflection
- report
- review
- standards
- time
- trust

In order to analyse the content in a systematic way, categories were used to guide the initial collation of data. The process involved several readings of the documents where categories were noted in the left margins of the document. The process was iterative in that categories were developed and refined several times as data was collated (Fitzgerald, 2007). A summary of the categories is given in APPENDIX 1. Key words and phrases were identified for each category and cross-referenced with page numbers. The process was undertaken manually with the use of excel to tabulate page references of key findings. By analysing the information manually, I
was able to gain a more complete and deeper understanding of the appraisal practices.

The analysis of any documentation can only provide insights into intended practices rather than accurate accounts of reality (Prior, 2003). Omissions and areas of ambiguity that affected the clarity of the documents were considered as part of the analysis. The focus group discussions, to a larger extent, and the questionnaires to a lesser extent, either confirmed or refuted the information gained from the documents, giving some insight into the reliability of their content.

Reliability of document findings

Threats to reliability occur due to the documents having multiple meanings for readers, therefore positions may differ as a result of varying interpretations of the wording. In this respect, the focus group members gave some insight into the extent to which the intent of the documents were reflected in their everyday practices and therefore confirm or refute my interpretation. According to Wellington (2000b), checking to see if the documents are representative or typical is akin to determining reliability. Therefore, identifying both common and differing perspectives increases the reliability of findings that is consistent with a constructivist view. Such evidence has been provided in Chapter 5 where data from the three methods were triangulated to provide a picture of each case.

Validity of document findings

According to Wellington (2000b) the validity of documents can be determined from two key factors: authenticity and credibility. The source of the documents will give some insight into its authenticity. Credibility refers to the extent that the documents are free from error or distortion. Ambiguity in language and omissions are likely to impact on validity in that the documents leave aspects open to interpretation by the readers. By triangulating the three data sources, converging information minimises these threats to validity, as the other data sources help to clarify the intent of the documents. Already discussed is the potential threat to validity from my biased understanding of the interpretive meaning of the document. Identifying similarities and differences in the documents across the two schools provides some measure of validity in that I have applied the same techniques of analysis across both data sets.
STAGE 2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was used to gather predominantly quantitative data to gain an understanding of the perceptions around intentions, procedures and conditions within appraisal. The strengths of using a questionnaire arise from the ease of gathering a comprehensive set of information in a relatively short time frame with the ability to test correlations in the data. However, the limitations are that percentages show the collective outcomes of the data set at the expense of the uniqueness of individual responses (Thomas, 2003).

The time taken to complete the questionnaire is critical to its success therefore closed multi-choice questions and scales were used to gather much of the data (Bryman, 2001; Punch, 2003). Opportunity was given to elaborate on responses in a qualitative manner at the completion of sections within the questionnaire. This provided some initial insight into the intended meanings and reasons for responses or omissions in the data. The questions were developed by me and were based on personal experiences and reading of literature in relation to appraisal. The questions were selected on the basis of how they might best contribute to the findings of the research questions. The questionnaire designed by Youngs and Grootenboer had been influential in the design and make up of questions, although further information was felt necessary in order to best answer the research questions, and to add new knowledge to existing research. Because of the exploratory nature of this stage of the research a broad range of factors were considered that would give insight to both attitudes and behaviours. A copy of the questionnaire is included in APPENDIX 2.

Careful consideration was given to the design of the questions and the layout of the questionnaire, as this impacts on non-response and inaccurate responses (Bell, 2002; Cohen et al., 2000; Gorard, 2001; Punch, 2003). The questions were condensed into an small booklet of eight pages. The front cover included information about myself and the aims of the research. School codes and response numbers used to distinguish individual responses were entered by myself after the completed questionnaires had been collected from each school. The 53-item questionnaire had six demographic questions, 25 attitudinal questions using a six-point continuous semantic differential scale, and a further 22 multiple choice questions.
Semantic differential rating scales were used for the 25 questions that explored the value positions of teachers around appraisal practices to provide an indication of their attitudes, perceptions and opinions to questions that lie at the heart of this research (Cohen et al., 2000). The extremes of the six-point scale were given as strongly disagree (0) and strongly agree (5). The semantic differential scale was selected because it would generate more diversity in responses than dichotomous questions and benefits arose from the potential for greater statistical analysis from a continuous scale (Cohen et al., 2000; Pallant, 2004; Punch, 2003). The six-point scale gave opportunity for a range of responses with some confidence that the respondents could quickly select their position on the scale (Punch, 2003). Respondents were instructed to place an ‘x’ on any position along the scale. In this respect, the scale is continuous rather than discrete. Notches were placed along the scale to help identify and label responses in between these two positions for entry into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) database that was used to analyse results. “A continuous score is the value of a variable assigned by the researcher to a point along a continuum of scores, from low to high values” (Creswell, 2002, p. 130). A six-point scale was used to avoid a notched position in the centre of the scale, thus, respondents would be less likely to take a neutral position. For purposes of analysis using SPSS software, results were labelled in 0.5 intervals according to their position along the scale.

Multi-choice questions were used to establish behaviours around appraisal that were likely to have some association with the attitudes explored in the scale questions. Difficulties in the design of multi-choice questions arise from having incomplete sets of possible responses. This had been addressed by combining multi-choice questions with the opportunity to further explain responses.

**Sampling methods for the administering the questionnaire**

I reasoned that the Senior Management Team (SMT) group were likely to generate atypical findings that could influence the overall results. My experiences suggested that appraisal of the SMT was more likely to have a larger emphasis on management and leadership than teaching and learning, which fell outside the parameters of this research. Also, as a result of their position and responsibilities, I ascertained SMT members may have had more direct ownership of appraisal. Therefore, SMT
members were excluded from participation in the questionnaire and the focus group discussions.

All teaching staff (part time or full time) were invited to participate in the questionnaire. Having a larger sample size increases the feasibility of exploring relationships in the quantitative data and reliability in the findings (Cohen et al., 2000). A process of random selection was not seen as appropriate to generate a sample large enough to explore relationships given that many researchers indicated at least 30 would be required for some forms of statistical analysis of the data (Cohen et al., 2000; Pallant, 2004), and this number was close to the total number of teaching staff in one of the schools.

**Questionnaire data collection**

To ensure a high response rate I had requested permission to speak to the staff to introduce the research project and the questionnaire, a process likely to increase the response rate (Bell, 2002). However, what was permissible and feasible led to somewhat different procedures for each school. Despite efforts to ensure otherwise, the response rate in both schools was very small (17%, n = 199).

At Leyland College, I was introduced to the staff by the principal at a whole staff meeting on Monday 21 August, 2006. Very few staff members chose to complete their responses at this time; this was understandable given it was 4.30 pm and at the end of a busy day. Due to the low response rate, the questionnaires were also placed into staff pigeonholes. Staff were invited via email, to complete the questionnaire and place them into a sealed box, if they had not already done so. By placing questionnaires in pigeonholes, it is expected that part time staff also had the opportunity to participate. The second and final collection of questionnaires occurred on the 25 August 2006. There were 22 questionnaires completed from a possible total of 160, giving a response rate of 14%.

At Turion College, the questionnaires were placed into staff pigeonholes and staff were provided with information about the research, by a senior manager at a staff meeting on Monday 18 September 2006. A sealed ‘post-box’ was placed near the pigeonholes for the questionnaire responses. By targeting pigeonholes, both full time and part time staff are likely to have been given the opportunity to complete the
questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected on Friday 22 September 2006 with one additional questionnaire received by email on the 26 September 2006. There were 11 questionnaires completed from a possible total of 39, giving a response rate of 28%.

**Analysis of findings from the questionnaire**

All data was entered into a database using SPSS software and checked for errors based on an analysis of gaps or outliers. A low response rate meant that comparative analysis was predominantly limited to using combined data rather than that of individual schools or sub-groups. Tests for normality were performed on the scale questions using SPSS software to determine the Kolmogorv-Smirnov statistic. A non-significant result (sig. value more than 0.05) indicates normality. The predominant lack of normality and small sample size from each school restricted the possible level of statistical analysis beyond descriptive statistics and the use of non-parametric tests of association. Non-parametric tests were most relevant to explore relationships given that much of the data did not meet the stringent assumptions of the more powerful parametric techniques outlined by Pallant (2004):

- The scale questions were continuous
- The sample was not random due to the bias associated with a high non-response rate (violation)
- Independence of observations may have been violated due to the possibility of multiple returns, although this is deemed unlikely.
- Most questions were not distributed normally (violation)
- The sample size of each group was less than 30 (violation)
- The larger to smaller sample size ratio was greater than the 1.5 recommended (violation)

Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation (rho), a non-parametric alternative to Pearson’s product-moment correlation, was performed on the combined results of both schools for the scale questions to calculate the strength of possible relationships between two continuous variables. The size of the value of Spearman’s rho (r) determines the strength of the relationship, whereas a positive or negative result determines the direction of the relationship. I used the guidelines given by Pallant (2004) where $0.5 \leq r \leq 1.0$ indicated a strong relationship. In addition, I chose the more stringent significance level $p$, labelled as ‘Sig. 2 tailed’, as the sample size was low. Only
results that complied with the two conditions \((0.5 \leq r \leq 1.0, \text{ and } p < 0.01)\) were considered in the analysis.

Consideration was given to manipulating data by collapsing categories in order to test relationships using Chi-square tests as a non-parametric test for independence between the discrete data. Controversy surrounds the use of manipulation (Pallant, 2004), so I was cautious in applying this technique. The responses to scale questions were divided in two parts, with responses less than 3.5 recoded as 0 and those equal to or above 3.5 recoded as 1. As many of the results were relatively skewed, the division point was selected above the half way point on the scale, meaning that results would distinguish those who tended to strongly agree with the statement from other views held by the sample. It should be noted that a violation of the cell frequency assumption occurred in most of the tests (Pallant, 2004); minimum expected cell frequency should be five or greater for at least 80% of cells. Only one test achieved a significant result without violating this assumption. The significance level \(p\), labelled ‘Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)’, needed to be 0.05 or smaller in order for the result to be significant.

**Reliability of the questionnaire**

The following threats to reliability are relevant to questionnaires (Creswell, 2002, p. 180):

1. Questions on instruments are ambiguous and unclear
2. Procedures on test administration vary and are not standardised
3. Participants are fatigued, are nervous, misinterpret questions, or guess on tests

Prior to administration, questions had been tested on a group of six teachers not involved in the research project, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretation resulting from ambiguous or unclear questions (Bell, 2002; Creswell, 2002; Punch, 2003). Minor changes were made to wording as a result of this trial, although the questionnaire was not re-tested before its use in the research. I did find that responses to question 29 did not reflect the pattern expected and retrospectively discovered the negative wording of the question may have led to some confusion for the respondents. It is highly unlikely that teachers had to guess answers as questions were related to experiences within the last two years and the language used was relevant to their occupation. I am confident that the procedures between schools
were sufficiently similar as staff voluntarily completed the questionnaire in their own time. The potential for duplication by some respondents may have resulted in a source of error in the findings. However, given the busy nature of teaching and the expected level of intelligence of this group, it is unlikely that respondents would intentionally complete the questionnaire twice.

Internal reliability of the 25 scale questions was tested using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The coefficient alpha is a recognised test of the internal consistency of scores on continuous variables within a questionnaire (Creswell, 2002; Pallant, 2004). The number of questions were well above the recommended minimum number of 10 (Pallant, 2004) and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was reported as 0.754 exceeding the ideal score of 0.7, thus confirming that the scale was internally reliable with this whole sample. Where ‘R’ was included alongside a question number, the wording of the question and scale responses were reversed to correspond with the scale values on the other items.

Validity of questionnaire findings

Due to my inexperience and the exploratory nature of the questions, more questions were asked than was perhaps ideal, as this may have been a contributing factor in low response rates. Fatigue may also have been a factor, though it is more likely that busy workloads resulted in non-responses. The questions were tested to find the length of time it would take to complete the questionnaire with the estimated time given as 15 minutes, based on the trial. The response rates were 22 out of approximately 160 (14%) and 11 out of approximately 39 (28%). These low rates ultimately affecting the external reliability of the findings as a high non-response rate can lead to bias in the results, compromising inferences drawn from the data (Creswell, 2002). “Validity means that the researcher can draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population,” (Creswell, 2002, p. 183). Consequently, any results that converge from triangulating the data increase the validity of such findings, despite the issues resulting from a small sample size.

Threats to validity may be associated with Type 1 and Type 2 errors (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Type 1 errors are common where the sample is large, therefore in this research with its small sample size, Type 2 errors are more likely to occur. Type 2 errors occur when deciding there is no relationship in the population when such a
relationship actually exists. By changing to the 99% level of confidence, Type 2 errors are even more likely to occur. The results of the Spearman rho tests with high levels of correlation (> 0.5) fell within the 99% level of confidence and all the findings that had a 95% level of confidence had low levels of correlation (< 0.5). Therefore, I can assume with relative confidence that the correlations that do exist in the sample are highly likely to be evident in the population.

**STAGE 3 Focus group discussion**

**Sampling methods for the focus group**

An outline of the process for the focus group discussion was provided on the questionnaire and a permission form was available at the time the questionnaire was administered. Email was also used as a mechanism to communicate with the whole teaching staff through the liaison person in each school, to further prompt teaching staff to volunteer for the focus group. All teaching staff, except members of SMT had the opportunity to volunteer for the focus group as the potential impact of power relationships gave substantial support for the need to exclude SMT members from the focus group.

Demographic information was obtained in the permission section, with the intent of using purposive sampling to establish the focus group, thereby increasing the reliability of findings across the population (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Purposive sampling was intended to be used to ensure the current school position of members within each focus group did not involve hierarchical, departmental, syndicate or appraisal relationships to minimise the impact of power relationships on the level of disclosure in the focus group discussions (Creswell, 2002).

While the participants provided the necessary information, low levels of interest meant that I accepted all of those who volunteered. The sample size for each of the three focus groups is given in Table 3-2. The sample met the requirements outlined above, even though I had too few responses to apply the intended procedures. The small size of each focus group had a limiting effect on the potential for discussion from a wide range of perspectives (Fern, 2001). The optimal size of a focus group is around six to eight participants with the intent of gathering a disparate group likely to
have a range of perspectives on an issue so that meanings are negotiated to come to a fuller understanding of the complexity factors that contribute to issues (Fern, 2001).

Table 3-2  Focus Group Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leyland A</th>
<th>Leyland B</th>
<th>Turion C</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus group questions

Questions for the focus group were divided into sections: introductory task (written response); main questions; and concluding task (written response). The main questions for the focus group were semi-structured in that themes were established from the research questions. The research questions were broken down to three key questions exploring the positives and negatives of existing practices, possible alternatives, and how these factors influenced participant's behaviour to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of appraisal (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2002). Responses made during the focus group influenced further questions consistent with a semi-structured approach (Opie, 1999).

Both the introductory and concluding questions were structured; participants were asked to complete these in writing so that they summarised their individual perspectives. The participants had received these introductory questions and an outline of the semi-structured questions prior to the meeting. As a final task, structured questions were used to gather a written summary of the top three factors that would gain the participant’s commitment, firstly to appraisal and secondly to their school’s goals. The concluding activity helped to prioritise the most important factors whether they had been discussed or not (Fern, 2001). The main questions used for the focus group are in APPENDIX 3.

Focus group process

The focus group meetings were held at the end of a school day in a room at the school site. The familiar setting with teachers from the same school increased the likelihood that discussion would be reciprocated and more information would be shared (Fern, 2001). Focus group members signed in on arrival, giving their preferred pseudonym to be used in the research. Food and refreshments were
provided for the participants prior to starting the focus group discussion; this provided both an informal atmosphere to interact with members of the group while waiting for all to arrive, and the necessary fuel to keep the participants’ minds alert. When all members were present they were asked to take their preset position at the meeting table.

The research aims and questions were on the table in front of each participant. After introducing myself and the nature of the research, I drew attention to the focus group dynamics presented on a wall chart; these were established to facilitate open discussion and inclusive behaviours. The dynamics are outlined below:

- Keep discussion focused on the research questions
- Listen to what others have to say (let them finish speaking)
- Contribute your ideas (multiple views need to be heard)
- Add new ideas to the discussion (but avoid repeating ideas)
- Avoid using names in personal examples to prevent possible harm
- One person speaks at a time

In the introduction, I also outlined other key strategies that would be used throughout the process with the intent of gathering the range of perspectives. These strategies included:

- Asking each person to speak in turn
- Posing a question to a specific member of the group as a starting point for the group to discuss
- Using sticky notes to generate ideas as a starter to discussion
- Interrupting when necessary to ensure other views were heard or to keep the discussion on the topic

Data analysis from the focus group discussions

Useful quotes were initially summarised under key statements that were likely to be developed into themes at a later stage of analysis. The summaries were given to the participants to check for accuracy of the information gained from the focus group and to ensure the meanings portrayed in the statements reflected their initial intent. At the next stage of analysis, categories were established and refined to be consistent with those used for the document analysis. Categories were noted in the margins alongside the quotes. This process involved several readings of the summaries and further refinement of the categories and subcategories. At this stage several copies
of the transcript summaries were made, each printed on a colour to represent a single focus group. This allowed the data to be cut up into chunks while still identifying the source. The pieces were pasted on to large sheets of A2 cartridge, each cartridge paper representing one of the following major categories:

1. Purpose of appraisal;
2. Effective appraisal procedures; and
3. Factors within appraisal affecting commitment.

Subcategories were noted alongside the quotes using either letter codes or different coloured highlighters. Findings from the focus group were presented under each category and subcategory heading. Tables were developed to cross-reference quotes used for the findings, back to a specific member of a focus group. This audit trail was an important step to support the reliability and authenticity of the findings and provide a structure to assist with the triangulation of data across the three stages of research.

Reliability of focus group findings

The researcher and the members of the focus group influence each other because they “bring their own unconscious experiential and biographical baggage with them to the interview situation” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 121). Semi-structured interviews and attitudinal questions are particularly challenging when seeking reliability because firstly, the use of impromptu questions will be unique to each situation, and secondly, attitudes are not always accurately reflected in behaviours. A common shortcoming of focus groups is that the researcher has little way of establishing the extent of support or opposition to individual views. The concluding task also involved answering questions in writing in order to capture each individual’s priorities (Fern, 2001).

The ways in which I did attempt to achieve reliability across the two settings was to create a checklist to ensure I replicated the procedures in both settings. Reliability was achieved by retaining all documents and associated details of the focus group discussion. The discussion was recorded in its entirety on an Olympus digital voice recorder, ensuring both high quality sound reproduction and enough memory to record the entire session. The tapes were transcribed by the same person each time, who was given documented instructions on how to deal with nuances of speech
evident in focus group discussions. I personally checked the transcripts for accuracy against the original recording.

Reliable analysis of data from focus groups requires “conducting a systematic analysis of the transcripts or tapes to check for consistency, stability and equivalence of the moderating procedures across groups. The coding scheme is critical” (Fern, 2001, p. 95). Key words and categories were established for coding the data from both the focus group questions and the documents. As I was the sole coder, consistent interpretations of the data across the two schools, were likely.

Given the limitations of achieving reliability within qualitative research, it is important to note that the goal of qualitative research is to find precise, truthful (valid) description of a phenomenon, rather than generalise findings. Therefore, to find validity is far more important for this study.

Validity of focus group findings

“Qualitative validity means assessing whether the information obtained through the qualitative data collection is accurate” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 134). Fern (2001) claims there are three threats to validity in focus group research. These are “compliance, identification, and internalisation” (p. 229). Compliance and identification are similar in nature in that the views presented by respondents may not be their own. These situations occur when the respondent expresses views similar to the researcher (compliance) or others in the group they are attracted to (researcher or other group member).

I attempted to address these issues by asking respondents to prepare responses to questions prior to sharing ideas with the group. In particular, the pre-prepared introductory task delved into the participants’ views of appraisal before the influence of other group members (Fern, 2001). An example of a completed introductory task is shown in APPENDIX 4. The purpose of opening questions was also to make participants feel at ease with those around them and give each person a chance to speak. My reason for providing a climate that values the opinions of each respondent at the start of the meeting was that issues of compliance and identification were less likely to prevail. Furthermore, the setting for the focus group was held at the school of the participants and make-up of the focus group comprised of members from within
the same school. Although their everyday contact may have been minimal, the familiarity of the environment and people were more likely to put the respondents at ease to share information and reciprocate in discussions.

Further issues that were noted in the focus group literature suggested that some members may have been less inclined to offer their opinions in a collective group, or may have felt ill at ease because of the presence of other individuals. Although six to eight participants were recommended as the ideal size for a focus group (Fern, 2001), three were the maximum number of participants in any focus group session. The specific numbers for each session are outlined in Table 3-2. For each of the three small-sized focus groups, it was easier for me to ensure every member was given the opportunity to add to the discussion. A range of recommended focus group processes were also employed to facilitate discussion and increase involvement (Fern, 2001). These included:

- Minimising any power relationships that existed within the organisation, through excluding members of the SMT, and by having only one representative from each syndicate or department;
- Using name tents to randomly position group members around the table;
- Inviting individuals to express views that were different from the group.
- Using probing questions to find instances of alternative views or circumstances that did not conform to a particular set of beliefs.

The latter strategies were important to attempt to draw out deeply ingrained, internalised personal opinions as these were susceptible to remaining hidden when respondent’s desire to conform was strong. Rather than act as a threat to validity, conflicting and differing perspectives could provide authenticity to the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Researcher bias or “reflexivity” is a further threat to validity in that the interpretation of the data cannot be entirely objective because, in qualitative research, the researcher is part of the social, political and educational world they are studying (Morrison, 2002, p. 22). Furthermore, this is more likely to occur with inexperienced moderators, as in my case. The main issue is that the researcher “accepts responses consistent with his or her own opinions on the issue and rejects others,” (Fern, 2001, p. 94). However, the groups themselves may guard against researcher bias due to the natural expression of unanticipated and inconsistent views, particularly if the
discussion is allowed to flow with minimal direction from the researcher. The use of a semi-structured interview schedule and starter activities facilitated open discussion amongst the members. The discussion was recorded in its entirety allowing this researcher to reflect on and examine the views within the context of the full set of statements.

One approach to reduce researcher bias, for interview type data, is member checking (Creswell, 2002). In qualitative research, validity means that “the results presented accurately reflect the opinions or actions of people in the study,” (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 34). Member checks were conducted on my interpretation of the focus group discussions. For this, specific quotes were identified and grouped under broad statements summarising the collective samples of quotes. Member checking can also improve reliability through a notion taken to mean that the data are dependable (Cohen et al., 2000).

**Triangulation**

Six major themes were generated from the focus group discussions and subsequently used as a basis to analyse the results from each stage of the research, with the intent of converging findings across the three data sources, a procedure referred to as “methodological triangulation” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 113). The themes were categorised by the following terms:

- Purpose of Appraisal
- Effectiveness of Appraisal
- Ownership
- Appraisal relationships
- Trust
- Time

It was at this stage that the documents were explored in greater depth to identify the conditions evident within the appraisal system as they related to a particular theme. Findings matching the themes were identified by manually reading through the documents and using excel to collate the page references of relevant ideas. Several readings were required to have confidence in the accuracy of my interpretations, given that meanings are often hidden within the language of text. Descriptive statistics and correlation results from the questionnaire were used to give a measure of the position of staff in relation to each theme. Lastly, the findings from the focus group were used to provide an explanation of the tensions involved in each theme.
and the underlying reasons for the attitudes and behaviours of staff evident in the questionnaire findings. The analysis was completed by comparing the literature to the similarities and differences in findings of each case.

**Ethical considerations**

The names given to the private schools in the study were pseudonyms selected by myself. Furthermore, as New Zealand is a small country, it was essential to describe the schools by broad geographic and numeric descriptions to reduce the risk of their identification. The questionnaire did not have any identification that would reveal who the respondent had been. Three strategies were used to protect the focus group participants from harm as anonymity could not be guaranteed in their case:

1. Participants in the focus group were able to select their own pseudonym.
2. Members of a focus group were notified that they would likely be able to identify individual responses back to participants from within the group.
3. Focus group participants were given the opportunity to withdraw comments that they perceived might lead to their identification.

All participants were given sufficient information on the research project to provide them with an understanding of the research aims and questions, their potential involvement in any of the three stages of the research, their time commitment in the process and their access to findings from the research. Only private schools where the principal had given written consent were considered for the research.

Tacit consent was gained from stage 2 participants as a result of voluntary return of questionnaires. Focus group participants provided written consent on a separate document so that their questionnaire responses could remain anonymous. Their consent also signalled permission to use their individual responses as direct quotes. However, they were also given the opportunity to check quotes and withdraw these where they felt the need.

Focus group participants are those most likely to be concerned about the negative effects of sharing information with those to whom they report, such as Syndicate Leader's, Heads of Department (HOD) or Senior Management. I have attempted to reduce this risk by ensuring the make-up of the focus group did not include:

1. Members of Senior Management
2. Pairings from within the same department
3. Appraiser-Appraisee pairings

In addition, participants selected for the focus group were given a list of the representative sample, so that if there was a concern they could withdraw from the group before the scheduled meeting.

A summary of key ideas and any quotes from the focus group that were likely to be used were passed to individual group members as a check for accuracy. Focus group members were emailed a summary and were given two weeks to check if the statements and quotes accurately reflected the discussions. In one instance only, this resulted in some modification of one individual’s responses to address a specific concern to protect that participant from identification. Principals’ of the two private schools involved in the research were given an abbreviated report of the overall findings encompassing both private schools.

All original documents and audio tapes are at my home, and will remain secure from unauthorised access for the required period of time as directed by UNITEC (5 years following completion of the project). No individual material was passed on to other parties except where this was to support the research.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a summary of the rationale for the qualitative case study methodology and design used in conducting this research. The use of two cases and multiple methods are likely to nullify the weaknesses of a single case or single method approach. Triangulation of the data methods and comparisons across each case provided a deeper understanding of the issues affecting implementation of appraisal and greater confidence in the theories that emanate from the findings.
CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the findings for each stage of data collection. This chapter is structured so that the three stages of the research are presented as separate entities. For each stage, results are presented as a predominantly collective set across the two cases. The analysis of findings from each data set is based around the themes that have emanated from the research. The group of themes that emerged from the research are associated with: the purpose of appraisal; the effectiveness of the process; ownership; qualities of the appraisal relationship; trust; and time. In addition, appraisal policies and practices from each school have been presented, to gain some insight into the contextual influences that may have affected teachers’ attitudes to appraisal.

Stage one - appraisal documents

As the documents are required for ERO reviews of schools, and only samples of master documents associated with appraisal were sought, there appeared to be no issues with obtaining information that can sometimes arise in document research. The documents were provided by the senior manager responsible for appraisal, and clearly originated from the school. This was evident from the use of logos, and headers or footers, containing the school’s name, while page numbers showed how some documents came in sets. Access to the bank of associated online resources, in one of the schools, provided further confirmation of the authenticity of the documents. Review dates on the documents from both schools provided some assurance that these were the most recent documents. I am reasonably certain that all the available documents were given except for the omission of the appraisal policy of Turion College. An attempt to source this from the school’s website was unsuccessful.

Overview of the Appraisal Process

The ideology that frames the intent of appraisal has led to three different systems of appraisal across the two schools. The outline of processes is presented as a reflection of the value positions situated within the appraisal policies. The processes
provide important contextual information to understanding similarities and differences of each case. In essence, the contextual influences have been described to provide an insight to the possible factors that have affected teachers' commitment.

**Leyland College process**

For Leyland College, the appraisal information was available as electronic files. Some of these were overview manuscripts, with some pages available as individual documents for ease of access. Additional data gathering materials were also available for use as part of the appraisal cycle. Teachers were supplied with the manuscript related to their position within the College:

1. ‘Professional Mentoring Programme’ (‘PMP’) and ‘Continuous Improvement Cycle’ (‘CIC’) for middle and senior school teachers
2. ‘Performance Management’ manual for junior school teachers (‘PM’)

**Leyland College Junior School**

The appraisal document for the junior school teachers comprises of twenty eight pages, seven of which were related to giving guidance with another six describing the *Professional Standards*. The remaining fifteen pages were forms that need to be filled in as part of the appraisal process. The appraisal process for junior school teachers involves a one year cycle of review, beginning with a meeting with the appraiser to review past performance and to set development goals.

**Leyland College Middle and Senior Schools**

The middle/senior school ‘PMP’ document comprised of thirty pages with twelve pages as guidelines and the remaining eighteen pages as forms to be completed as part of the appraisal process. In addition to these forms, the ‘CIC’ document comprised of a further five pages of forms to be completed. The appraisal process consisted of completing both the ‘PMP’ and ‘CIC’ sections.

**Turion College process**

For Turion College, the information supplied to teachers comprised of a single manuscript of twenty six pages, the ‘Performance Development Review – process guide’ (‘PDR’). Within this, seventeen pages were forms to be used as part of the appraisal process. The remaining nine pages were designed to give guidance on the
process; this included a one-page overview. The appraisal process involved a one year cycle of review with an external appraiser, beginning with data gathering, two classroom observations, further data gathering, followed by a meeting to review the data and set developmental objectives. An overall performance grade was determined from the gathered data. These grades could result in the allocation of a monetary performance bonus for high performing staff.

Comparing procedures

All three procedures involved assessment of performance against the Professional Standards, by an appraiser that had a position of hierarchy over the teacher. All limited the number of goals to three, of which at least one was linked in some way to school goals. Classroom observations were included, although the frequency for these varied. Classroom observations were primarily for checking performance against the Professional Standards. Student feedback was also used to inform the process in all but the junior school, however, the frequency and nature of these varied. Turion College adopted a grading system for student feedback, while the process at Leyland College identified teacher attributes as either strengths or weaknesses. Appraisal discussions and review were evident in all systems, but the frequency varied. Professional development needs were identified in the process at Leyland College with the expectation that these needs would be met. While at Turion College it appeared as though it was teachers exceeding high expectations, who would primarily benefit from having their professional development needs met.

The ‘CIC’ process at Leyland College has many features that are different from the other procedures. The action research focus of the ‘CIC’ process of appraisal was to enable professional learning to occur through a process of both reflection and reflexivity (Lomax, 2002). The ‘CIC’ process can be briefly summarised as a six step process:

1. Act
2. Decide target
3. Gather data
4. Critically reflect
5. Design improvement
6. Check for change (‘CIC’, p. 2)
Table 4-1  Appraisal procedures in each school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Procedures</th>
<th>Leyland Junior School</th>
<th>Leyland ‘PMP’</th>
<th>Leyland ‘CIC’</th>
<th>Turion Senior School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher self-reflection</td>
<td>Against Professional Standards</td>
<td>Against Professional Standards</td>
<td>Finalised with facilitator</td>
<td>Max of 3 agreed goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Jun School goal Agreed PD goals Appraisee goals</td>
<td>2 areas of Professional Standards agreed with mentor*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraiser</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Appointed mentor*</td>
<td>Self-selected from list</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal discussion</td>
<td>Term 1 every year</td>
<td>Term 1 every year</td>
<td>Pre, Mid, Post Action research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>By supervisor term 2 &amp; term 3</td>
<td>By mentor* At least every 2 years</td>
<td>As appropriate to goals</td>
<td>2 formal observations by external appraiser. Some staff only have 1 observation**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher attributes survey at least every 2 years. Others as appropriate to goals. Facilitator collates data</td>
<td>Formal grades. Results need to be moderated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance review</td>
<td>Every 12 months</td>
<td>Variable within 2 year max</td>
<td>Grading every year. Every 2 years for some staff**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Procedures

| Feedback from further sources | As appropriate to goals | As appropriate to goals | As appropriate to goals | Dean, Faculty co-ordinator, DP |
| Sharing best practice | | | | Identified as a PD option |
| Mentoring | By facilitator | | | Identified as a PD option |
| Link to Professional Development opportunities | Yes | Yes | Yes | Prioritising PD for those exceeding high expectations |
| Link to Team goals | Yes | | | Faculty expectations for Key Performance Indicators |
| Link to School goals | Yes | | | ICT & Thinking skills |
| Differentiation of procedures for subgroups | New staff New staff Beginning teachers Beginning teachers | New staff Beginning teachers | New staff Beginning teachers | LAT, STC and Beginning teachers. Teachers graded 1 or 2 overall** |

* Mentor is the term for the immediate supervisor of the appraisee.
** Teachers graded 1 or 2 overall have the appraisal system extended to 2 years.

The ‘CIC’ system of appraisal, based on these action research principles, had been in action since 2000 because the principal had been discontented with the lack of outcomes of existing appraisal systems. However, ERO had found the ‘CIC’ system of appraisal lacked the required level of robustness for their purposes. ERO (2001) stated that:

The current appraisal system in the middle and senior school makes it difficult for principals to attest that staff renewing their practicing certificates meet all of the dimensions of a satisfactory teacher. It is now a matter of urgency to address this issue. (p. 4)
By the nature of the review comments, ERO appeared to have been more concerned with the use of appraisal for the assessment of teachers to ensure competency, than as a process for professional learning. As a result of this ERO report, two parallel systems were put in place for the middle and senior schools. The ‘PMP’ was added to appraisal as an accountability mechanism to meet the expectations of ERO. The ‘CIC’ and ‘PMP’ appraisal systems operated in the middle and senior schools while the junior school continued to operate its own system of appraisal.

**Ideological position of appraisal**

The ideological positions of the document are likely to influence teacher commitment, either positively or negatively, depending on the synergy between teacher’s own value positions and those reflected in the policy (Bottery, 2004). Contextual differences in appraisal, and how it is implemented, will reflect management’s view on teacher professionalism in respect to the purpose of appraisal and the level of surveillance required for teacher learning to occur. To understand how teachers’ commitment has been affected, it is important to understand the contextual influences that may have shaped this commitment. Therefore, embedded meanings within each of the documents are outlined as a framework for understanding the factors that affected teacher commitment.

The ideology that sits behind the appraisal document will be evident both explicitly by the stated aims and inherently in the manner in which key words and phrases have been used throughout the documents. Two main purposes for appraisal were identified in Chapter 1, firstly for professional learning; and secondly for accountability by assessing teachers against the *Professional Standards*. In addition to these two outcomes, a further purpose is aligned to improving school performance by connecting individual appraisal to school or team goals. Table 4-2 provides a comparative summary of the page references of key phrases linked to identifiable purposes evident within the documents. These and further examples of language used in the document are analysed for each school to provide insight to the ideological position of the documents.
The major emphasis of the appraisal cycle in the middle and senior school at Leyland College had a focus on professional learning through action research contained in the ‘CIC’ component and with ownership of this process belonging to the teacher. Ownership is considered to be a factor that may influence the success of appraisal because of its capacity to motivate teachers (Evans, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000). Furthermore, the ability to select a facilitator was more favourable to professional learning as it removed the hierarchical power influences on assessment usually associated with accountability measures. According to Smyth (2007), trust relationships are deemed necessary for learning and these are more likely to develop where teachers can select their appraiser. The extended cycle of appraisal over the two year period, provided opportunity for success by recognising that learning takes time to be embedded in practice, and that appraisal is a time-intensive activity added on to teachers’ already busy workloads.

While the priority of appraisal focuses on professional learning through the action research process, the ‘PMP’ also made provisions for the assessment of teachers against the Professional Standards, by the immediate superior of the appraisee. There had been an attempt to separate accountability aspects from the professional learning aspects of appraisal, achieved through having two appraisers; a mentor for the ‘PMP’ and a facilitator for the ‘CIC’. Existing research draws attention to the tensions evident when appraisal processes attempt to combine aspects of accountability and development (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Hill & Locke, 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). Ownership was also possible in the ‘PMP’, for selecting the two areas of the Professional Standards, against which performance

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### Table 4-2 Espoused purposes of appraisal in each school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Professional learning</th>
<th>Assessment of performance</th>
<th>Alignment to school goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leyland Policy</td>
<td>p. 2</td>
<td>Areas for development; professional development; actions to improve performance; development and evaluation of goals</td>
<td>Grading performance against indicators; several data sources to evaluate performance; pay; grades; recognition; reward</td>
<td>Emphasis on ICT and Thinking skills; development objectives derived from the school vision and/or departmental goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland Junior PM</td>
<td>pp. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10-12, 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland Middle &amp; Senior 'CIC'</td>
<td>Title, pp. 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turion 'PDR' – process guide</td>
<td>Title; pp. 2, 3-8, 9, 10, 12, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>pp. 3-8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17 – 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
was reviewed, and individual needs could be prioritised over school or team goals. There was opportunity for self-assessment against the *Professional Standards* with peer assessment informing the final judgement. As part of the ‘PMP’ accountability measures, the appraiser was required to conduct a classroom observation at least once in any two year period. Classroom observations were not specifically required for the ‘CIC’ component unless it was an agreed source of data for the goal that has been set. In this case, the relevant data was more likely to have a narrow focus than the data collected for assessment of performance as part of the ‘PMP’. The ‘CIC’ documents and the final report of the ‘PMP’, that outlined areas of strength and progress on identified goals, were then passed on to the principal. All other documentation was to remain with the appraisee, and the relevant mentor or facilitator. In so doing, there was an assurance that the process took place within a minimum accountability arrangement. These factors are consistent with a view of teachers as professionals who take responsibility for their own professional growth. In effect, these processes attempt to gain teacher commitment to the appraisal process beyond a level of compliance (Sergiovanni, 2005).

The appraisal process for the junior school at Leyland College was aligned with a multiple focus of development, assessment of performance, and a link to school goals. Three developmental goals were established at the beginning of the cycle, one of which needed to be aligned to the school’s goals (‘PM’, pp. 10-12). All goals were reviewed in term three or four. In addition, assessment of performance against the *Professional Standards* occurred in specified stages over the course of the four terms (‘PM’, p. 6). Expectations of performance were set by the principal or appraiser, with subsequent consultation with the appraisee. From these expectations, agreement was reached over development objectives and one of these needed to be aligned with school goals. The appraiser determined the ratings for the final evaluation of both the developmental objectives and the *Professional Standards*, with the provision that this “is discussed with the appraisee and agreement is sought regarding the conclusion of the evaluation” (‘PM’, p. 7). Self-assessment grades may therefore be moderated as a result of discussion with the appraiser. The appraisal process in the junior school had a strong focus on utilising external accountability measures to enhance teacher learning with what appears to be minimal ownership for individual teachers. Accordingly, Robinson and Timperley (2007) have suggested that the co-construction of goals by teachers and their developers lead to the highest gains for
students. However, other research suggests that accountability features of appraisal are likely to lead to defensiveness that hinders development (Beerens, 2000; Middlewood, 2002).

One purpose of appraisal evident in the Turion College documents was directly related to improving teacher performance. This was clearly articulated by this statement: “the whole aim of the process is to identify the actions that will make teaching performance even better” (‘PDR’, p. 12). It was also evident through the use of terms such as “areas for development” “agreed development actions” in various sections of the appraisal forms, as shown in Table 4-2. However, several factors indicate that while this purpose was identified as desirable, it held a lower priority than the assessment of teachers for grading. In the first instance, the sequence of appraisal procedures was based on collecting a comprehensive set of data to grade performance including two or more classroom observations. At the conclusion of the data collection, performance was assessed against all the performance indicators and developmental actions were agreed, indicating that there was an intent to improve performance. It is unclear from the process who initiates the developmental actions, except it is feasible that these would be determined from the appraisers assessment grades. At Turion College, data collection for the appraisal procedure was completed by the external appraiser, who also determined the performance assessment grades that are passed on to the principal. As a result, teachers at Turion College are likely to have experienced little ownership in the process. All information was passed on to the principal who then made the final decision on the allocation of bonuses as a result of the process.

A second purpose identified in the documents was related to assessment of teacher performance. As already indicated in the previous paragraph, there was a strong emphasis on the collection of data in order to grade teacher performance against the Professional Standards. Moreover, the school had invested “significant resources” to ensure objectivity, through the use of an external appraiser (‘PDR’, p. 14). Teachers were graded by the external appraiser against each area of the Professional Standards, with overall grades used to reward staff exceeding high expectations, possibly through performance bonuses (‘PDR’, pp. 13 - 14). However, assessment of a teacher’s performance is problematic because desirable outcomes of schooling are often difficult to ascertain (Beerens, 2000; Gunter, 2001; Husbands, 2001).
Furthermore, issues surrounding the authenticity of teacher behaviour for classroom observations, have been evident (Ball, 2003).

At Turion College, it appears as though grading and subsequent rewards were used to gain teacher commitment to their learning. Two statements strongly suggested that appraisal was a mechanism to reward high performing teachers through remuneration and professional development opportunities.

In addition, to help prioritise professional development activity, grades will be used to reward those individuals who are consistently exceeding our high expectation levels. (‘PDR’, p. 13)

The extent to which individuals fully and consistently meet or fail to meet our high expectations levels will be reflected in their base salary and/or a performance bonus, during their individual, annual pay review. (‘PDR’, p. 14)

It seemed that those who were not meeting expectations were less likely to receive the necessary professional development in order to address areas of weakness. If those most in need of professional development are least likely to receive it, then claims that appraisal is for improving performance seem to lack authenticity.

**Questionnaire results**

Despite the potential for a large sample size and the rigorous measures to ensure a high rate of return, the rate of participation was lower than desired with only 31 responses from a possible 199 (17% overall). It was not always possible to distinguish those in SMT positions and purely administrative roles, from the staff lists provided, which may have contributed to errors in determining true response rates. A copy of the questionnaire used for the research is given in APPENDIX 2.

The design of the questionnaire included scale questions to gather teachers’ feelings associated with appraisal, and category questions that gathered information about their appraisal practices. A full summary of the comparative mean scores from the scale questions is presented in Table 4-3. The list was ranked from highest in the overall data, showing the statements that were the most strongly supported at the top, to lowest ratings. The most significant results from the ranked means show that these teachers feel an obligation to contribute to improvement in their school ($\bar{x} = 4.1, n = 33$), and it would appear that this is confirmed by the alignment of some of their personal goals to those of the school ($\bar{x} = 4.0, n = 33$). They also appear willing
to devote personal time to their improvement ($\bar{x} = 3.8, n = 32$). These examples would suggest that teachers have a professional attitude to their work.

The process of self-review was the factor most likely to contribute to a change in their teaching practice ($\bar{x} = 4.0, n = 32$), confirming what has been argued by others (Norsworthy, 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). It is also evident that change has occurred in their practice ($\bar{x} = 3.9, n = 33$) and consequently that teaching is a profession that involves life-long learning. It would appear from the low level of ownership experienced by these teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.2, n = 33$), that appraisal is perceived to be a mandated process. Furthermore, many of the common appraisal procedures appear to hold little value. It also appears that appraisal itself has had little impact on improving their practice ($\bar{x} = 2.4, n = 33$). However, these teachers did not believe that mandates were needed to enhance their teaching practice ($\bar{x} = 2.5, n = 32$).

While the differences cannot be tested statistically due to the small sample size, comparisons between schools do show some patterns that are worthy of closer examination because they highlight possible differences between the two schools, and these may be relevant to the research findings. In summary, teachers at Leyland College were more likely to:

- Be willing to devote personal time to their development;
- Believe that the process of self-review had influenced a change in their practice;
- Have found discussions with other colleagues to be more worthwhile;
- Be motivated to change as a result of student feedback;
- Align their goals to dept/syndicate goals;
- Align their goals to the organisation;
- Perceive that their professional development needs were being met;
- Have had mandatory professional development;
- Gather feedback from a wide range of sources;
- Meet with their appraiser more than twice a year; and
- Request other colleagues to come observe them.
Table 4-3 Comparison of ranked means for scale questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Leyland (n = 22)</th>
<th>Turion (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q9 Obligation to contribute to improvement</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 Self-review has potential to influence change</td>
<td>4.0*</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 Professional discussions with other colleagues have been worthwhile</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 I align some personal goals with my organisation’s goals</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 Change has occurred in classroom practice</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 Willing to devote personal time</td>
<td>3.8*</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19 The feedback from my students motivates me to develop my teaching</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20 The feedback from my appraiser is objective</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16 Classroom observations of other colleagues are worthwhile</td>
<td>3.6**</td>
<td>3.6*</td>
<td>3.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 I align some personal goals with team/syndicate goals</td>
<td>3.6*</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26 My personal professional development needs are met with full support by my organisation</td>
<td>3.6*</td>
<td>3.8*</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17 Fully supported by appraiser in development as a teacher</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27 Some of the professional development opportunities I have undertaken are mandatory</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15 Professional discussions within my department have been worthwhile</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Ownership of my appraisal process</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18 Feedback from appraiser motivates me to develop my teaching</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 Feedback from classroom observations by appraiser have been worthwhile</td>
<td>3.0*</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11 Appraisal meetings are worthwhile</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28 Appraisal goals should be achievable in the same year as they are established</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q31 The appraisal process should be a catalyst for remuneration</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 External forces are needed to motivate teachers to change</td>
<td>2.5*</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30 The appraisal process should be a catalyst for promotion</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23 The school’s appraisal process is a major factor in bringing about change to my teaching</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 Some aspects of appraisal give me cause for high levels of stress</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes one piece of missing data

The Spearman’s Rho test of association was conducted to verify any relationships between the scale questions. The significant results of this analysis are presented as Figure 4-1 to illustrate the stronger correlations that existed in the data (r > 0.5 at the 0.01 level of significance). The line thickness corresponds to the strength of the relationship as shown in the key. The symbols shown in the key correspond to the level of the mean score for each item. The scale ranged from 0.0 (strongly disagree) to 5.0 (strongly agree). An interpretation of the collective results of scale and category questions, and significant relationships found in the data, is outlined in the next section.
Interpretation of the findings

Ownership

The most significant difference in scores between the two schools was related to Question 7, on ownership. Teachers at Leyland College appear to have a moderate sense of ownership in their appraisal ($\bar{x} = 3.6, n = 33$). Furthermore, this rating was much higher than teachers at Turion College ($\bar{x} = 2.4, n = 22$), indicating that there may be some evidence that the differences between each appraisal process were contributing to this increased sense of ownership. Opportunities for ownership
occurred throughout the ‘CiC’ and aspects of the ‘PMP’. Closer examination of the results at Leyland College show them to be skewed because the majority of teachers did rate their sense of ownership higher than the mean (72.7%, n = 22). But there were also some teachers at the other end of the scale. These teachers disagreed (\( \bar{x} < 2 \)), some more strongly, that they had ownership (18.2%, n = 22). It is possible that these differences may be attributable to the different systems of appraisal operating at Leyland College because the junior school ‘PM’ offers less ownership of the process. Evidence of processes at Turion College suggest appraisal is largely led by the external appraiser.

Staff feelings about ownership of appraisal appeared to correspond to a belief that their professional development needs were being met by the organisation \( (r = 0.615) \). The individual school data appears to confirm this relationship; Leyland College staff were more convinced their professional development needs were met by their organisation (\( \bar{x} = 3.8 \), n = 22) than staff at Turion College (\( \bar{x} = 3.2 \), n = 11). The majority of staff at Leyland College (71%, n = 21) had both a sense of ownership (\( \bar{x} > 2.5 \)) and their professional development needs were met (\( \bar{x} > 2.5 \)). Because most of the remaining teachers had not had their professional development needs met (24%, n = 21), it seems their sense of ownership had been affected by this. The findings from the questionnaire confirm that teachers at Turion College were also less likely to feel they had undertaken mandatory professional development. A weak association between two factors, having professional development needs met and aligning goals to the organisation, had been found from the Spearman’s Rho analysis of the complete set of data. The scores for both these factors were lower for Turion College, which provides probable evidence that the inference may be true. The differences in the results on ownership and professional development between the two schools seem to confirm that the absence of available professional development at Turion College, might be affecting both the individual teacher, and the school.

A chi square test for independence was used to check for an association between ownership and teacher input into the review of their school’s appraisal system. Categories were collapsed for both Q7 and Q32 in order to ensure the cell frequencies were sufficiently high to obtain a significant result. The scale question was divided into two groups; results 3.0 or less were coded 0 and those 3.5 or higher were coded 1. A value above the centre of the scale was chosen because the scale
question was skewed to the high end with the median given at 3.5. The categories for Question 32 were collapsed so all those with no input into appraisal were coded together and those with at least a little input into appraisal were all coded together. The results are presented in Table 4-4. All expected cell frequencies were greater than 6.36 therefore assumptions about cell frequencies of the chi-square test were not violated. The Yates’ Correction for Continuity was given as 4.103, with an associated significance level of 0.043 indicating that the result was significant.

Table 4-4 Comparing ownership and input into review of appraisal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7. Ownership of my appraisal process</th>
<th>Q32. Level of input into review of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>No input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3.0</td>
<td>12 (36.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 to 5</td>
<td>7 (21.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of input into the review of appraisal was connected to a feeling of ownership in the process by 69.7% (n = 33) in the overall sample. Despite having no input into the review of appraisal, some (21.2%, n = 33) still felt ownership, indicating other factors are also likely to be contributing to this sense of ownership. Some (9.1%, n = 33) did not feel ownership despite having at least a little input into the review of appraisal. This may suggest, for some, only higher levels of input into review can contribute to a sense of ownership. Alternatively, more important factors may be working against the possible sense of ownership gained from input into the review.

The association between ownership and review of appraisal was not apparent in the singular results of Leyland College, shown in Table 4-5. Half of the teachers, who rated their sense of ownership at 3.5 or higher, did not have any input into the review of appraisal. This would seem to indicate that there are other factors that contribute to their sense of ownership.

Table 4-5 Comparing ownership and input into review of appraisal at Leyland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leyland College (n = 22)</th>
<th>Q32. Level of input into review of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>No input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3.0</td>
<td>4 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 to 5</td>
<td>8 (36.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-6 holds the specific data from Turion College and shows that most teachers had no input into the review of appraisal in their current school (81.8%, n = 11), and most of these participants ranked ownership at 3.5 or lower (63.6%, n = 11). Only one participant felt they had adequate input into the review of appraisal, and they felt a strong sense of ownership (x̄ = 5.0). The findings from Turion College corroborate the overall findings and seem to suggest that a lower level of input into the review of appraisal may therefore offer one explanation of the lower mean rating for their sense of ownership in appraisal (x̄ = 2.4, n = 22).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turion College (n = 11)</th>
<th>Q32. Level of input into review of appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>No input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3.0</td>
<td>7 (63.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 to 5</td>
<td>2 (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most teachers in the survey (81.8%, n = 33) said they enhanced their development in ways other than through appraisal. They also personally searched for professional development to meet their own needs in the last two years (93.9%, n = 33). Their commitment to improving their teaching is also confirmed by the number who have indicated that they have embraced a change in their guiding beliefs (74.2%, n = 31), or those that have observed the practice of other teachers out of personal choice (72.7%, n = 33). These findings would seem to suggest that teachers have a professional approach to their job. In contrast to this professional approach, most of the teachers (97%, n = 33) are less enthusiastic about inviting others to observe their own teaching practice.

Teachers also appeared to agree that they had an obligation to contribute to improvement in their organisation (x̄ = 4.1, n = 33). This belief had the highest overall ranking and the mean was also consistent across the two schools. Furthermore, teachers agreed that they aligned some of their goals to the organisation (x̄ = 4.0, n = 33). The two factors that seemed to be most associated with this were the degree to which professional development needs were being met by the organisation (r = 0.52), and the value of self-review as a potential to influence change (r = 0.57).
would appear mutuality between teachers’ goals and school goals may occur as a result of a reciprocal relationship of support between teachers and the school.

**Effectiveness of the process**

The findings indicate that appraisal in these schools has no significant influence in bringing about change to teaching practice ($\bar{x} < 2.5$, $n = 33$) and this question was ranked second lowest on the table. An analysis of the Spearman’s Rho correlation coefficients, for each of the items on the scale question, revealed that attitudes to several aspects of the appraisal process appeared to be associated with this finding. The strongest of these relationships linked three common appraisal procedures to the stated outcome of appraisal; appraiser observation of classroom practice ($r = 0.82$), appraisal meetings ($r = 0.75$), and feedback from the appraiser ($r = 0.74$). Furthermore, the interconnections between these factors also has a strong relationship with correlations ranging from 0.78 to 0.81. Not only were each of these factors interrelated, the mean rating of 3.0 for all three procedures indicates that little value was also given to these common appraisal practices that are intended to influence change in classroom practice.

In contrast, self-review was valued as a factor to bring about change ($\bar{x} = 4.0$, $n = 32$). It would appear as though these teachers failed to connect this with the outcomes of appraisal because there was no significant association between the two items. Self-review did appear to be linked, somewhat weakly, to other factors that were perceived as valuable; professional discussions with other colleagues ($r = 0.58$, $\bar{x} = 4.0$), aligning goals to the organisation ($r = 0.57$, $\bar{x} = 4.0$), and feedback from students influencing change in their practice ($r = 0.53$, $\bar{x} = 3.8$). These findings suggest the procedures contributing most to change have the potential to operate independently of appraisal. This is because none of the afore-mentioned procedures has been associated with the outcome of appraisal, even though they are part of current appraisal practices.

Results from the questionnaire seem to back up the importance of training to increase the effectiveness of appraisal. The results for Leyland College are shown in Table 4-7. These results appear to indicate that half the teachers in the survey have had no formal training in appraisal as an appraisee or appraiser. Results also show
there was more support for all appraisers to be trained, than for all teachers, however, voluntary training for the appraisee was also well-supported.

### Table 4-7 Experiences and attitudes to appraisal training for Leyland College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appraisee (n = 22)</th>
<th>Appraiser (n = 22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48 &amp; 50</td>
<td>I have received no formal training as ...</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>50.0%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 &amp; 50</td>
<td>I have received adequate or extensive training as ...</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>36.4%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 &amp; 47</td>
<td>Training is needed for all teachers as ...</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 &amp; 47</td>
<td>Training is needed for some or all teachers as ...</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 &amp; 51</td>
<td>I would like formal training as ...</td>
<td>31.8%*</td>
<td>36.4%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes one piece of missing data

Teachers at Turion College seem to have advocated more strongly that training is important for both parties in the appraisal relationship. Turion College results are shown in Table 4-8, and these results indicate that more of the teachers have had professional development for appraisal than teachers at Leyland College, but this had been as an appraisee. However, it would appear that more teachers at Turion College want training, and the number of teachers exceeds those who had received none in the past. In particular, a very high number had wanted appraiser training (81.8%, n = 11) despite a lack of need to offer appraiser training to the staff as a whole, because of the use of an external appraiser.

### Table 4-8 Experiences and attitudes to appraisal training at Turion College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appraisee (n = 11)</th>
<th>Appraiser (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48 &amp; 50</td>
<td>I have received no formal training as ...</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 &amp; 50</td>
<td>I have received adequate or extensive training as ...</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 &amp; 47</td>
<td>Training is needed for all teachers as ...</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 &amp; 47</td>
<td>Training is needed for some or all teachers as ...</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 &amp; 51</td>
<td>I would like formal training as ...</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes one piece of missing data

### Appraisal relationships

A factor that appeared to be strongly associated with the appraiser’s influence on a teacher’s motivation to change, is the relationship between the appraiser and the
appraisee ($r = 0.773$). For most teachers (84.8%, $n = 33$) appraisal had not affected their appraisal relationship in a negative way. For many (63.6%, $n = 33$) the relationship had not changed with their current appraiser. For the remaining teachers (15.2%, $n = 33$), their appraisee/appraiser relationship had changed in at least some negative way. Many teachers feel supported by their appraiser to some extent ($\bar{x} = 3.5$, $n = 33$). More teachers had experienced positive improvements from a new appraisal relationship than those whose experiences had changed for the worse ($\bar{x} = 9.1$, $n = 33$). It would appear from the results that a more supportive appraisal relationship is desirable, although the current level of support is acceptable.

A comparison of results between the schools related to the appraisal relationship, is given in Table 4-9. These show that teachers at Turion College did not feel as fully supported by the external appraiser ($\bar{x} = 3.0$, $n = 11$). There were also further indications, that the appraisal relationship had not been as positive as those at Leyland College. In addition, more teachers believed their appraisal relationship had been negatively affected, and fewer teachers had experienced a positive change in this relationship. More teachers felt that the appraisal relationship had changed in a negative way from previous relationships (18.2%, $n = 11$), than others from Turion College who believed it had changed positively (9.1%, $n = 11$). Results overall provide strong evidence that building a supportive relationship with an external appraiser had been very problematic.

Table 4-9  Comparisons of factors related to the appraisal relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Leyland (n = 22)</th>
<th>Turion (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Appraisal meetings are worthwhile</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.0$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 2.8$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Appraiser feedback from observations is worthwhile</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 2.9$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.2$*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Fully supported by appraiser to develop professionally</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.7$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.0$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Feedback from appraiser develops my teaching</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.1$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.0$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Feedback from my appraiser is objective</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.6$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.6$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Some aspects of appraisal cause high levels of stress</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 2.2$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 2.6$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Meeting with appraiser 3 or more times a year</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>The appraisal relationship has been affected positively</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>The appraisal relationship has been affected negatively</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>The appraisal relationship has changed positively</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>The appraisal relationship has changed negatively</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes one piece of missing data
What does need to be taken into account in this school is that the teachers felt the purpose of their appraisal system to be a mechanism to assess their performance. In such a system, impartiality would be a key consideration. However, it appears likely that using an external appraiser has made ongoing consultation more difficult. As noted in Table 4-9, fewer meetings occurred between the appraisee and appraiser at Turion College. For example, one teacher had not met with the appraiser at all, and one met the appraiser less than once a year. In addition only a few (18%, n = 11) met with the appraiser three or more times a year. Less ongoing contact may limit knowledge shared in the partnership, which can then impact on the time it takes to develop a relationship of trust. Lack of regular contact between teachers and the external appraiser appear to have hindered the development of a supportive relationship.

The one area that appears to be less positive at Leyland College was related to feedback from classroom observations by the appraiser. The speculated reasons for this could be due to the lack of classroom observations, lack of constructive feedback, or inadequacy of the data that had been collected. The results from the questionnaire confirm that for half of the teachers (50.0%, n = 22) classroom observations occur less than once per year, and some of these teachers (36.4%, n = 22), were not observed at all.

The analysis of data from the Spearman’s Rho test of association appeared to show that the appraisal relationship was a possible cause contributing to perceived outcomes of appraisal. Several factors connected with the appraisal relationship were directly or indirectly associated with the potential of appraisal to bring about change:

- the degree to which feedback from the appraiser had a motivating influence to bring about change ($\bar{x} = 3.0, r = 0.77$);
- the perceived value of appraisal meetings ($\bar{x} = 3.0, r = 7.4$);
- the supposed objectivity of feedback ($\bar{x} = 3.6, r = 0.68$);
- the apparent value of classroom observation by the appraiser ($\bar{x} = 3.0, r = 0.67$); and
- the potential for self-review to bring about change ($\bar{x} = 4.0, r = 0.62$).

All of these factors encompass most of the set of common appraisal procedures. Of these correlations, the appraisal relationship had the lowest association with self-
review, yet a teacher’s practice was most likely to change as a result of self-review. Consequently, it would seem that the appraisal relationship has little influence on the outcomes of the self-review. In contrast, there was only a weak link between having a supportive appraiser and the impact of appraisal to change practice. This would appear to suggest that other factors within the appraisal relationship may possibly contribute to the perceived lack of value in appraisal. Considering the impact that the appraisal relationship would look to have on the outcome of appraisal, it is understandable that training in appraisal would also be seen as important.

Themes from focus group discussions

A valued purpose?

Participants’ perceptions on the purpose of appraisal in their school are shown in Table 4-10. Some teachers at Leyland College appear to acknowledge that learning is situated at the core intent of appraisal at their school, while others appeared to say the purpose was for accountability. This may reflect the different models that operate across the junior, middle and senior schools. According to Lomax (2002), the action research of the ‘CIC’ at Leyland College provided a sound foundation for professional growth. Despite this, the feelings about appraisal of teachers’ at Leyland College are not different to those of Turion College.

Participants’ views on what they believed should be the purpose of appraisal were explored. One idea came through more clearly than any other; teachers’ needs should be at the centre of appraisal and it’s main purpose should be as a mechanism to improve teacher performance. Appraisal has the potential to capture a teacher’s inherent desire to improve and become a mechanism to support this desire. Doing the best for the students they teach seemed to be a key motivating factor. These ideas were expressed across a wide range of the focus group members:

WORKERBEE: I probably more appraise myself than what my appraiser appraises me because I am committed to what I am actually doing.

ANA: In general, I think it is a good idea to have an appraisal, because I think it can improve your teaching.

LAUREN: You do better because you want to do better for the kids that you teach.
There was an expectation that goal setting was an important process within appraisal that would increase staff commitment. Overall, goal setting was considered a worthwhile aspect of appraisal because it was an indication that learning was a valued part of the appraisal process.

**JANICE:** ...you should be able to say by the end of the year, I want to have achieved this and set a goal, something to do with yourself...So that at the end of the year you can see that you made progress.

While there was clear support from the focus groups for a professional development approach to appraisal, there was also recognition that this approach was problematic because some failed to set challenging goals or address areas of need. Others were considered experts already. Overall, there was more support for the idea that individual teacher’s developmental needs should be central to appraisal. The following comments sum up these contrasting views:

**PETER:** If you have got staff that have ownership of appraisal, they see the point in it; they see it as a positive way of improving their performance as a teacher and progressing in their chosen career. Then you will get teachers who suggest how they can improve, they are more willing to have people in and assess how they are progressing, they will do a better job, the marks or grades will improve, the school will run better, the management will be happy. If you don’t do that you will get a very cynical bunch of teachers.

**WORKERBEE:** Some of my teachers sit and make things up, particularly with this one here, their personal professional development. They really struggle with this one. They’ve come to a point in their careers where they probably could be lecturing in certain things because they are so knowledgeable so they think - What can I do this year to stretch myself? – Sometimes I think - Isn’t it enough to be a really good teacher?

---

**Table 4-10 Teachers’ perspectives on the purpose of appraisal in their school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leyland College</th>
<th>Turion College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The current system for me is a complete waste of time as there is no ongoing formal observation of teaching practices, or subsequent recommendations, suggestions, advice or sharing of ideas as part of the appraisal system. The system serves nobody’s interest.</td>
<td>To check that teachers are teaching OK. To pretend to offer rewards for excellent teaching (but only rewards the favourites who do the most around the school – which is nothing to do with the classes watched for appraisal). Serves senior exec – meets ministerial guidelines and offers false hope for staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purpose is to help the teachers be the best that they can be which will benefit the students.</td>
<td>The management. The management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management interests as well as mine. It serves as a reminder.</td>
<td>Who gets bonus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet the requirements of ERO.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current system for me is a complete waste of time as there is no ongoing formal observation of teaching practices, or subsequent recommendations, suggestions, advice or sharing of ideas as part of the appraisal system. The system serves nobody’s interest. To check that teachers are teaching OK. To pretend to offer rewards for excellent teaching (but only rewards the favourites who do the most around the school – which is nothing to do with the classes watched for appraisal). Serves senior exec – meets ministerial guidelines and offers false hope for staff. The purpose is to help the teachers be the best that they can be which will benefit the students. The management. The management. Management interests as well as mine. It serves as a reminder. Who gets bonus? To meet the requirements of ERO.
Providing opportunities for teachers to develop their craft, whether through mentoring, in-house professional development, or courses, was sanctioned by focus group members to be an essential part of the appraisal process that would increase their commitment in the process. This was consistent with their belief that appraisal should be centred around improving a teacher’s practice. These are illustrated in the selection of comments below:

JANICE: I haven’t been given professional development for [my needs]. I have been asking for it all year. And at the end of the day that would show that they want me to do well, as much as I want me to do well. And so that would increase my commitment a little bit as well.

PETER: Linking that back to appraisal, if you had a weakness … or you had an interest in a particular area, you could tie that into your appraisal so that in “x” months time you could show that professionally you are targeting that area, either by attending a course or by having it reassessed later on… As far as I can see there is no linking the performance in the appraisal to future professional development opportunities, so I question the motives for it.

Several focus group members made reference to the flow on effect of benefits to students and the school. Yvonne’s comment below summarises these views:

YVONNE: ...I tend to think that if you have got very happy, highly motivated staff that are constantly reviewing what they are doing and improving on what they are doing, that the school’s interest would be served… I personally think if teachers interests are at the top, the filter on effect will be that the school is going to benefit and the students are going to benefit.

Where teachers needs were not central to appraisal the only benefit was that the senior management were seen to be meeting their obligatory requirements. An approach to appraisal that accurately assesses the performance of teachers is fraught with challenges because appraisal only offers a snapshot of what teachers do. In the case below, the comment implies that any process not based on improving teacher performance only serves management’s interest to meet their statutory obligations:

JANICE: If you can get it right at the bottom with teachers everybody benefits all the way through. But if you don’t, the only person benefiting are the senior management who are meeting all the government guidelines they are meant to be doing.

In contrast, Doris felt there was a need to assess the performance of teachers against the Professional Standards, by someone else, because some would not necessarily challenge themselves without pressure from others.

DORIS: ...there are some people who will just not choose the things that are disadvantaging their students, are making life difficult for other teachers, will require them
to put in an effort that they are simply not prepared to give...Being able to choose whatever you want, they can go for a soft and easy option all the time.

There was evidence that the current systems at both Leyland College and Turion College had attempted to link appraisal to school goals. It was also clear that staff commitment to these goals could vary. The following selection sheds light on some of the influential factors:

**WORKERBEE:** We have a thing that the school is doing so all the staff have to be on board with it, so for me that’s fine. But, what decreases my commitment is not everybody gets on board, so you've got those knife stabbers that are saying it’s a load of rubbish...There are still people that dislike change, so that’s when things fall down too. But that’s human nature though, isn’t it?

**PHAEDRUS:** Well I just turn off if somebody wants me to do something that I don’t see any point in. I’ll go through the motions and that’s my attitude to it. On the positive side, if I can see a clear avenue to improve and it’s achievable, then I’ll go for it straight away.

**YVONNE:** I think it would have to be based on an individual basis....you might have 10% of... teachers who have more pressing needs than being on board, or they need even more time given to them to counteract these needs that they have here, as well as this new programme that the school is trying to implement.

It would be fair to say that the discussion that took place associating appraisal to team or school goals failed to give a clear indication of the benefits of this. The influencing factors were the feelings and attitudes of others; the relevance of the goals to the individual; and the individual’s current priorities. Most of these factors appear to be consistent with the belief that appraisal should be firmly based around the needs of the individual teacher.

Affirmation stemming from appraisal was perceived to be a significant factor, by several focus group members, that could increase teacher commitment to the process. It would appear that the potential for valuing teachers through appraisal has not yet been realised. Appraisal can be a way of giving positive feedback and therefore be a motivating force that affects teachers’ attitudes to their work and their job satisfaction.

**YVONNE:** I just think the whole process is something that is really positive, or can be really positive, because you get some really positive feedback from someone which is always nice. We all like to be patted on the back.

**ANA:** I just thought that appraisal should be a means to make teachers feel happier because they feel they are being valued, they feel they are learning themselves, they feel they are improving their results, they are likely to have students who are happy with the way they teach and the students are learning.
Factors affecting commitment

The focus group reflected over a wide range of factors that affected their commitment. The collective results are summarised in the next section under the following themes: effectiveness of the process; ownership; qualities of the appraisal relationship; trust; and time.

Effectiveness of the process

Whether the process is effective, affects teachers commitment to appraisal. But on the flip side of the coin, the effectiveness of appraisal is also affected by the level of commitment given in the first place. Perceptions that appraisal could be valuable in improving practice, did not translate into behaviours. There appeared to be little commitment to appraisal other than to fulfil accountability requirements. This is evident in the feelings gathered from the introductory task that are shown in Table 4-11. It would appear from these focus group members that the process in both schools have failed to capture teacher commitment, yet without this commitment, there is little chance that appraisal will result in positive outcomes.

Table 4-11 Feelings associated with experiences of appraisal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leyland College</th>
<th>Turion College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have always found it to be a positive experience so long as the person appraising is eager to be involved in the process. Some see it as a chore.</td>
<td>Why? Snapshot – criteria ➔ students appraisal are variable. Nebulous reasons, not clearly defined. Stressful – obviously. Anecdotally the appraiser doesn’t like the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My most recent past school developed a system of peer observation that took place once a year. The idea was that a mutually agreed lesson was arranged between teacher and observer from the same discipline ... The intention was to improve technique in the classroom and preparation if that was an issue. Sharing of ideas at all levels was encouraged and embraced by all staff within and across departments. Now that was a system that worked.</td>
<td>At my last school appraisals were constructive; you talked about specific areas you wanted appraisal to focus on – to help you develop professionally. They would give constructive feedback and ideas etc. Here the external appraiser doesn’t do this and hasn’t spoken to me since the appraisal. He sent his preliminary report to me but hasn’t allowed me a chance to discuss it at all. As you can tell I have become very negative about the appraisal system...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After teaching for 20 years, is it really necessary to be observed particularly by someone that may not necessarily have taught for many years? I’d like to be observed by someone who shows interest throughout the year not just one lesson! Someone who helps with planning and maybe shares in the commitment to children’s learning.</td>
<td>Appraiser fab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lip-service, seems like there is no real accountability compared to other schools when the appraiser is more up-front about what s/he thinks the staff member needs to approve.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Finding solutions to this dilemma is at the heart of this research project. Therefore, as a concluding activity, the focus group members were asked to summarise and rank the three most important factors that would gain their commitment to appraisal. The results are presented in Table 4-12. The most significant factors would appear to be an effective appraisal relationship, transparent purposes with some varying views as to whether this should be for accountability or professional development, valuing the appraisee and their individual needs, and trust where openness and transparency are conditions that foster such trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Ranked 1st</th>
<th>Ranked 2nd</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>Appraised by person who is totally devoted to necessities of professional development.</td>
<td>Appraised by person who shows interest in you as a person.</td>
<td>Accountability is addressed. Appraiser has the authority and the power to make change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>A process that values me as a teacher.</td>
<td>Trust in the process and appraisee.</td>
<td>A more rigorous process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>Sharing of teaching ideas with peers.</td>
<td>Appraisers from same teaching area and level.</td>
<td>Knowing appraiser was “on my side”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>Having the right people lead from the top.</td>
<td>Matching staff and appraiser in the best possible way.</td>
<td>Real accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turion</td>
<td>Individualised to my needs/situation.</td>
<td>Openness.</td>
<td>Two way conversations / feedback. Not obscured by money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turion</td>
<td>Increased transparency of the system.</td>
<td>Link appraisal to target setting for staff and school.</td>
<td>Link appraisal to professional development and career development or academic study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whatever system was in place, teachers wanted a clearly defined process that involved both expectations and timelines. Yvonne also commented that “paying lip service" to the process would decrease her commitment. Therefore, having a process alone does not ensure that teachers would value the outcomes of the process. Uncertainty within the process appeared to further diminish the belief that the outcomes of a less structured approach could be worthwhile. Sometimes this uncertainty stemmed from unexplained changes to the process. The concerns expressed below may carry truth for a significant number of the staff:

YVONNE: It would decrease my commitment if I didn’t feel that there was a trust, if you didn’t trust the systems as such. And it would decrease my commitment, if they (the appraisers) were paying lip service, and ticking off boxes, because that’s all they are going to do with it... I found that the state school was a lot more rigorous in its application of the appraisal system and it was a definite process that you went through, and I knew
when certain things were coming up and certain things had to be filled in...as opposed to here sometimes, I'm not quite sure what's going on.

ANA: The appraisal system was sort of put in and then phased out again without actually ever talking about why it was phased out. I felt that I did all that work and despite that, now I can just throw the folder in the bin as it's no longer needed.

Appraisal is a mandated requirement of teachers at both schools. On the whole, the current systems had not gained teacher commitment as form-filling seemed to dominate the appraisal process as part of the accountability mechanisms of the process.

DORIS: There is nobody really making appraisal a priority other than when you have these systems set up and you do have to; somebody is saying it's about time we got together and talked about such and such and it makes it happen.

WORKERBEE: And like Doris said, it's kind of lip service, it's like my appraiser has no real interest in my professional development; they're interested in filling in [the appraisal documents] and getting the job done.

PHAEDRUS: I still feel there was a little bit of form filling, going through the motions, lip service, people not really committed to what was going on. I think I would be more committed if I knew appraisal was more that just a mechanism for accountability.

ANA: I think ... appraisals should come from the heart because when something comes from the heart then you are willing to commit yourself and you also feel something positive is going to come out of it. I feel the appraisal processes that I have been part of do not come from the heart.

In somewhat contradictory statements, Peter made the following series of comments:

PETER: I think if you made it optional, I think if you made it less important...then I think you would get a completely different set of commitments to it...I can see no day to day reason why I should increase my commitment to appraisal at all beyond I want to be a professional. I want to be good at my job and appraisal is part of my job...I can see the reason why they have [appraisal] and I think it's because they are told they have to have it.

It would seem that Peter supports appraisal as a mandated requirement, but the current system has failed to gain his commitment beyond meeting his obligations as a teacher. Rather than the obligation to have an appraisal system, it is the application of procedures within the system that appears to be the most significant factor affecting this commitment. The requirement to complete forms as part of the appraisal process of both schools has failed to capture teacher commitment to the process, beyond fulfilling minimal requirements.

Furthermore, the lack of classroom observations to support learning appeared to be an area of concern at Leyland College:
PHAEDRUS: *The current system is, for me, a complete waste of time, as there is no ongoing formal observation of teaching practices that I have observed, or subsequent recommendations, suggestions, advice, or sharing of ideas as part of the appraisal system.*

Ownership

A sense of ownership was seen to be a significant factor in gaining teacher commitment to appraisal. This was expressed by nearly all the focus group members. The following expert from the focus group discussions illustrates this point.

"MONIQUE: Could appraisal be established in a way that would gain commitment from staff because it actually was a positive experience for them in terms of their professional learning."

"LAUREN: Until they feel like they have ownership of it, it’s never going to.

"MONIQUE: And what would give ownership?"

"LAUREN: Having control over some of the variables."

"JANICE: That of course means they have to ask you in the first place. It comes back to you being able to set your own standards within your appraisal or your department sets standards."

The factors identified by the focus group included teachers setting their own standards, and being able to review the process itself. Their comments would suggest that teacher ownership would need to go beyond the self-review process to having control over the Professional Standards relevant to their subject area. Somewhat in contrast, Doris wanted a clear direction and vision. She said:

"DORIS: I like to have someone at the top saying this is my vision, this is how I want it to be, and these are my expectations. And I buy into that, I get motivated by knowing what they want...I want to be told what I’m supposed to be doing."

The challenge is to find a way to combine both positions, one where there is a clear vision and expectations, coupled with the flexibility to give ownership to meet individual’s needs. Another factor that was mentioned was the need for the appraiser to have ownership of their role. This is discussed later in the section on qualities of the appraisal relationship.

Ownership was also evident in the way these teachers perceived classroom observations should be conducted. Classroom observations were highly valued as a tool to reflect on current practice and to offer valuable professional development, particularly when teachers were given the option to observe others. Observing others provided the opportunity to learn new ways of doing things, to observe good teaching
practice. Albeit indirectly, this also aided the process of self-reflection about one’s teaching. It becomes clear from the following comments that observing others had significant value:

YVONNE: I think it doesn't matter how many years you have been teaching, no matter who you go to observe, you pick up something, or see something different or it reminds you of something that you have slipped into a bad habit of doing, and I think that it is so important and I can’t remember the last time I watched anyone teach.

PHAEDRUS: ... in my most recent past school, they developed a system of peer observation of a teaching lesson that took place once a year... Now that was a system that worked.

However, being observed was viewed as a stressful experience, particularly where the information gathered was used for assessment purposes, or the identification of weaknesses. Teachers saw classroom observation as vital to the appraisal process but want ownership of the process. Historically, most classroom observations have been used to evaluate teacher competency. One of the reasons given to have others come into the classroom was to identify things teachers do not see for themselves. With ownership in the process, teachers were more likely to be receptive to the feedback given by others.

PETER: ...I think it is stressful because we've got professional staff who like to do a good job. And anybody coming in to your classroom, whether it is officially meant to be a critical evaluation of your teaching or not, if you are professional and you care about how good you are in the classroom, for anybody who goes in and observes you, you immediately start to think it is critical.

PHAEDRUS: I'm just wondering if we see ourselves as we think we are, and that’s where I think it is important to have, if you can’t video yourself, then you’ve got to have somebody else observe.

Factors affecting commitment were often associated with the value they had on professional learning and because these factors provided teachers with ownership for this learning. These teachers desired more time to be able to have discussions with their colleagues about teaching practice. Sharing of ideas or best practice had the potential to generate new possibilities that may or may not be directly related to current practice. These thoughts are summed up in the following quotes:

ANA: I think you often share knowledge, experience, and materials in between classes but you don’t really sit together. With full time teaching you don’t really have the time to share your knowledge and your information. Being able to share more effectively would be great.

PHAEDRUS: I think that [feedback] has to come from peers and there is no formal time. As I said, we do it anyway in times between lessons... I think it should be part of the appraisal system.
YVONNE: By modelling best teaching practices, it is like...we’ve got a teacher in our team who’s just amazing with English skills. If you can get to go and watch her, and how she works, you just learn so much.

It was generally agreed that through appraisal, strengths and weaknesses should be identified. The extent of ownership of the subsequent steps seemed to be the main point of difference between two of the schools of thought. One view felt that teachers should use the information and make their own choices as to areas for development, while others thought it should be the appraiser making this decision. When it was preferred that the appraiser identify areas for improvement, the comments would suggest that this preference was closely linked to the need to deal with issues of performance. The concern for accountability was highlighted by the following comments:

DORIS: I’m in favour of accountability to a larger extent than what we have it currently ... I would like to see people doing appraisals saying I think this is an area of weakness. I want to see improvement in this.

WORKERBEE: The accountability thing comes in when someone in your team wasn’t up to scratch and that’s when the appraiser needs to get them up to scratch.

Some felt self-reflection to be a positive way of sharing your strengths because it provided a mechanism to value teachers’ work. On the other hand, others were at pains to point out that we may not be accurate judges of our own performance. The questions relating to ownership appear to surface in connection to the underlying purposes of this self assessment, as there were perceived limitations surrounding the accuracy of data. This may be more prominent in relation to identifying personal weaknesses, which then impacts on learning potential. However, the need for ownership was significant in getting teacher commitment. Therefore, addressing the shortcomings of self-review appeared to be the issue. The varying views are illustrated in these comments:

PETER: I think giving staff the opportunity to say, this is where you get to write down or get to tell me what you’ve done this year that makes you a good teacher.

PHAEDRUS: All sorts of little things come up in classroom teaching, which sometimes we forget about. I mean, you’ve continually got to be aware that we are getting our message across in an effective way. I don’t know that we are always picking up on things like that.

WORKERBEE: Because sometimes you don’t recognise your own weaknesses.
Qualities of the appraisal relationship

There appeared to be considerable discussion over the appraiser’s level of commitment to their role. Some suggested that the process should be lead by the appraiser because it showed their commitment to the personal development of the appraisee. It was seen to be extremely important that the appraiser put their heart into the role. Comments seemed to suggest that this was not necessarily the case. One comment suggests that the selection of some facilitators for the ‘CIC’ had not necessarily had the positive effects that might have been desired. These views, that include perspectives from across the school, are illustrated in the following comments:

PHAEDRUS: I think we need to involve people who are not so busy, who can actually put their heart into a task, rather than do it as an adjunct to something they are already doing.

WORKERBEE: This particular person … shows absolutely no interest in me whatsoever until this … until the document is in her hand and it’s tick off, oh yes you’re doing a wonderful job, yes wonderful, wonderful, wonderful; but they don’t really know what’s happening in my class. And that kind of irks me a bit, that it’s all done in one day, no probably, 15 minutes I should say (laughs), 15 minutes to put my appraisal in, and that sort of gets up my nose a bit... I think the appraiser has to be passionate about what they are doing, not just filling in the document.

YVONNE: So that means over a year they’ve got all these periods to do the appraisal process and yet I’m finding it’s up to me to email them and say, “When are we going to meet to go over my appraisal goals?” So I feel they need to be accountable. They’ve been given this time to do this process so they need to do it well, and if they are not committed to it then they shouldn’t … I know that there have been people that have been told that they have to do it basically, and they don’t want to. I have always found it to be a positive experience so long as the person appraising is eager to be involved in the process. Some [appraisers] see it as a chore.

When an appraiser was not committed to their role, it was likely to decrease commitment and cause frustration. Essentially commitment is either all or none for appraisal to work effectively. Any person involved, whether appraiser or appraisee, will find it difficult to be committed without commitment from the other person involved in the process. Being committed to the development of an appraisee was one step towards building a trusting relationship which was identified as another essential attribute for appraisal to be successful. The reason trust was an essential component seemed to be because of the anxiety associated with revelations of weaknesses. Trust in this case was associated with the need for confidentiality. Yvonne’s comment is an indication of this:

YVONNE: ...So you’d have to feel you could trust this person and confide in them and that they would help you to improve in that area without it being something that might come up later – “Oh well, they’ve got this weakness”.

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Further comments indicated that the appraiser should have an intimate working knowledge of the appraisee. Mutual trust would contribute to effective appraisal though it is difficult to say whether trust would necessarily coincide with the development of an intimate working knowledge. Given that neither trust nor an intimate working knowledge transpire overnight, appraising new staff successfully would appear to be a challenging prospect. As such the ‘CIC’ facilitator and the external appraiser were found to be problematic as the appraiser knew too little about the person they were appraising.

*DORIS*: It’s that intimate working knowledge. ... So you’ve suddenly got this person to appraise you and you don’t actually know what they do. So it comes back to time, a little bit, the method by which people are selected, the matching up of people and how much you actually know [about them], before you go into the classroom. I mean, they are all key considerations, really.

Honesty is a value closely associated with trust. The ability to discuss aspects of appraisal in an honest and open manner, so that concerns could be addressed, was a condition identified as important. Collegiality seemed to be the main factor that was most likely to hinder the ability to be honest an open. These teachers wanted to hear the difficult issues:

*YVONNE*: You want people to be honest with you, so that you can move forward and improve what you are doing.

Trust was more likely to be evident in peer appraisal. This did not necessarily equate with effective appraisal because of a desire to be overly collegial, rather than address issues. The appraiser needed to be able to broach difficult subjects. It appeared that, in peer appraisal it was more likely that there would be a reluctance to address areas of concern:

*WORKERBEE*: When we do peer appraisal its fine, but if something was not fine, what happens then, because no one seems to want to take the responsibility of it? You need someone at the top that is saying – “Look you are not towing the line here.”

*DORIS*: I feel like we pay lip service to it here, whereas in other schools we’ve done it a lot more thoroughly. It’s been an opportunity for HOD’s to really challenge people on the areas that they are under performing in and to broach subjects that are difficult, instead of just shying away from it because it might be upsetting to someone.

Developing the ability to address issues seemed to be the main reason why appraisers should be involved in any training for this role. This is evident from Phaedrus’ comment that came at the conclusion of a conversation around the need for training:
PHAEDRUS: As far as formal training, I don't believe that it is necessary for everyone to have formal training to go through a form filling exercise, which is what we seem to have at the moment. If we are going to have an effective appraisal system then some form of instruction on how to go about it would be a good idea. In other words, rather than formal, just what works and people should probably get together with somebody like a school counsellor perhaps and work through what is a non-threatening method of making an appraisal so that the person being appraised feels positive about the process. I don't think it necessarily has to be formal training as much as just what would work to put people in a non-threatened position so that we can fulfil the requirement on the last one, which is build up a trust between the appraiser and appraisee.

Further discussion about the key attributes that were of importance, suggested that the appraiser was best to come from the same subject area and have the experience to model best practice. They also needed to be someone who was respected by the appraisee. It would appear from some comments that the ‘CIC’ facilitator did not always come from the same subject area and this had affected the attitude of some towards the current arrangements of the ‘CIC’. The need for an intimate working knowledge was also strong. However, there was a concern that collegiality had hindered effective appraisal. It was suggested that, within an intimate appraisal relationship, there was a need for the appraiser to give constructive criticism in order to address issues. Desirable attributes are illustrated in the following statements:

ANA: As well, I think that it is important for the appraiser to have a lot of experience and to be able to model effective teaching practice.

PHAEDRUS: I think that the positive feedback I would be looking for would be people who teach alongside me in the same subject area.

DORIS: It’s somebody who has the knowledge about what you’re like as a professional, and not to be too scared to say well, this is not up to scratch and I’d really like to see an improvement in this area.

It was clear from the various experiences that a hierarchical position held by an appraiser was not the most important consideration. While some felt that the HOD should be the appraiser, this was not a view held by all. Hierarchical relationships within appraisal appeared to be more important when the outcomes of appraisal were linked to assessing competency. More importance was placed on the need for the appraiser to work within the same subject area, although there was acknowledgement that those from outside the subject area could still comment on classroom practice. Having respect for the appraiser was declared to be important by several focus group members and their comments would suggest this respect is largely as a result of perceptions about the appraiser’s ability to teach the same subject area. Comments were made on several occasions about the need for the appraiser to be situated within the same subject area. One example is given here:
PETER: Is he the best person to be observing my subject when he is not an expert in it? He can observe classroom practice, but he can’t appraise my subject knowledge. If I’m here employed to teach my subject, then surely somebody who knows what they are doing in this subject should be assessing it.

At Turion College, the appraiser was not a member of the teaching staff or senior management. Therefore, the qualities of the appraisal relationship were likely to be different than in most schools. The following extract sheds some light on the impact this has had:

*MONIQUE: You are unique in that you bring in an outsider, who doesn’t actually work within the school, to come and appraise.

PETER: I think that’s good.

LAUREN: Yeah, I don’t see that as a negative. You’re right, yeah…I think it could be because of the person that we have as an appraiser, because I can see why it might not work. But it does here because the person themselves is actually very good.

PETER: I can imagine him in front of a classroom being very, very good as a classroom teacher and I have to say that over the experts and consultants that I’ve met in my career, they are probably in the minority.

LAUREN: So he is very, very good and you’re right, I think it is a really positive thing because he comes from the outside.

PETER: And so he doesn’t get the gossip and he doesn’t know who does what, so it’s a little bit more impartial in that sense.

LAUREN: He has no axe to grind anyway, does he?

PETER: No.

Further comments indicated that the benefits that arose from using an external appraiser were related to the quality of feedback that was provided as a result of classroom observations:

LAUREN: He is actually very perceptive. He picked up on something in my lesson, that at first as always when you get a comment you sort of bristle and think grrrr, but actually he was right and he was very, very perceptive and I hadn’t even thought about it. So yeah, I was very impressed.

PETER: The appraiser, I think, is a great guy, he’s very professional when he is observing you, his feedback was professional, it was reasoned, he had examples of situations in the class and he had … he didn’t criticise, he suggested ways in which it could have been different, although he was always at pains to say, if you give the same lesson to 10 people you will do it in 10 different ways.

Trust

For appraisal to be effective, teachers needed to have trust that the process would not cause them harm. Situations that had the potential to cause harm created tensions that affected their commitment. While teachers were happy that appraisal
could provide opportunities for them to develop and prepare for new roles, fear of disclosure of weaknesses to others was a very real concern. Weaknesses identified in appraisal, could jeopardise an existing position but, the impact it would have on future opportunities seemed to be of greater concern. The subsequent use of information gathered in appraisal has the potential to affect the level of disclosure of weaknesses by an appraisee. On the other hand, the concept of using appraisal to affirm what teachers were doing well was an idea that found favour by several of the focus group members. This is summed up in some ways by Yvonne’s comment:

YVONNE: And yet in some ways it would depend on your personal situation, I think. Because, in some ways you want senior management to know that you are doing a good job – “Yes please pass that on, tell them all about me” – you know. But if you’ve got a weakness you’d be saying “well I don’t really want people to know that I struggle with such and such”. I don’t know what the answer is.

The teachers acknowledged that they felt appraisal was stressful because of a perception that it was a critical evaluation of their performance. Having information passed onto senior management, added to this stress. This was best summed up by the following observations:

PETER: Because, whether you are a superb teacher or not, it is stressful being observed, especially when you know what you do in the lesson is getting written down and it goes to through the chain of command up to the principal.

ANA: In that respect you become open to critique from the senior management who have never actually been in your class, they have never seen you teaching. I don’t believe that creates a foundation of trust.

As a further tool for self-reflection, teachers also saw some value in the feedback obtained from their students. However, there were also concerns about the accuracy of information gained from students. These ideas were confirmed by Doris and Peter in their respective comments:

DORIS: I also like to hear what students and parents are saying, what they want and what works well, what they appreciate about us, what they find difficult. And I also find that motivating and that will make me think: oh yeah. I could do that better, or that is a particular need.

PETER: I think its good that students are asked to appraise us as part of the process...But for the same question, for the same class, for the same teacher, the numbers were widely varying. So my point about that is: how constructive is that if it’s so subjective to the students?

It would therefore appear that while teachers potentially value input from students, it would seem that current practice falls short on drawing accurate and valid data from students due to the variability of their responses from within the same class. For student feedback to have greater value, the measurement tools used within schools
need to ensure greater validity in the findings. In addition, careful consideration should be given to how the feedback from students is used as part of the appraisal process, given the variability in student responses. Where it may be used to inform performance reviews, teachers are likely to have justifiable concerns.

One of the major reasons surrounding concern over information being passed on to management was due to the lack of accurate information on which judgements were based. Several of the focus group members across both schools expressed the view that the appraiser only got a snapshot on which to base judgements against the Professional Standards. When these judgements were passed on, the cause for concern was amplified as further judgements were perceived to have been made on the basis of second-hand data. Some of these concerns are outlined below:

WORKERBEE: But what I am saying about these ones that we tick off, great reminders but the person that’s appraising me, how do they know (laughs), how would they know if they are only coming to see me for fifteen minutes? This one here – “Communicates effectively and interacting with colleagues” – Well maybe they know, I don’t know. I could say I’ve been doing a wonderful job and I might not be.

PETER: I think it’s a snap shot. He came into half of two separated lessons, two different groups, at two different times... Do they want the appraisal system to give management a good and accurate impression of how I as a teacher perform in the classroom. Because if that’s what they are after I don’t think this system works.

Teachers in the focus group at Turion College spoke at length, about factors that affect their trust in appraisal. There was considerable concern over the manner in which appraisal information was used to determine the performance bonus. The perceptions indicated that the appraiser had limited authority in the final outcome of their performance assessment, because the principal made the final decisions. It would seem that hidden agendas were affecting the outcomes of appraisal. The written criteria appeared to have had little to do with what occurred in reality, from their standpoint. The selection of quotes below illustrates these assertions:

LAUREN: The appraiser is quite open about his powers and how limited they are and what happens after he’s written his report. There are no numbers put on your observation at all until after it has been discussed with the principal. Now sorry, the principal wasn’t in my lesson, he was, he should be putting the numbers on not the principal.

JANICE: From my viewpoint, there can be resentment against the principal because the system is seen as unfair, because despite what the appraiser may say on their piece of paper about the actual appraisal that he has seen, the actual decision is made by the principal at the end of the day, who hasn’t seen that lesson at all.
Members of the focus group at Leyland College also identified situations of mistrust. In the first instance, their mistrust appeared to be concerned with the potential use of appraisal information, for purposes other than what had been espoused. However, another issue arose when information was passed through the chain of command. Here the concern was to do with the potential for inaccuracies to occur as the result of second hand, or incomplete information. The views expressed by the focus group would suggest that mistrust does permeate the appraisal system:

**YVONNE:** I have said that some teachers feel threatened by the appraisal process. They feel that if they admit that they have an area where they feel they need work, or they feel they are weak in something, that that will be used against them.

**PHAEDRUS:** So the appraiser should have no hidden agenda. The appraiser should be open and honest.

What is clear from the comments is, that any information gathered in appraisal only provides a snapshot, whether it is based on self-reflection, student feedback, or the observations’ of others. The incompleteness of the data used to inform subsequent judgements appears to be a common concern across the two schools. When appraisal information was used explicitly as a basis for judgement of performance, the concerns were expressed even more strongly. In a professional development approach to appraisal there may be less need for a complete picture of a teacher’s performance, although the concern for accurate data collection may still be valid. Accurate data would provide the evidence of goal achievement, which can in turn, lead to higher levels of commitment to the process, if success is achieved.

Stress was associated with critical aspects of appraisal. However, at least at the grass roots level of appraisal, teachers maintain that a trusting relationship can help to overcome some of their fears. Trust was important to the success of any critical evaluation because, even though it was stressful, being critiqued was also helpful.

**YVONNE:** I mean, sometimes it’s not easy to hear you are doing something or people think that you are not performing the way you should be, and so on. But once you get over the initial shock you are so relieved to hear it, because that’s what you want. You want people to be honest with you, so you can move forward and improve on what you are doing...I think that if someone was having some difficulties with a class or with some aspect of their teaching, they would need to build up a really close relationship with the person that is appraising them, so they felt confident with them, and that they could work on things they were having issues with.
Time

Lack of time was a major factor that prevented the level of commitment required for appraisal to be effective, this affecting both the appraiser and appraisee. Time is a precious commodity and this is particularly the case for teachers. Appraisal was perceived as an extra responsibility on top of a teacher’s already busy workload.

DORIS: Well time is a very important one obviously, because otherwise, you end up thinking, I’d really like to do something about that, but it ends up featuring way down on your list of priorities because of everything else. If you’ve got people hounding you for, or there is going to be consequences if you don’t meet the deadline, or the other things.

ANA: Due to a shortage of time, you can think, “Oh goodness, not another thing I need to do. OK, I’ll get that ticked off as quickly as I can”. I think that attitude sometimes hinders effective appraisal.

It was suggested that having expectations and deadlines could have a positive effect on commitment. However, time pressures and existing workloads appear to have been a significant issue. As a consequence, the effort put into appraisal tended to be at the minimal level to ensure responsibilities are fulfilled. The indication that teachers had demanding workloads were expressed several times with comments such as:

DORIS: It interests me that the top scoring comment was about being prepared to put in your own time. Because with certain people that I have to work with, that is the number one thing that gets in the way of us sharing ideas for best practice, for planning, for reviewing, for any of the things that we have to do. People who won’t stay after school, and they won’t come in early, and they are not giving up another lunchtime, so that’s really interesting that you have got that from your sample (laughter) and the people who are not going to give up their own time are not going to fill in your survey.

WORKERBEE: But getting the time to reflect on what you have done during the day, you just don’t seem to get it. So that sort of decreases your commitment because the days are very busy.

To be effective, these teachers believed that appraisal required time to be dedicated to it. This is summed up in the following comment:

ANA: I think you need more time. Even if you have an appraiser who you trust, they really need to put a lot of time into observing your classes. You also need time to observe them, time to discuss things, time to implement new things, and time to review how it’s working. Therefore appraisal requires a lot of time. And I think when you have the time you actually feel that what you are doing is improving your teaching. Then I think the commitment will increase.

At Turion College, the appraiser appears to be a specialist position, with allocated time for appraisal, but the full extent of responsibilities that go with the position are
unknown. However, it would appear that the appraiser’s workload was impacting on the process:

   JANICE: I think perhaps [the appraiser] is not resourced as well as he should be. He is always running and he never has the time. I think he is slightly too stretched. If you want get hold of him you literally are going to be grabbing him running from one place to another, which I think can make it so that you feel that maybe you can’t discuss things with him or whatever.

Most of the focus group teachers found there could be mutual gain from discussions about teaching and learning, or as a follow-up to classroom observations. Too often, this occurred in snatches of time due foremost to the heavy workload of teachers. Huge workloads seemed to be the most stressful factor impacting on appraisal.

Conclusion

This chapter was divided into distinct parts for each tool used for the three stages of the data collection. Six major themes have emanated from the overall findings; the purpose of appraisal, effectiveness of the process, ownership, qualities of the appraisal relationship, trust, and time. Professional learning was the purpose that teachers valued most in appraisal. In addition, there was considerable support for the notion that appraisal could be a mechanism to value the work they did. Ownership was a factor that increased commitment, although there were some areas of tension surrounding this. Of all the qualities of the appraisal relationship that were mentioned, of highest importance is the need for the appraiser to be committed to their role as appraiser. Without this condition, other factors such as the ability to instil trust, honesty, training, and experience would not result in effective appraisal. There was an expectation that through appraisal, difficult issues would be challenged. Essential to the success of this is the need to have a degree of trust, while collegiality was identified as a factor that could prevent good appraisal. Training could help develop skills in an appraiser to be able to deal with issues in a non-threatening manner. Time appeared to be a significant issue that impacted on teachers’ commitment to the process. However, where increased time is given for appraisal and it does not result in increased effectiveness, it is unlikely to sustain teacher commitment.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF CASE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter integrates the literature outlined in Chapter 2 with an analysis of the common and diverging results of each case. Data from across the three collection methods are triangulated to present individual case findings. The discussion draws together findings from this and the preceding chapter. The chapter is sequentially structured around the questions guiding this research. The first section is framed around the focus of this research: finding value in appraisal. The second section considers the factors that impact on the effectiveness of appraisal because of the influence of effectiveness on teacher commitment. In the final section, the discussion is framed around the tensions in appraisal that affect teacher commitment to the process.

The value of appraisal?

The reality for teachers in both these schools is that they find little value in appraisal as it is currently practiced, shown by the low ratings given to appraisal as a factor influencing change in their teaching. The data evident in Table 4-10 seem to suggest that lack of value stems from many of these teachers' beliefs that appraisal was situated around its bureaucratic components or had little impact on their learning. The result is in line with findings by other researchers showing that there appears to be no evidence linking appraisal to improving teacher effectiveness (Fitzgerald, 2001; Husbands, 2001). These views have been summed up by Doris:

DORIS: There is very little feedback about whether it is or isn't working. So there is nobody who is actually saying, “How is this working? How can we make it better?” So things just sort of tick along the same, and because of our great emphasis on collegiality you bite your tongue instead of kicking up a fuss. Then you end up with this feeling that it’s pretty much just lip service and as long as ERO is happy then let’s just get it over and done with as quickly as possible, and get back to the real work we do.

Nonetheless, comparisons between the two schools would suggest there are many indications that the focus on professional growth at Leyland College may have had some positive benefits. Self-review did appear to be influential in bringing about change in practice, more so at Leyland College. Youngs and Grootenboer (2003) found that teachers perceived self-review to be associated with reflective practice,
rather than the bureaucratic components of appraisal. However, their findings also showed that appraisal was perceived to be a form of surveillance. This may suggest the reason there had been no direct association between self-review and change stemming from appraisal. According to some researchers promoting and supporting reflective practice is a major factor in improving teaching and learning (Norsworthy, 2003; Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005). Therefore, the ‘CIC’ component of the appraisal system at Leyland College, with its focus on action research, may be a contributing factor for the higher rating for the influence of self-review. However, the lack of classroom observations to support learning at Leyland College, appeared to be an area of concern.

There was evidence of tensions in these teachers’ views on how appraisal might impact on professional learning. For some, there appeared to be a need for others to assess performance and identify the areas most in need of improvement, in order to ensure the outcomes of appraisal would occur. The issue here is that there is little evidence to show that learning occurs from assessment against the Professional Standards, and surveillance offers little more than minimalist conformity (Beerens, 2000; Fitzgerald, 2001; Gunter, 2001; Middlewood, 2002). In contrast, others believed that self-reflection, classroom observations and discussions with colleagues were the most influential in bringing about a change in their teaching. The contrasting views of appraisal evident from this research reflect the tensions over ownership identified by previous researchers (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1997; Fitzgerald, 2001; Hill & Locke, 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). Concerns surrounding the effectiveness of self-directed aspects of appraisal to bring about change were also highlighted by the focus group members. These concerns, pointing to teachers who do little to address areas of weakness, are also not new (Beerens, 2000; Middlewood, 2002). In many respects, these contrasting positions mirror the debate regarding teacher professionalism and accountability. At the heart of both issues is a concern about ownership.

The teachers in this research were also at pains to point out that appraisal could be a mechanism to value their work. In particular, they felt recognition of their work would impact positively on their job satisfaction. In combination with justified recognition, Evans (2001) has correlated challenging, respected leadership, to high levels of performance. It appeared from the results of focus group discussions, that praise was
a worthwhile and sustainable form of recognition. One result suggested that more teachers at Turion College were in favour of the link between appraisal and remuneration. This was the area where the higher results for Turion College had the greatest contrast. The results suggest that there may be some motivating factors associated with performance bonuses for teachers who have experienced this system.

In contrast, the focus group at Turion College believed that remuneration was detrimental to the appraisal process. A reason for the apparent contrast could be because some teachers, who had received the bonus, may have different perceptions of its value. The experiences of the focus group may be valid for other teachers who have been at the school for a short time, as was their case. The potential issues of secrecy and ambiguity had been identified by members of the focus group. While remuneration has the potential to provide motivation, the experiences of these focus group members suggest that the system they currently have, has not had a positive impact. The following extract from the focus group provides insight into the effect of this:

*MONIQUE: So could appraisal work more effectively with a link to remuneration?
JANICE: I think remuneration ruins it.
LAUREN: Yeah, I don't think that money has anything to do with it... And I don't think money actually is the driving force... I can honestly say it's never had any impact on me whatsoever, so what's the point.
PETER: If they link it to money it becomes the driving force... But it doesn't have to be money. If there was something else that would be fine. I'm used to the system where you got a pat on the back and a well done.
JANICE: I think, when I came here I was told that you could get a bonus, it really did motivate me to begin with because I was like – right, well I'm a fabulous teacher, there is no reason why I can't get this and I'm gonna go for it. And then as I went through the system more ... and talking to people I got more jaded about it hearing of their experiences until someone actually said to me, they pointed out, "Oh, why are you thinking you're going to get it, it's your first year here. They don't give it to anybody their first year because they consider you have not improved enough into the Turion College system to be eligible". And that really peeved me off because I'm like, I could be a fabulous teacher, I could be much better than teachers that have been here for a long time who are resting on their laurels now, but they might be getting it rather than me.

**Effectiveness of appraisal?**

Correlations between change stemming from appraisal and many aspects that are associated with the appraisal relationship indicate that this may be a core issue impacting on the effectiveness of appraisal. In this regard, some of the discussion
centred around the appraiser wanting to be in this role. Further to this, focus group members identified that an appraiser’s desire to be overly collegial rather than challenging reduced the potential of appraisal to change existing performance. Several researchers (Beerens, 2000; Fitzgerald, 2001; Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003) have found that effective appraisal is dependent upon the quality of the appraisal relationship. In particular, that effective appraisal requires the appraiser to be challenging, yet collaborative. This situation creates tensions in this dual role, that go beyond identified issues surrounding the purpose of assessment (Beerens, 2000; Middlewood, 2002; Rudman, 2002).

Consequently, Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005) have also argued the need to provide appraisers with professional development in dilemma management, so they have the skills to overcome defensive responses. Teachers in this research also indicated that training was important for appraisal to be effective, in order to capture teacher commitment. However, the results implied training may not be as important for all teachers. Some of this may have been due to their previous experiences with training. Confirming claims by Piggot-Irvine and Cardno (2005), one suggested reason for training by those in this research, centred around the need to develop skills to address issues in a non-threatening manner. In this research, about half of the teachers had received some sort of training in appraisal. The number of teachers who had been trained in appraisal is consistent with the findings of a New Zealand study by Youngs and Grootenboer (2003).

Youngs and Grootenboer (2003) argued that hierarchical approaches to appraisal may be damaging to the collegiality deemed necessary to improve teaching practice. The appraisal relationship in the junior, middle, and senior schools at Leyland College was a hierarchical arrangement. However, the ‘CIC’ component was different and the facilitator could be chosen by the teacher. For the most part, the facilitators had selected their role and had a time allowance for it. Training in appraisal for the facilitators, was given at the start of the year. The findings showed that teachers at Leyland College were more fully supported and disagreed that appraisal had caused them stress. This may have been associated with the non-hierarchical structure. However, some findings from Leyland College seem to question the significance of a non-hierarchical structure. The more important attributes of the appraisal relationship
were that the appraiser was fully committed to the development of the appraisee, and the appraiser had expertise in the same subject area.

The teachers in this research have identified a need to have trust in their appraiser because they perceived risks with revealing their weaknesses. Trust is deemed to be essential to appraisal because of its significance to learning (Middlewood, 2001; Six, 2005). Even though the appraiser did not have regular contact with the College, focus group teachers at Turion College had confidence in the judgements of their appraiser because they perceived him to be an expert. Their opinions appeared to be based on their views of the quality of his feedback on their classroom performance, which may have been influenced by perceptions that he had been trained for the role. Thus, it would appear that the influence of role trust may have contributed to this. According to Bottery (2004), role trust may develop as a result of perceived experience the person might bring to this role in a specialist position. It has also been suggested that hierarchical structures may work to enhance trust because of the influence of role trust (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). However, perceived lack of expertise of those in hierarchical positions can hinder the development of role trust. Focus group comments would suggest that role trust is not automatic. Moreover, trust is believed to decline as a result of the gaze of audit (Codd, 1999; Court & Adams, 2005; Elliott, 2001; Sikes, 2001). The intent of using an external appraiser at Turion College was to increase the objectivity of data collection but the results across the two schools are identical. Perhaps it is the auditing of performance at Turion College that has resulted in the lowered feelings of support from the external appraiser.

**Tensions affecting commitment**

There was considerable evidence from the focus group that time had a significant impact on teacher commitment to appraisal. There was recognition that to be effective, appraisal was a time-intensive activity. Teachers at Leyland College were more willing to devote their personal time to their development. In addition, the extended timeframe for the ‘CIC’ and ‘PMP’ aspects provided more time for the processes to be undertaken more fully. At Leyland College, additional management time had been given to the facilitator of the ‘CIC’. Consequently, one reason for the extra meeting times evident at Leyland College may come as a result of the time
allocation given to the ‘CIC’ facilitators. However, undergoing two processes simultaneously was also likely to have added to teacher workload. It does appear as if heavy workloads were preventing the realisation of teachers’ desire to devote time to their development. In contrast, the pressure to complete tasks within a given time frame had helped to determine appraisal as a priority. For example, the junior school teachers at Leyland College were expected to meet with their appraiser four times in the year. In this respect, accountability measures may have had a positive influence on teacher commitment to the process.

Time itself was the most significant factor that appeared to impinge on teachers’ commitments to appraisal. The appraisal process is time-intensive and teachers at both schools felt that conflicting demands on their time had resulted in minimalist approaches to appraisal that served nobody’s interest. Gathering evidence is time-consuming if it is to be done so that there is some confidence in the validity of results, whether these results are to determine competency, or that goals have been met. However, Mahoney and Hextall (2000) argue that the time spent on gathering evidence is counter-productive to quality teaching. Other researchers (Beerens, 2000; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003) have also found that time constraints have led to simplistic approaches to appraisal, rather that the more time-intensive approach focused on reflective learning and development. Teachers at Turion College noted that the external appraiser always seemed to be rushing, lacking quality time to spend with them for their appraisal. At Leyland College, the facilitators had been given a time allocation for this role, yet this did not always appear to translate into increased commitment to the role. Fitzgerald (2008) has suggested the education reforms have “radically altered the way in which teachers experience their everyday work” (p. 126). Reforms have placed increased demands on teachers’ time and even more so due to the gaze of audit deemed necessary to ensure these reforms translate into practice. Demands on teachers’ time appear to be jeopardising the effectiveness of appraisal.

Ownership was an important factor that could increase teachers’ commitment to appraisal although this would be dependent on the impact ownership had on improving performance. Overall, the focus group discussions supported the notion that teachers needed ownership of aspects of their appraisal, and their needs should be central. Contrasting views over ownership of appraisal were attributable to
perceptions of the subsequent effectiveness of appraisal, in bringing about improvements in teaching practice. There was some recognition that teachers may not always pick up on areas that affected their performance, therefore, the input from others appeared to be a desirable aspect. This need seemed to be stronger in the case of teachers who were under-performing. As a result, some focus group members felt that the appraiser should be leading the appraisal process, to set challenging goals for these under-performing staff. Others thought the appraiser should lead the process because the appraiser had an allocated time, therefore, they should be taking responsibility for initiating action. On the one hand, ownership of appraisal may not bring about improvement if teachers were not motivated to improve. On the other hand, ownership would appear to increase commitment to appraisal, as many of the features that were desirable for these teachers also gave them more ownership of the process. These features included selecting their own goals, observing others, professional discussions with other colleagues, and inviting others into their classroom from choice. Tensions in ownership appeared to surface most in relation to situations of performance issues.

Mistrust in the system’s effectiveness was also a concern, one that was likely to lead to reduced levels of commitment. In particular, changing systems without consultation seemed to hinder the development of trust in the appraisal process. There appeared to be some recognition that if there was no commitment, then the outcomes would not be worthwhile. In this respect, results showed that half of the teachers had no input into the review of appraisal. Furthermore, the findings from this research would appear to tentatively link involvement into the review of appraisal systems as one factor contributing to a sense of ownership. The evidence from this research consolidates the findings of previous researchers (Fitzgerald et al., 2003; Youngs & Grootenboer, 2003). In addition, Middlewood (2002) had found that self-reflection in appraisal had an influence on ownership. Yet in this study, self-review did not appear to be associated with teachers’ sense of ownership, as may have been expected. One reason for the difference in findings could be that some teachers appear to have less ownership of their goals or input into the results of assessment of their performance, particularly teachers at Turion College. Also, the terms self-reflection and self-review may have different meanings because of the way in which they were applied in appraisal practices.
A heightened sense of ownership in appraisal also correlated with teachers feeling their professional development needs were being met. Teachers’ perceptions at Turion College did appear to confirm that appraisal had not centred on their professional development, and this had affected their commitment. This is evident from their views expressed in the focus group introductory task, revealing that they believed appraisal was primarily focused on accountability and the allocation of a performance bonus. Further discussions clearly illustrated that a lack of professional development opportunities appeared to lie at the core of their beliefs about the lack of value of appraisal.

The need to have professional development opportunities associated with the appraisal process was identified as a factor that increased commitment, in this research. Tensions occur in the allocation of money for professional development when the interests of individual teachers’ are not aligned with those of the organisation (Gentle, 2001). Some researchers (Fitzgerald, 2001; Gentle, 2001; Harris, 1999; Middlewood, 2002) have suggested that the credibility of performance management to bring about change in classroom practice rests on its ability to deliver professional development. That teachers at Leyland College appear to have had more opportunities to have their professional development needs met may explain the higher ratings for change in their teaching practice. Also for teachers at Leyland College, there was a stronger feeling that some of their professional development had been compulsory, indicating that there is likely to be a tension between their needs and the organisation.

The evidence from this research suggests that teachers’ individual needs must be at the heart of effective appraisal. If appraisal was to have any link to team or school goals, the success of this appeared to be dependent on the school supporting the professional development needs of its teachers. Achieving mutuality between individual needs and the school has been shown to be one of the challenges of leadership (Harris, 1999; Piggot-Irvine & Cardno, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2005). Comments from the focus group would suggest that visionary leadership, that provides clear expectations in partnership with teachers, could make a difference. What is most essential is that the goals set by others must be valued by the individual, and there must be support for individual teachers to work towards these goals. These findings are consistent with the research of Robinson and Timperley.
(2007) on effective leadership strategies that make a difference to teacher and student learning.

At the heart of the tension on ownership is the dichotomous positions of professional versus democratic forms of accountability. Situated alongside this is the wider debate over the professionalism of teachers collectively (Codd, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008; Sachs, 2003). Thompson (2001) argues that the question of ownership is central to whether the culture of performance management re-professionalises or de-professionalises teachers. This has implications for Turion College as teachers there seemed unconvinced that they had ownership of their appraisal. While they felt an obligation to contribute to improvement in their organisation, it looks as if they were less likely to align their personal goals to the organisation, or to devote personal time.

The development of trust necessary for learning is likely to have influenced the separation of professional learning from accountability mechanisms, for the middle and senior school at Leyland College. Further to this, imparting ownership within this model is akin to placing trust in others to fulfil their responsibilities. Bottery (2004) argues that trust levels are often reflected in behaviours and attitudes. This would seem to suggest that trust placed in the teachers at Leyland College had been translated into an increased sense of duty to their organisation, and professional development. However, requiring paperwork to be completed as evidence of actions, particularly where this must be passed up the chain of command, is evidence of low levels of trust. This reflects the situation for accountability aspects of both the ‘PMP’ and junior school appraisal process. For the ‘PMP’, the information required to be passed on by the appraisee was confirmation that the appraisal process had been undertaken, which included details on their areas of strength, and their progress on goals. Assessment against the Professional Standards was a self-assessment to be completed with guidance from their mentor. Therefore, the level of ownership given to the appraisee would suggest that some level of trust had been shown. Not having to identify weaknesses to the principal was also an area that would increase teachers’ trust in the process. For the junior school, the appraiser writes a summary report that has details of the appraisee’s performance assessment against the Professional Standards, and an outline of their progress in the development objectives. The appraiser was also the driver in the goal setting process. In this respect, the junior school appraisal process is based on a low trust, accountability
model. The emphasis on assessing competency evident in appraisal at Turion College was also based on low-trust accountability. As a result, it would seem teachers at Turion College were less willing to devote personal time to their development as a teacher.

The value positions of democratic forms of accountability and the level of trust needed for learning, sit in conflict. Therefore, the audit culture of accountability in New Zealand has implications for those in management positions. While managers may be supportive and have the expertise in the relevant subject area, trust is likely to be lost because of conflicting values in their dual roles of accountability, and supporting learning. Mandated procedures are evidence of low levels of trust. However, the risks associated with making appraisal optional may be compelling reasons for keeping it this way. It would also appear from some comments that, making appraisal optional may not be desirable.

What also came to the fore were concerns over revealing weaknesses. The associated risk lies in subsequent judgements that might arise from this knowledge, which could cause the person to lose face. This has the potential for long lasting consequences for the individual. Concerns over misuse of the appraisal process appeared to be a key factor in the need to be able to trust the appraiser. At Turion College, an external appraiser was used to increase the objectivity of data collection so that there could be more confidence in the validity of assessments. Strategies to increase the objectivity of data collection appear not to have been realised. The results from both schools, on the objectivity of appraiser feedback, are identical. Possibly the only benefit to arise from using an external appraiser, was a slight increase in the value of feedback from classroom observations. Focus group members’ comments about the appraiser provide some insights to the possible reasons for the higher rating. It would appear role trust had some part to play in the perceptions because of the quality of feedback the appraiser had given (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000). However, the quality of the appraiser’s feedback had not corresponded with teachers having higher levels of motivation to change their practice, at Turion College. Impartiality had been important for these focus group members and this was most likely because of the link between appraisal and the performance bonus. However, not having regular and timely access to the appraiser was a cause for concern.
It seemed as if teachers from both schools wanted to have an accurate assessment of their performance if assessment was to be for the purpose of accountability. These teachers’ accounts of appraisal suggest that evidence of their performance was incomplete and questionable in terms of its validity. The assessment criteria seemed to be an area of contention. This was particularly so in regards to student feedback, where the main concern for teachers at Turion College related to the variability of student responses. Student ratings used at Turion College appear to have had a detrimental effect on the way in which these results have influenced teachers to develop their teaching. The questionnaire results appear to confirm that the teachers at Turion College show less trust in the feedback from their students than teachers at Leyland College.

Teachers at Turion College seemed to dwell on how the assessment criteria could be used in a fair and valid manner. The number of observations that were used to grade performance appeared to be an issue. It would seem that the issues encompassed a concern over accuracy and completeness. More observations were wanted, yet there were already more classroom observations at Turion College than is standard practice. The issue was compounded by methods of data collection that were perceived to be ad hoc. These concerns appear to have been heightened by associating appraisal with a performance bonus. In doing so, competition had been introduced for a limited allocation of resources.

The stories that have been told by participants in this research confirm that lack of trust has infiltrated their perceptions of appraisal. The point is, that situations causing mistrust are likely to be the lens through which teachers view appraisal, with subsequent implications on their attitudes (Bottery, 2004; Olssen et al., 2004). The culture of democratic forms of accountability imply that the state has little trust in teachers. Six (2005) notes that situations of distrust breed further distrust. Distrust was evident in these teachers’ perceptions of other teachers’ integrity. For example, questions arose whether all teachers would set challenging goals. Furthermore, the evidence from both schools in this research showed that the need to pass on information for accountability reasons had reduced these teachers’ trust in the espoused outcomes of appraisal as a mechanism to enhance their practice. Due to the potentially negative repercussions of auditing their performance, it was evident that these teachers wanted to showcase their best lessons, rather than just any
lesson. Hence, the reliability of collecting data from classroom observations for accountability purposes or learning, is questionable. In this case, Sergiovanni’s (2005) words seem pertinent for those concerned with quality teaching:

*Teachers willingly showboat required behaviours when they are being observed. However, the question for anyone concerned with genuine school improvement is what happens when the evaluator is not there? As you can imagine, when no one is looking, teachers’ teach in ways that make sense to them.* (p. 5)

**Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion of the findings in a manner that utilised triangulation across data collection tools to outline similarities and differences between each case. It would seem from the interpretation of the data that these teachers have not found value in appraisal, as it is currently practiced. They perceive that their needs should be of central importance and that appraisal should enhance their practice. What has emanated from the findings of this research is that the main factors impacting on the effectiveness of appraisal are to do with the quality of the appraisal relationship and time. Tensions associated with each of these may underpin the lack of impact appraisal has on changing teachers’ classroom practice. Trust is a central concern because of its impact on learning. In fact, difficulties associated with trust were positioned in many of the complex issues surrounding appraisal. This was revealed in perceptions reflecting value differences situated behind the purpose of assessment in appraisal. Divergent views on ownership of appraisal practices are manifested in beliefs concerning the integrity of other staff to engage critically in the process.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

As a small scale research project, the findings of this research attempted to gain an understanding of the complex issues associated with teacher commitment to appraisal because of the impact of their commitment on appraisal outcomes. What follows here is an outline of the findings of this research in relation to the initial research objectives:

1. To describe evidence of effective appraisal in schools that is valued by teaching staff.
2. To critically analyse factors that affect school teachers’ commitment to appraisal.
3. To critique the appropriateness of school appraisal procedures in developing mutuality between individual needs and organisational goals.

Strengths and weaknesses of the research process are discussed before outlining recommendations for the future.

Major findings

What makes appraisal effective and valued by teachers?

The most important outcome desired by teachers from both schools was that appraisal would lead to improvements in their teaching. For improvements in teaching to occur, appraisal had to link to professional development opportunities in the broad context of what counts as professional development. Any procedures that had the potential to generate improvements in practice were considered desirable. Goal setting and the review of goals were valued for providing a focus for development, and as a source of feedback, to show that progress had been made.

These teachers asserted strongly that change had occurred in their teaching practice, but they did not attribute this change to the effects of appraisal. The evidence from the two schools suggests that appraisal is not a major factor leading to change in teaching practice therefore, teachers do not find value in appraisal as it is
currently practised. The factor most strongly alleged to influence change was self-review, a process that already exists in their current appraisal practices. Yet there appeared to be no relationship between the value given to self-review and the belief that appraisal was a major factor influencing change. Reasons for this may be that teachers perceive self-review to have only a minor role in current appraisal practices which may come as a result of the focus on accountability measures assessing teachers against the Professional Standards. Despite the rhetoric on improving performance, teachers perceptions’ of the purpose of appraisal as it is practiced, may have more to do with the assessment of their performance against the Professional Standards. This is evidenced through comments indicating that appraisal served the interests of management’s need to be accountable to the MoE.

Self-review was not the only process that was valued by teachers. There was a strong belief that, beyond the appraisal relationship, professional discussions with other colleagues were worthwhile in informing a teacher’s practice. This correlated to some extent with the value given to self-review. It would be feasible to expect that discussions with colleagues could influence self-review by providing impetus for change, through the identification of differences in beliefs and practices. Current appraisal practices in these two schools do not appear to encompass this valued practice, which may also be connected to reasons why appraisal has not been perceived as a major factor in bringing about change.

Observing others was valued as a source of new learning and sharing of expertise that would allow for differences to be experienced first-hand. Teachers’ decisions, on what aspects could be translated to their classroom would be based on comparisons to their own practice, while taking the perceived differences in context, into consideration. The appraisal procedures of the two schools included classroom observation by the appraiser, but for the most part did not appear to encourage the appraisee to observe others as an expected part of the process. Despite this, many of the teachers indicated they had observed the practice of others out of personal choice.

Some of these teachers still felt that there was benefit from having an appraiser observe classroom practice, as the appraiser could identify areas where learning would be desirable that may not be evident to the appraisee. However, the feedback
in this case would be more likely to lead to defensive responses that hinder learning unless the appraiser had the skills to overcome such defensiveness (Cardno, 1999). As a snapshot of their practice, it would appear that the teachers from these two schools are unconvinced that the findings from classroom observations by the appraiser were an accurate reflection of their ability, or that the feedback from such observation would provide impetus for change. Moreover, classroom observations by the appraiser were more likely to be perceived, by these teachers, as an accountability aspect of appraisal. On the whole, appraiser feedback from classroom observation had little perceived value; this was the area most strongly associated with a low rating for the perceived value of appraisal. The results of this research have shown that in these two schools, little value was placed on appraisal meetings and appraiser observations of practice. This occurred despite some positive feelings associated with the level of support from their appraiser, and the objectivity of appraiser feedback. The combined set of results are perhaps indicative of these teachers' observations, that appraisers perceived a need to maintain collegial relationships, which came at the expense of learning.

**Factors that influence commitment to appraisal**

Appraisal was perceived to be an additional workload on already busy schedules and lack of time had appeared to result in minimalist approaches. The most significant factor that affected commitment to appraisal was associated with time. In particular, these teachers wanted more time to observe others, to share best practice, and to have professional discussions with their colleagues. Providing more time for appraisal was also deemed necessary, yet when time had been allocated to some appraisers, appraisee's did not always perceive the time given translated into increased commitment by the appraiser. Teachers felt that time was more likely to be dedicated to appraisal when there were associated expectations and deadlines to be met. However, appraiser commitment could also be affected by workloads, despite an allocation of time for their role. When this is the case, deadlines are unlikely to have the desired impact on increasing appraiser commitment. Understanding the factors that affect appraiser commitment is an area where further research would be beneficial.
Ownership appeared to be a factor that would increase teacher commitment to appraisal in these two schools. Several aspects appear to be associated with a sense of ownership. Firstly, the procedures that teachers valued most, in bringing about a change to their teaching practice, were those that would be initiated by themselves. For example, more value was placed on discussions with, and observing other colleagues. These procedures would therefore contribute to a sense of ownership. This research has found that having an input into the review of the appraisal process could contribute to the sense of ownership, however, there was evidence that a sense of ownership existed despite little input into review of the system. Another related factor was the extent to which goals were perceived to be owned by the appraisee as a result of self-review, rather than imposed by the appraiser. These teachers’ feelings of ownership of appraisal also corresponded to their belief that their professional development needs were being met by their organisation. In these schools, the identification of professional development needs occurs through the appraisal process. It would appear that these teachers’ sense of ownership of appraisal could therefore be determined from the outcomes of this process. The low ratings for both factors could correspond to the fact that professional development needs are identified for them, or that their needs have not been met, or a combination of both.

The teachers from these two schools appeared to say that external forces were not needed to bring about change in their teaching practice and rated many mandated aspects of appraisal lower than those over which they would have ownership. While ownership is considered to be a motivating factor, motivation does not necessarily translate into action. For example, increasing the level of ownership may not necessarily lead to desired outcomes of appraisal, due possibly to competing demands on a teacher’s time. Therefore, changing the nature of appraisal procedures alone is not likely to translate into commitment. Also, the relative importance of some factors over others, in giving ownership is not yet known.

Although ownership seemed important to gain teachers’ commitment, some of these teachers were concerned that self-review would not necessarily provide an accurate description of a teacher’s performance or lead to improvements in areas found most desirable by others. Often this concern was associated with teachers who were under-performing. Also in contrast to a desire for ownership, some of these teachers
argued that the appraiser should initiate times for meetings and classroom observations. The main factor that seemed to contribute to this view was that responsibility for the process had been associated with the allocation of time given to the appraiser. For some of the teachers, actions initiated by the appraiser gave an indication of the appraiser's commitment to supporting the appraisee. The converse can also hold true in that the appraisee's commitment to professional learning can be reflected in the initiative they demonstrate towards appraisal.

In order for teachers to be given ownership of their appraisal, they need to be trusted. It has been argued that external accountability mechanisms can work against the development of trust by the very nature of surveillance measures (Court & Adams, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2008; Olssen et al., 2004). Under the rhetoric of improving performance, the current political climate of mandated appraisal linked to assessment of performance against the Professional Standards gives a perceived message that teachers cannot be trusted to do a good job. Surveillance of the appraisal implementation process in each school, by ERO, ensures that the political agenda has been implemented in schools, in a manner consistent with the MoE’s desire to ensure minimum standards through the assessment of teachers against the Professional Standards. This was evidenced by the changes at Leyland College as a result of an ERO report, that required a more robust appraisal system be put in place; one that included an accurate assessment of teacher performance against the Professional Standards. Even though private schools are not obligated to meet the mandated requirements from the MoE, the principal at Leyland College felt an obligation to meet the demands of ERO, most likely for fear of retribution associated with the public nature of ERO reports. Parents’ choice of a private school is almost certainly based on their perceptions of the quality of education their child will receive and ERO reports have the potential to affect their perceptions.

Low levels of trust have infiltrated appraisal at several levels. As Bottery (2004) has noted, distrust breeds distrust. These teachers did not trust appraisers to make an accurate assessment of their performance. Furthermore, teachers themselves were not convinced all teachers could be trusted to accurately reflect on their own performance, or set appropriate goals for improvement. It appears that teachers were not trusted to improve without the need to measure their performance improvement through the collection of data and observation by others, while teachers themselves
did not trust the measures to accurately reflect the desirable improvements. The variance in views surrounding the motivation of all teachers towards self-improvement may be at the heart of conflicting views surrounding the purposes and practices of appraisal. Low levels of trust are counterproductive to the ideology that appraisal will improve teacher performance, as trust is a necessary condition for learning (Beerens, 2000; Piggot-Irvine, 2003b; Sergiovanni, 2005; Six, 2005). Exposing weaknesses or risk-taking associated with implementing new teaching strategies is unlikely to occur outside of a trusting environment.

As noted above, trust is an essential attribute in the appraisal relationship because of the risks associated with learning, such as uncertainty, unpredictability and the possibility of failure. There was evidence to show that factors that could build trust were important considerations in the selection of appraiser. Honesty and openness were identified as attributes to help to build trust over time. Respect for the appraiser was important and this came about largely as a result of perceptions about the appraiser’s ability to teach the same subject as the appraisee. This perception would be based on existing knowledge about the appraiser and expectations associated with their position, a situation termed as role trust that can fast track the development of trust (Bottery, 2004; Dibben, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). The evidence from this research suggests that where appraisers come from other subject areas, or outside of the institution, trust is likely to take longer to develop. Furthermore, mutual commitment to appraisal was believed to be another important factor in the appraisal relationship, although there appeared to be some disagreement over who should be initiating the process. Appraiser commitment to the appraisee’s development, which some had likened to mentoring, was perceived as highly important.

Distinction was made between an appraisal relationship based on trust or one on collegiality. Rather than be conducive to effective appraisal, collegiality was identified as a factor that could prevent good appraisal, as difficult issues might be avoided in order to maintain existing relationships. The teachers in this research suggested that training for the appraiser would be beneficial, as it could help to develop the skills of the appraiser to be able to deal with issues and challenges, in a non-threatening manner. This was consistent with the research findings and suggestions of Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1997), that dilemma management was a key factor in the success of appraisal. The results of Turion College appear to indicate that training in
classroom observation may also be beneficial for providing more worthwhile feedback in this area, given that the feedback from the external appraiser proved to be more valuable and he may have advanced skills in his specialist role.

**Developing mutuality between the individual and the school**

In order to fully capture teacher commitment to appraisal so that there is mutual benefit between teachers and the organisation, appraisal must be situated so that for a majority of teachers, evaluation for learning rather than assessing competency against the *Professional Standards*, is the desired outcome of the process. If improving teacher performance is at the heart of appraisal and this outcome is realised, benefits will emanate to students, their parents, and the organisation. Where there is concern that a teacher may not be meeting the expected requirements of the school, the process should be differentiated because the dual purposes of evaluation continue to suspend the potential of appraisal to bring about the outcomes most desired by teachers. Given that both forms of evaluation are concerned with improving performance, examining the assumptions that lie behind the need for each form of evaluation may well be a key issue. Hence the importance of knowing how to deal effectively with dilemmas if appraisal is to be effective (Cardno, 1999).

Several factors suggested that teachers held a professional attitude to their work consistent with the findings of Hill & Locke (2003). These teachers took responsibility for their professional learning that went beyond the expectations associated with the appraisal process. Teachers from both schools insisted, most strongly, that they felt a duty to contribute to improvement in their organisation that went beyond their own classroom teaching. However, they challenged the notion that school and team goals should be the primary purpose of appraisal. The teachers in these two schools felt that it may be possible to support school or team goals through appraisal, but a key factor to bring about success would be to ensure these goals were perceived as relevant and important priorities for them. Clearly articulated goals were a prerequisite and teachers needed to be supported to achieve these goals through professional development opportunities. Moreover, individual teacher’s needs would be the key consideration as to where the focus of appraisal should lie. These teachers’ obligations to fulfil appraisal requirements were aligned with a desire to be
professional, despite acknowledging that they saw little value in the outcomes of appraisal within their schools. However, their level of commitment to appraisal appears to be one of compliance.

Meeting the mandated requirements of a low trust system of appraisal has meant that teachers were not sufficiently committed for the process to have the desired effect. Not only is a trusting relationship needed between appraiser and appraisee for meaningful learning to occur, teachers need to feel trusted as professionals and in turn have trust in the appraisal process in order to be committed to appraisal. Autonomy and ownership, synonymous with high levels of trust, are key motivational factors that will increase a teacher’s desire to be professional. Furthermore, teachers need to trust that the process will lead to improvements in their performance and not have associated negative repercussions. Increasing the level of trust placed in teachers is a factor that can contribute to learning. According to Bottery (2004) trust is a reciprocal process so by trusting teachers, they in turn are more likely to have trust in the process and commit to it. Without a teacher’s commitment, learning is likely to be superficial at best.

The findings of this research have been portrayed in Figure 6-1 to illustrate the major tensions evident in appraisal. The dual purposes of evaluation situated in current appraisal practices have placed tensions on the appraisal relationship with consequences on learning (Beerens, 2000; Cardno, 1999; Fitzgerald et al., 2003). Ownership is also an important factor in adult learning (Beerens, 2000; Terehoff, 2002) and motivation. Providing ownership is indicative of high levels of trust, while the converse is also true (Bottery, 2004; Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Six, 2005). Low trust compared to high trust conditions in appraisal are therefore likely to have implications on both teacher commitment and learning (Dibben, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2005). Situated in each of the four quadrants is a description of the nature of the appraisal policy, procedures and practices that would be aligned to the given purpose and level of trust shown to teachers. The ideal for most teachers is largely situated in the lower left quadrant, although there are also some desirable factors evident in the upper left quadrant. In contrast, the upper right quadrant appears desirable for dealing with teachers who are not meeting minimum requirements.
Figure 6-1  Tensions evident in appraisal

APPRAISAL
Evaluation to assess learning

Characteristics
Policy and practice reflect schools desire to improve
Teachers viewed as managed professionals
Processes, data gathering tools & timeline set by the organisation
Goals balanced between personal needs and organisations goals
Professional development needs met by the organisation
Possible mandatory professional development to meet school goals
Appraiser as a mentor to appraisee selected by the organisation
Accountability mechanisms in place

ASSESSMENT
Evaluation to assess competency

Characteristics
Policy and practice reflect imposed standards at national level
Teachers viewed as not meeting minimum requirements
Criteria used for assessment set externally
Possible outcomes associated with judgments:
- job loss
- pay increase or bonus
- identification of the need for improvement
- implementation of a guidance programme
- recognition of strengths and weaknesses
Goals are only important if requirements are not met
Hierarchical structure for appraisal e.g. Line manager as appraiser
Accountability mechanisms in place

Teacher Ownership

High levels of trust

Characteristics
Policy is developed by teachers
Policy reflects the schools desire to assist each teacher to improve
Teachers viewed as self-managed professionals
Goals based on personal needs
Teacher selection of data gathering tools and processes for self review
Self-determined timeline
Self-determined professional development
Self-selected appraiser as mentor

Low levels of trust

Characteristics
Policy and practice reflect imposed standards at national level
Teachers viewed as not meeting minimum requirements
Criteria used for assessment set externally
Possible outcomes associated with judgments:
- job loss
- pay increase or bonus
- identification of the need for improvement
- implementation of a guidance programme
- recognition of strengths and weaknesses
Goals are only important if requirements are not met
Hierarchical structure for appraisal e.g. Line manager as appraiser
Accountability mechanisms in place

APPRAISAL
Evaluation to assess learning

Characteristics
Policy is developed by teachers
Policy reflects the schools desire to assess each teacher’s performance
Teachers viewed as professionals who will demonstrate they are meeting requirements
Job descriptions and professional standards used for judgments are developed by teachers
Processes are owned by teachers
Possible outcomes associated with judgments:
- job loss
- pay increase or bonus
- identification of the need for improvement
- implementation of a guidance programme
- recognition of strengths and weaknesses
Self-selected appraiser as judge
Teacher has responsibility to present evidence they have met the standard
Strengths and weaknesses of this study

The schools involved in this research have provided the opportunity to investigate three different approaches to appraisal, although the data from Leyland College did not always differentiate between the two systems that operated. Comparing and contrasting the results between the contexts of the two schools involved in this research, have added richness to the findings. A strength of this research lies in the collection of teachers’ stories about their experiences of appraisal. Integrating these stories with questionnaire results, and the document analysis, has created an insight into the complexities surrounding the commitment of teachers’ toward their appraisal.

Even more time spent within each context would have assisted me to better appreciate the historical, political and cultural forces at play in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers. More time may have led to increased response rates by targeting times of the year when teachers were under less pressure. With the proviso of increased response rates, more time would have increased the number of focus groups that could have been conducted, thus increasing the likelihood that the comprehensive range of perspectives could be heard. A longer time frame, between collection of the questionnaire data and the focus group meetings, would have provided the opportunity to explore the relationships in the data more fully, to achieve more from the focus group discussions. Some benefits exist in having the focus group discussions prior to data collection. This would have provided the opportunity to verify questions remaining from the discussions, through quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Recommendations

Practice

Lack of time is the single most important factor that will continue to preclude any likely gains from appraisal, as learning takes time to be imbedded and requires a high level of commitment for anything more than superficial change. In order to provide quality time for valued appraisal procedures, it will be important to reflect on which of the current, time-consuming, accountability measures, are really necessary. Careful consideration needs to be given to the number of new initiatives and changes
that place further demands on teachers’ time. On the other hand, within the time-constraints of their daily work, teachers are likely to commit time to a process they value.

Teachers in this research have identified practices that are not part of current appraisal systems but are of value for their professional learning and would gain their commitment; sharing best practice through discussions with other colleagues and observation of others’ classroom teaching. Coupled with existing valued procedures of self-review and goal setting, these procedures also devolve ownership of a significant part of the appraisal process to teachers. Consideration should therefore be given to how the appraisal process may be reviewed with teachers, to include the practices that have the potential to make the most difference to their professional lives.

Commitment from the appraiser is more important than any other single factor in the appraisal relationship, therefore, appraisers need to be selected based on this, rather than the position they hold in the school. Consideration needs to be given to whether the absence of dilemma management skills is affecting both, appraiser commitment, and the success of appraisal. Hierarchical structures may possibly not make a difference to effective appraisal, although the appraiser would need to have some level of expertise in order to effectively fulfil the role. Basing appraisal on hierarchical structures that already exist may have detrimental effects when appraisal is also connected to assessment of performance for surveillance purposes. More importantly, the appraisal relationship should be a partnership based on trust, where the appraiser is perceived to have the expertise to support and challenge the appraisee. Training for appraisal is more beneficial for appraisers, so that they learn to counteract the desire to be overly collegial, and overcome any problems associated with defensive responses. These are the conditions needed to effectively provide a challenge for learning to occur.

**Policy**

Foremost, teaching is a profession that continues to develop throughout a teacher’s career. For this reason, the purpose of teacher appraisal must be genuinely concerned with improving teaching and learning; then it will be of value. Where broad
evaluations of performance against the *Professional Standards* are necessary, benefits may arise from separating the process of developmental appraisal from this, so that the boundaries of each purpose are clearly drawn, and articulated. This is because, evaluations associated with determining levels of competency can appear to hinder the development of trust necessary for learning to occur, and do little except to ensure minimum standards are achieved. However, consideration also needs to be given to the additional time and human resource requirements that is likely to occur as a result of implementing separate systems.

To fully trust teachers may be an ideal, as teachers themselves indicate that some are more trustworthy than others. The challenge for schools is to find a balance between the risks associated with increasing the level of teacher ownership of appraisal and mandating requirements that may thwart any benefits of appraisal, but will ensure the process takes place. Teacher ownership has the potential benefit of improved outcomes by increasing their commitment, but may also result in no outcomes if such trust has been misplaced. Greenberg and Baron (2008) do caution that it is wrong to assume, that high levels of motivation are synonymous with high levels of performance. They also note that motivation is multi-faceted, different motives may operate concurrently and be in conflict with each other.

**Further research**

This research supports earlier findings that contributions to the review of appraisal and self-review are both factors that could provide a sense of ownership (Middlewood, 2002). Similarly, earlier research also indicated that lack of time hampered teachers’ desire to engage in the appraisal process because of more pressing demands (Fitzgerald et al., 2003). This study involved a broad collection of data to understand the complexity of factors affecting the commitment of teachers. Further research into schools should focus on a narrower and more in depth investigation, to confirm or refute the significant findings of this research.

Further quantitative research is desirable so that generalisations can be made, in particular, to ascertain the most significant features that determine ownership in appraisal. Ownership may then be offset with minimal accountability measures to
provide more confidence in outcomes of appraisal because the process balances the needs of teachers and school leaders alike.

In addition, this research has made tentative propositions about the factors in the appraisal relationship that are important in gaining teacher commitment. Comparative case study research investigating the impact of varied appraisal relationships may contribute useful findings that identify the most significant features of the appraisal relationship conducive to professional learning.

Furthermore, this research has indicated that teachers are unconvinced that appraisal has an impact on improving practice, and there is, as yet, no clear research base to indicate whether this is the case. This research has identified that sharing of best practice is a process valued by teachers that could have an impact on their professional learning. Self-review is another valued process. Future case study or action-based research could focus on identifying whether the specific procedures aligned to sharing best practice and self-review, independently or collectively, contribute to improving practice.

**Final comments**

This research has compared the perceptions of teachers’, in two private schools, towards their appraisal practices and identified subsequent implications for leaders in schools. What teachers value most, is for the appraisal process to lead to increased professional learning. However, many factors within current systems of appraisal impede any such potential and as a result, teachers find little value in appraisal in its current format. Teachers want to be professional so undertake the requirements of appraisal in the face of heavy workloads. Increasing teachers’ ownership of their appraisal involves risk, but is tantamount to the success of appraisal and the re-professionalisation of their role. Leaders must be willing to place more trust in their teachers, while also advocating about the dedication of teachers towards their professional learning. For this, leaders will need courage, to oppose the current political climate of surveillance and measurable outputs that are interfering with many important factors contributing to quality teaching and learning.
APPENDIX 1 APPRAISAL REFERENCE GUIDE

Purpose and Outcome of Appraisal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Appraisal</th>
<th>Secondary Outcomes of Appraisal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of teacher performance</td>
<td>Meet mandated requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving teacher performance</td>
<td>Review of contract / promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving school performance</td>
<td>Affirmation / Remuneration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures of Appraisal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common</th>
<th>Additional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher self-reflection</td>
<td>Feedback from further sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Sharing best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraiser</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal discussion</td>
<td>Link to Professional Development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>Link to Team goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student feedback</td>
<td>Link to School goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance review (Formative / Summative)</td>
<td>Differentiation of the process for subgroups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors affecting commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Commitment</th>
<th>Associated Stress Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A valued purpose</td>
<td>Accuracy of information (validity &amp; reliability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An effective process</td>
<td>Huge workloads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Fear of criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective qualities in the appraisal relationship</td>
<td>Fear of repercussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

Stage 2 Research Questionnaire

Section One

Demographic Information

1. Are you:  
   a. Male □  
   b. Female □

2. Do you work:  
   a. Full time □  
   b. Part time □

3. Are you:  
   a. Provisionally Registered Teacher □  
   b. Fully Registered Teacher □

4. Do you appraise other staff?  
   a. Yes □  
   b. No □

5. When did you start teaching?  
   a. Prior to 1997 □  
   b. Prior to 2000 □  
   c. 2000 or later □

6. How long have you been at this school?  
   a. less than 2 years □  
   b. less than 5 years □  
   c. 5 years or more □

Section Two Instructions:

Place an X on any place along the scale to match your position on each of the statements. If you wish to make further comments, space has been provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Scale: 0 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I have ownership of my appraisal process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am very willing to devote personal time (e.g. weekends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and holidays) into my development as a teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have a duty or obligation to contribute to improvement in my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisation beyond my own classroom teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My classroom practice has changed significantly over my years of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Appraisal meetings with my appraiser have been worthwhile in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informing my teaching practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Self-review has potential to influence change in my teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Feedback from classroom observations by my appraiser has been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worthwhile in informing my teaching practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Professional discussions with other colleagues (i.e. colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other than my appraiser) have been worthwhile in informing my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching practice.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PTO...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Professional discussions within my department/syndicate have been worthwhile in informing my teaching practice.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Classroom observations of other colleagues are worthwhile in informing my teaching practice.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am fully supported by my appraiser in my development as a teacher.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The feedback from my appraiser has been very useful in motivating me to develop aspects of my teaching.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The feedback from my students has been very useful in motivating me to develop aspects of my teaching.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The feedback I receive from my appraiser is objective.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I choose to align at least some of my personal appraisal goals with the goals of my department/syndicate.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I choose to align at least some of my personal appraisal goals with the goals of my organisation.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The school's appraisal process is a major factor in bringing about change to my teaching practice.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. There are some aspects of the appraisal process that give me cause for high levels of anxiety or stress.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. External forces (e.g. directives from those in senior positions, government or professional organisation) are needed to motivate teachers to change.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. My personal professional development needs have been met with full support by my organisation.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Some of the professional development opportunities I have undertaken are mandatory.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Appraisal goals should be achievable in the same year as they are established.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I shouldn't need to devote personal time (e.g. weekends or holidays) to achieve my appraisal goals.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The appraisal process should be a catalyst for promotion.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. The appraisal process should be a catalyst for remuneration.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PTO...
### Section Three Instructions:
Please tick the box that best fits your answer. Space has been provided should you wish to make further comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 32. How would you describe the level of input you have had in any review of the appraisal system in your current school? | a. There has been no review in the time I have been at this school  
   b. None  
   c. A little  
   d. Adequate  
   e. Extensive |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
| 33. Are there things that you do to enhance your development as a teacher, which you consider are not part of your school’s appraisal process? | a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. I don’t know |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
| 34. In the last 2 years have you personally searched for any professional development opportunities (e.g. courses, readings, etc) to meet your own needs? | a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. No, but I intend to for this year’s goals  
   d. Other: Explain……………………………  
   ………………………………………………………… |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
| 35. Have you embraced a change in any beliefs that guide your practice?  | a. Yes  
   b. No |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
| 36. Identify the range of people from whom you receive formal (written) feedback on your performance. | a. My appraiser  
   b. My students  
   c. Members of my department/syndicate  
   d. Colleagues outside my department/syndicate  
   e. Other: Explain……………………………  
   ………………………………………………………… |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
| 37. Approximately how often per year do you usually meet with your appraiser to discuss your progress? | a. Never  
   b. Less than once a year  
   c. Once a year  
   d. Twice a year  
   e. Three times a year  
   f. Four or more times a year |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                                           |
### Section Three continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 38. How often do you write down your personal reflections of your teaching for your appraiser? | a. Never □  
b. Less than once a year □  
c. Once a year □  
d. More than once a year □  
e. Other □ : Explain…………………………… |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
b. Less than once a year □  
c. Once a year □  
d. More than once a year □  
e. Other □ : Explain…………………………… |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 40. In 2005, what was the range of formal (written) feedback that you gathered from your students? | a. All classes □  
b. Most of my classes □  
c. A few of my classes □  
d. None of my classes □  
e. Not applicable □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 41. Have you ever observed the practice of other colleagues out of personal choice (i.e. not as part of an appraisee/appraiser situation)? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  
c. No, but I would like to □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 42. Have you ever requested for another colleague, other than your appraiser, to observe your classroom practice? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  
c. No, but I would like to □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 43. Are the goals you set this year in any way linked to goals set in previous years? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  
c. Don't know □  
d. I haven't set goals yet this year □  
e. I haven't set goals in previous years □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |

PTO...
### Section Three continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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</table>
| 44. Are there any of your appraisal goals set in either 2005 or 2006 that are aligned to your department/syndicate's goals? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  
c. I don’t know □  
d. I haven’t set goals in 2005 or 2006 □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 45. Are there any of your appraisal goals set in either 2005 or 2006 that are aligned to your organisation's goals? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  
c. I don’t know □  
d. I haven’t set goals in 2005 or 2006 □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 46. Do you believe appraisee's should receive formal training in appraisal for the process to be effective? | a. Yes, for all people □  
b. Yes, for some people □  
c. No □  
d. I don’t know □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 47. Do you believe appraiser's should receive formal training in appraisal for the process to be effective? | a. Yes, for all people □  
b. Yes, for some people □  
c. No □  
d. I don’t know □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 48. Have you received formal training in appraisal as an appraisee?      | a. None □  
b. A little □  
c. Adequate □  
d. Extensive □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 49. Would you like to receive any/further formal training in appraisal as an appraisee? | a. Yes □  
b. No □  |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
| 50. Have you received formal training in appraisal as an appraiser?      | a. None □  
b. A little □  
c. Adequate □  
d. Extensive □ |
| Comments:                                                               |                                                                         |
### Section Three continued

| 51. Would you like to receive any/further formal training in appraisal as an *appraiser*? | a. Yes ☐  
| b. No ☐  
| c. I don’t know ☐  |

Comments:

| 52. Has your relationship with your current appraiser been affected by any aspects of the appraisal process? | a. Not affected ☐  
| b. Yes, affected in a **positive** way ☐  
| c. Yes, affected in a **negative** way ☐  |

Comments:

| 53. Have your experiences of appraisal changed from earlier experiences with a different appraiser? | a. Not applicable ☐  
| b. No ☐  
| c. Yes, positively ☐  
| d. Yes, negatively ☐  |

Comments:

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire and the contribution you have made to my research on appraisal.

- **Please check that you have completed all questions including the demographic information.**
- **Return the questionnaire to the labelled box in the staff room.**
- **I invite you to participate as a focus group member for Stage 3 of the research project. Information regarding the focus group is on a separate form to ensure anonymity for the respondents in Stage 2 (The Questionnaire).**
- **Stage 3 forms are available alongside the return box and can be returned into the same box as the Stage 2 Questionnaire.**

By February 2007, the Principal of your school will receive an abbreviated report of the findings and the date at which the thesis will be available in the UNITEC library.

If you have further comments to make in support of your ratings that can inform my research or add insight for the focus group discussions, write these in the space below.
APPENDIX 3 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Introductory Questions Part A (Written preparation task)
1. In the thought bubble, tell me what you see as the purpose of appraisal as it is practised in your school. Whose interests does the current system serve?
2. In the speech bubble, tell me how are professional relationships between teachers are affected by appraisal.
3. In the section linked to the heart, tell me about your experiences and feelings associated with appraisal over the past year and how this may have been different from other experiences of appraisal you may have had in the past.

Introductory Questions Part B
4. What thoughts do you have about the findings from the questionnaire, and how they relate to your experiences?
5. What do you want as an outcome of appraisal?

Research Themes
6. Appraisal as a mechanism for developing your teaching (professional development)
   a. What factors within your current appraisal system affect (increase/decrease) your commitment to your learning (professional development)?
   b. What alternative factors would make a difference to your level of commitment to your learning (professional development)?
   c. How do these factors influence your behaviour?
7. Appraisal as a mechanism for developing your organisation (learning organisations)
   a. What factors within your current appraisal system affect (increase/decrease) your commitment to your organisation’s goals?
   b. What alternative factors would make a difference to your level of commitment to your organisation’s goals?
   c. How do these factors influence your behaviour?
8. Appraisal as a mechanism for accountability (meeting the Professional Standards)
   a. What accountability measures within the system affect (increase/decrease) your commitment to appraisal?
   b. What alternative accountability measures would make a difference to your commitment to appraisal?
   c. How do these strategies influence your behaviour?
9. Appraisal as a mechanism for multiple benefits
   a. Whose interests should be served by an appraisal system? What factors influences your thinking?
   b. How could multiple interests be served by an appraisal system? How might priorities affect the outcomes of appraisal?
   c. What do you identify as the core concern with the current system, if there is one?

Ending discussion questions
10. When you consider the focus of my research (see board), is there anything we should have talked about but didn’t?

Summary questions
11. Rank the top 3 to 5 factors that could gain your commitment to appraisal, with the most important as number 1.
12. Rank the top 3 to 5 factors that could gain your commitment to your school’s goals, with the most important as number 1.
APPENDIX 4 FOCUS GROUP INTRODUCTORY TASK

Your Pseudonym.....

The current system is for me a complete waste of time as there is no ongoing formal observation of teaching practices, or subsequent recommendations, suggestions, advice or sharing of ideas as part of the appraisal system. The system serves nobody’s interest.

There is no effect on professional relationships between teachers who do not interact as part of the appraisal system. There is a negative effect between my appraisal colleagues and me as they are resigned to the mindless form filling and I am frustrated by their reluctance to rise against it.

My most recent past school developed a system of peer observation of a teaching lesson that took place once a year. The idea was that a mutually agreed lesson was arranged between teacher and peer observer from same discipline. Observer observed and took notes. Then reported back on a well-designed form, as well as making casual verbal comments. One proviso was that positive comments had to numerically equal or exceed negative comments, limited to 2 or 3 each. The intention was to improve technique in the classroom and preparation if that was an issue. Sharing of ideas at all levels was encouraged and embraced by all staff within and across departments. Now that was a system that worked!

1. In the thought bubble, tell me what you see as the purpose of appraisal as it is practised in your school. Whose interests does the current system serve?
2. In the speech bubble, tell me how professional relationships between teachers are affected by appraisal.
3. In the section linked to the heart, tell me about your experiences and feelings associated with appraisal over the past year and how this may have been different from other experiences of appraisal you may have had in the past.
REFERENCE LIST


