

Where's the evidence: A portfolio approach

A School Development methodology to create a learning community

School Development in this country has a strong “informal” strand. What others are doing has become very important. Some principals have built a “visiting others” component into their schedules and most enjoy viewing samples of the work from other sites. School Development in this context can be viewed quite narrowly. It can become a sequence of problem solving activities, or a means of implementing a particular curriculum as others have done it. The training and development ideas presented in this chapter take a critical strategic focus where school development might be defined as a collaborative narrative. Many schools provide time for routine discussion but have little allocation for professional dialogue.

There is a growing awareness of the use of narrative in data gathering. Students are encouraged to “tell their stories” and professionals have always used narrative to express their meaning. There is a view that the kind of stories teachers use in talking to each other is indicative of the kind of culture evident in the school. This notion is supported and analysed in Cortazzi (1993).

Other references to narrative acknowledge its use as an important means of sharing values, beliefs and common understandings across a staff. There is a general agreement that sharing experiences and insights through relating stories of professional practice acts both as a motivator and energiser of staff activity. It is a useful way of explaining individual teacher, informal, classroom research, and a proven mechanism for providing raw material to begin a process of reflective critique as in Quality Learning Circles¹.

Narrative also offers the opportunity for analogy and for demonstrating how patterns of activity or patterns of behaviour mark the context of the learning environment. How teachers recognise and build on these patterns gives insight into how they develop further knowledge about their work and construct their individual theory of

¹ David Stewart (2000) *Tomorrow's Principals Today*. Kanuka Grove Press Massey University Palmerston North. Chapter 3.

practice. Sharing stories helps promote a sense of community and develops further collaboration and a sense of mutual accountability.

A central aspect in the School Development activities described below is the application of the four phase school development process (see Stewart 2000 Chapter 3) as the superordinate taxonomy.

1. Understanding the school culture.
2. Collaborative problem solving.
3. Structural change.
4. Curriculum and programme change.

This enables each school to develop a theme, give prominence to data gathering and collaboration, and to assess the likely impact of a range of alternative actions on classroom teaching and learning prior to instigating any structural change. This kind of mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991) places leadership priority on a continuous reframing notion to establish progress through the four phases. There is a real need in leading and managing school development initiatives to have a means of both charting progress and of talking with staff about 'what is' and 'what might be.' This is what is meant when principals talk of change being *embedded* or making sense of a *swampy* process (see Stewart 2000 Chapter 6). Furthermore, a simple taxonomy such as this enables steady considered processes to predominate and mitigate against sudden revolutionary orientations where many worthwhile practices are lost.

Transformational practice

It is not enough for principals and teachers to be aware of, or even knowledgeable about, reflection. They need opportunities to develop the skills of critical reflection, with reference to their own work, along with other professionals that they trust and respect. Brookfield (1995) argues that viewing their work and their assumptions about their work through multiple *lens* which include their colleagues' perceptions and experiences, is the essence of critical reflective practice. It is unlikely that school leaders will make time for teachers inside their schools to engage in reflection unless they, themselves, have taken time to develop the necessary skills and appreciate the technique. Building a professional community in their own institution where learning

is given prominence may be a consequence of principals' desire to recreate for staff opportunities that they have found valuable as in the networks described by Lieberman and Grolnick (1997). The core culture, values and beliefs then continue to be applied, if schools were to accept the criteria for judging teacher effectiveness shifting from "that of delivering good lessons to that of being able to build or create a classroom 'learning community' " (Prawat, 1992:12, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996:39). Within the four phase development process, there is an emphasis on the way that teachers think about what they do. There is some evidence that this school development procedure helps move many teachers from a reliance on simple outcome measures to an acknowledgment of multi-dimensional effects (Stewart 2000). This is a position that further supports the concept of a "core culture" for the school, arising from the discussion and sharing of personal values and beliefs (Campbell-Evans, 1993) and the consequential large degree of teacher discretion within that agreed cultural framework (Sergiovanni, 1996). Leadership that allows this to occur is often termed *transformational* (Grace, 1995; Burns, 1978, in Sergiovanni, 1996; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990).

What is and what might be

An ability to implement successful school development activities that lead to teachers applying critical reflective analysis to their work develops slowly. It is nurtured both by time for principals and school leaders themselves to engage in reflective activities, and by some form of longitudinal networking with others engaged in similar activities. Early attempts to engage school staff in activities of this nature may increase the level of dissonance amongst staff and necessitate some additional skill development work with the professional group.

Data gathering, often centred on ensuring that current practices are illuminated for all and engaging the participants in the collection, is a core activity for school development. There is some evidence to suggest that cycles of data gathering activity interspersed with collaborative discussion may be needed to first define the problem prior to engaging in problem solving activities. School groups that apply a similar data gathering focus to understanding the school culture and "taken for granted" actions and values show strong growth towards more collaborative communities.

The adoption and implementation of Quality Learning Circles allows the practical application of critical reflection but, even more importantly, signals to staff that this form of professional development is worthy of considerable investment of time and resources. Not only are professional discussions of this nature crucial to a school development process, but here is a vehicle for display, analysis, reflection and reconstruction using theory and practice in a collegial manner. Research and literature influences are integral to this process. Where groups combine the evidence they have gathered through the Portfolio Process with Quality Learning Circles there is usually further growth of critical professional conversations and reflective thought. A commitment to this hermeneutic practice tends to spread into other more casual staff interactions, further supporting the concept as school as community.

The growing use of portfolio artifacts as the stimulus for a Quality Learning Circle discussion and as an acceptable form of data in defining or addressing a problem, illustrates the developing tendency of school leaders to look for patterns of meaning within their school development initiatives as validation of improvement in teaching and learning. Use of portfolio in this manner reinforces the value of teacher knowledge while, at the same time, engaging the staff in activities that broaden and sharpen the critique that they apply to their own, and colleagues,' theory of teaching and learning. Narrative based around portfolio artifacts, in this sense, provides a reality-based mechanism for continuing learning and accountability amongst the teaching staff.

It is the metaphors contained within the narrative that often signal the dominant values being presented. Beavis and Ross-Thomas (1996), for example, suggest that metaphors of 'a team,' 'bridge building,' and 'putting out fires' all relate to dampening disturbances in some way and show values related to stability. People using metaphor in the context of their talk with each other enables the insights and meanings from one situation to be transferred to a totally different context. The listeners can take what they like from what they are hearing to reinterpret their own actions or to prepare some future behaviours. Listeners to multiple professional narratives can begin to assemble the community's or group's dominant metaphor. This provides strong indications of the kind of culture and core values present

amongst these people in their current environment. Narrative rich with metaphor can be a powerful vehicle for professional development and can be a useful means of keeping a school on track, as listeners choose the kinds of stories to which they wish to listen.

What the principal does

There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the principal's job has intensified along with that of teachers (Apple, 1988; Apple and Juizck, 1991; Chicago School Reform Consortium, 1991). In the change to a more inclusive form of learning, it is the principal who plays the key role in interpreting the values, the way common understanding will be applied and how the culture will be extended (Campbell-Evans, 1993). The major responsibility, to make learning the dominant characteristic of the institution, rests firmly on principals' shoulders. Although most school work takes place in classrooms and principals can be held responsible for these interactions, Fullan (1991:161) suggests principals may be more effective managing and modifying the school culture rather than spending large blocks of time in individual classrooms.

Principals have a responsibility to ensure that learning and teaching functions effectively, and that members of the school community gain satisfaction from these activities. How they do this may have more to do with developing a commitment to a range of agreed core culture elements, than developing managerial and supervisory systems which mimic the commercial world (Sergiovanni, 1996).

Serious reform... is changing the culture and structure of the school... if the principal does not lead changes to the culture of the school, or if he or she leaves it to others, it normally will not get done. That is the improvement will not happen (Fullan, 1991,p169)

If we seriously believe that learning is the active construction of knowledge by individuals, then we will not be satisfied with any school goal which emphasises mere knowledge acquisition. We will want to establish conditions which encourage pupils and teachers to challenge old conceptions and learn from new experiences. It is the process of reflection and learning that we will be focusing on, rather than merely the outcome in terms of knowledge acquired. The principal's main objective should be to

foster that climate of active reflection and learning throughout the whole school community. This objective certainly extends beyond the student body.

Evidence of own progress towards agreed goals and a focus on learning

Principals who wish to *walk the talk* can, of course, construct their own portfolio. Significant numbers of New Zealand school principals already do. It is then a relatively simple matter to demonstrate to staff and to boards progress and development. Furthermore, principals who work in this way can also show how the portfolio artifacts function as evidence within existing appraisal and review processes. They can demonstrate their focus on learning as the central tenet of the school.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning

Schools that wish to demonstrate their commitment to improving the quality of learning and teaching integrate into their procedures ways of constantly evaluating what they do with this bottom line question. "To what extent will this improve teaching and learning?" Those who follow the *4 phase School Development theory* concept referred to above ask this question in phase 4. These schools create frequent opportunities for teachers to critique each other's work and may use some form of Quality Learning Circles to do this.

The nature of Quality Learning Circles

The concept of *Quality Learning Circles* combines both the developments in this field pioneered by supporters of the development of critical theory (McTaggart, 1991; Carr & Kemmis, 1983), and by those who wished to promote the teacher as an action researcher (Elliott, 1991; Adelman, 1993; Elliott, 1985; Somekh, 1988).

Quality Learning Circles are small groups of teachers brought together to develop their professional practice. Quality Learning Circles are formed by selecting staff who are comfortable working with each other, but who also represent a heterogeneous cross section of teachers within the school. It will be useful if such groups comprise teachers at different stages in their career who are selected across age and subject

boundaries. The size of QLC groups should not exceed five or six teachers and they should remain intact for at least the duration of the school year.

The notion of QLCs, as a staff process, is consistent with transformational leadership, where “the leader works with others to obtain transformations of undesirable features of schooling, culture and practice” (Grace, 1995:54), ideas of schools as learning communities (Sergiovanni, 1996), and management roles using collaborative and cooperative methodologies (Brookfield, 1995). “If you want to change people’s ideas you shouldn’t try to convince them intellectually. What you need to do is get them into a situation where they act out ideas not argue about them.” (Horton, 1990:16, cited in Brookfield, 1995:251).

The Quality Learning Circles become the basic units for individual professional development within the school. They should meet regularly, preferably once a month, for at least half an hour. Their purpose will be to allow teachers to study and discuss their professional practice with a group of colleagues in a supportive and non-threatening environment. Quality Learning Circles are simply a structured opportunity for teachers to narrate real instances of teaching and learning and then critically reflect on their professional practice and that of their colleagues.

Principals may join QLCs for a time as participating members. The size of the school will determine the length of time that the principal could remain with any particular group. During this time it would be expected that group members would have the opportunity of hearing the principal’s philosophy and methods of teaching described, as well as visiting a class while the principal is teaching.

Quality Learning Circles could operate in a variety of ways, but typically they will follow a three phase sequence of steps: firstly, the members of the group will discuss a selected theme, and talk about their own interpretation of that theme in their classroom teaching; secondly, they will get an opportunity to observe other members of the group demonstrating their interpretation of that theme in their teaching; and finally, the group will discuss and reflect on what they have seen and discovered in their own as well as their colleagues’ teaching. Through this process teachers will be

able to construct new meaning and understanding to apply to their own classroom practice.

The *first phase* involves discussion of a selected theme that will be meaningful to the whole group. These themes should relate to current process at the school and should incorporate existing job definitions. Many schools, for example, have adopted the *Conceptual Job Description*² formats which include the current teaching standards and, as a consequence chose the sequence of themes from these documents. These themes are broadly classified as *classroom teaching, classroom culture, personal professional development, school culture, special responsibilities and goals*.

The complexity and the subtlety of the teaching-learning process means that teachers often find it difficult to be analytic about what is going on. Sometimes they will present textbook explanations which may bear little resemblance to what is really going on; or else they may simply describe their classroom practice as if this were some sort of statement of purpose. The challenge may be to get behind these taken-for-granted statements of theory or practice, and encourage teachers to reflect with fresh eyes on what they are really doing and trying to do. Any attempt to provide a simple cause-effect analysis of what is going on will almost certainly fail to tell the whole story. In fact, story telling or teacher narrative is a good place to begin as a group of teachers starts to talk about their classroom work with each other. Encouraging teachers to summarise their interpretation of the theme with a story or a descriptive metaphor is a simple but powerful way to get a new perspective on what is going on.

Teaching is about exchanging ideas and concepts, and facilitating the construction of new and different meaning by the learner. Teaching is not an activity which can be readily measured or quantified. While it may be possible to record and analyse the teacher's behaviour, it is not so easy to determine the effect that the session is having on each member of the class. The affective dimension of teaching is important, but not one that is easily assessed. Sometimes a raised eyebrow, or an encouraging smile, can be more significant in determining the success or failure of a teaching session

² *Tomorrow's Principals Today*. P83 –88.

than the quality or form of the information being presented, or the carefully followed lesson plan. Quality Learning Circles begin as groups of teachers tell stories to each other about how they teach, about classroom culture, and about the successes and worries of their current class.

The *second phase* involves teachers visiting each other's classrooms at predetermined times to observe a colleague putting into practice something they have discussed during the first phase. The visitor has an altogether different status and purpose to the supervisor in an appraisal situation. Here the observer is a *learner* who has come to observe something the teacher wants to share, or has been illustrating at the QLC meeting, rather than an observer coming to gather data on an area of professional weakness. The visitors may gather data if this is appropriate and necessary for their own learning.

The *third phase* will involve conversations between the visiting teacher-learner and the demonstrating teacher. The visitor may clarify to the demonstrating teacher the impressions gathered and the interpretations that have been made. The demonstrating teacher may wish to further discuss aspects of the lesson or of the underlying objectives. Both teachers will acknowledge that the purpose of the visit is for the visitor to gain a clearer view of the teacher narrative discussed at the recent QLC. Evaluative comment by either teacher is inappropriate and should be avoided. Following these private conversations, the larger QLC group will reconvene to share what they have learned during their study of that particular theme. It may be that certain examples of good practice come in for particular mention, and are then shared with the wider community through a whole-of-staff meeting. Following this, the group would commence discussions on the next theme for the year.

Teacher portfolio is the evidence for QLC discussion and critique

Discussions need to be about the real work of the classroom and portfolio development enables teachers to select artifacts which illustrate clearly the construct to be discussed. Not only is it possible to present examples of intent and outcome, but also included can be thoughts relating to context and progress towards set goals.

An overview of *Digital Teacher Portfolio*

Digital Portfolio is presented as a process for operationalising reflective thinking and action. Whilst reflective critique is a vital component in every educator's arsenal, it is the consequent action which leads to improved student learning. The portfolio process links the thinking and the action together and provides a record of why particular actions were considered important at the time. It is appropriate that this particular adaptation of the portfolio process uses a conceptual view of the teacher's job as the launching point.

The Conceptual Job Description as index and organiser

Tom Prebble and I began talking about a "Conceptual Job Description" in the lead up to "Tomorrow's Schools" on 1989-90. We first published these ideas in "The Reflective Principal: Strategies for effective development"³ in 1993. The concept has been further refined and the Education Ministry standards for teacher development added in "Tomorrow's Principals Today"⁴

This newly developed Conceptual job Description, which is really a way of thinking about the teacher's role, becomes the organiser and the index to the Digital Teacher Portfolio. Progressively, as filestamps⁵ are placed in the various sections of the CJD, a comprehensive amalgam of actions and reflections is constructed as evidence of work in progress. This portfolio is never intended as a stand-alone document. It should always be linked with illustration, narrative and explanation. Constructing the portfolio is about assembling evidence of thinking and action which is tied to a particular context and time. These records contain subtleties that need conversation, metaphor and example to be understood by others.

³ David Stewart and Tom Prebble. (1993) *The Reflective Principal: School development within a learning community.* ERCD Press Massey University. Palmerston North.

⁴ *Tomorrow's Principals Today.*

⁵ Hyperlinks to the completed artifacts

Figure 1. Page 1(portion) of the Conceptual Job Description with filestamps added

CONCEPTUAL JOB DESCRIPTION - TEACHER		
<i>Responsibilities</i>		
1. Classroom teaching		
<i>Concept</i>		
Providing quality learning opportunities based on The Curriculum Guidelines and targeted to the specific needs of this class group.		
KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED	STANDARD
Establish entry level for individuals File Stamp: 3/07/2001 C:\My Documents\Tchr Portfolio\Classroom Teaching\GroupEntry Levels.doc	Cumulative pupil progress.	PKC CS
Design and plan learning sequences. File Stamp: 3/07/2001 C:\My Documents\Tchr Portfolio\Classroom Teaching\Learning Sequence.doc 3/07/2001 C:\My Documents\Tchr Portfolio\Classroom Teaching\Sequence Bloom.doc	Area, class, group, individual plans and programmes.	MSL PKL&A SC

Progressive construction

When we address the concept of reflection from a teacher or an educational leader's perspective, we are thinking about an integral set of behaviours. Reflection in this sense, is not something that can be put off until there is some *free* time, but rather is a form of thought that is constantly occurring and recurring as teachers go about their work. It is truly "reflection-in-action" (Schön 1983:42), and the on-going thinking is constantly reshaped by reaction and response from others and perception of consequence. It is this reflection-in-action which we aim to catch and retain within the portfolio.

In a real sense, an illustration of our thinking and action-response can be called an artifact. It exemplifies what we did, at that time, in that instance. As mentioned earlier, it needs careful interpretation but it provides a sign on the way in an intensely complicated and fast paced environment. Over time, a collection of such artifacts, ranging over the many facets of an educator's work, begins to provide a view of the way a particular teacher thinks and acts. Careful selections can show progress towards set goals and sequences can demonstrate how thinking has changed and evolved as situations and knowledge has developed.

Evidence + talk

Portfolio construction links evidence and talk in a variety of contexts. As the database extends, so too do the range of applications for which it can be used. Importantly, the teacher decides which aspects of on-going work to capture and retain and which subsets are used in subsequent conversations. A number of possible applications are discussed below.

Towards set goals

Page six of the Conceptual Job Description encourages school leaders to select and illustrate a range of goals under each of the major page headings:

Classroom teaching;
Classroom culture;
Personal professional development;
School culture; and
Specific responsibilities.⁶

By using the filestamp process on this page teachers have a useful record which illustrates their dominant initiatives and the various links to the wide variety of other work in progress.

Appraisal

This goal page is an obvious start point for an appraisal process and then decisions may be made as to how such a process might best proceed. My own view is to encourage the detailed examination of one of the first five pages each year, supplemented by an overview of this goal page. Teachers already engaged in this kind of development with the *Digital Teacher Portfolio* report major satisfaction with this kind of process in that they feel well prepared, they have chosen the artifacts for discussion, and they can demonstrate how interconnected and contextual their work is.

Self review

As the file stamps are progressively added to the CJD it becomes obvious which dimension is dominant. It is not surprising, for example, than many teachers report significant undervaluing of their own personal professional development. Constructing the portfolio draws attention to imbalances in professional life and can act as a stimulant to changed action.

Professional discussion

Congruent with the development of this version of portfolio has been my involvement with a number of clusters of teachers who have developed their portfolios within the Quality Learning Circle process. They report their satisfaction and growth through the school providing a means of continuous focus on day to day teaching and learning

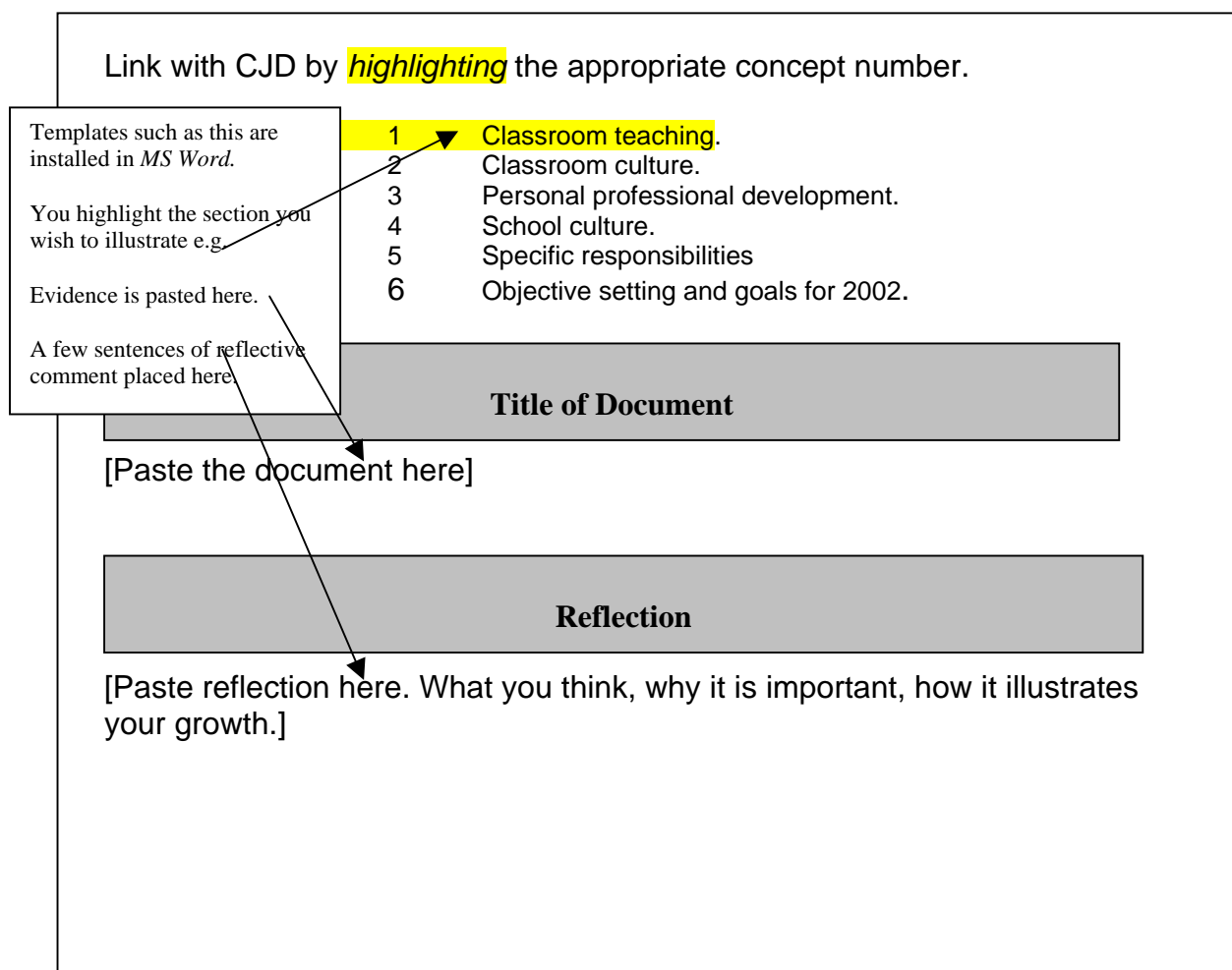
⁶ *Tomorrow's Principals Today* Ch3

strategies. They report on how the use of portfolio artifacts illustrates the values and underlying assumptions of their work and enables profitable and professional discussion with colleagues. A number have reported an increasing awareness of their own growth, ability and understanding which has led to further career opportunities.

School Development progression and reporting

Comprehensive and on-going collection of evidence, relating to school development is often left until an initiative has been completed. It is usually then both a chore and quite difficult to reconstruct. Portfolio construction does need organisation and commitment but the consequential rewards, in this area alone, are considerable. Reporting then becomes a simple selection amongst the variety of documents and comment that is available.

Figure 2. An example of a Portfolio artifact.⁷



⁷ The *Digital Principal Portfolio* program automatically installs a number of alternative templates for artifact construction in the *MS Word* program. These templates come with some automatic tracking headers and footers not shown in the example above.

Appraisal and teacher growth: what is important here

Much of the material about appraisal relates to how it should be done, how to make observations, how to provide effective feedback, and how to make judgements about performance perhaps related to particular standards. While these aspects need attention in order to meet mandated processes, what is important is the quality of the teaching and learning that goes on every period of every day. We know that providing teachers with time and opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about their work with their colleagues, often leads to improved practice but instead we often use up their time and energy by having them listen to how they could become more like us! We subject them to the power of the supervisory *but*.

Using a portfolio approach, teachers collect the evidence that supports their values in their teaching, demonstrates their progress towards stated goals and illustrates how they operate as classroom teachers. In their talk with each other they weave this evidence into their narrative. Following the talk they adjust their practice to integrate the insights and further understandings that arose in their discussion. It is reflection-in-action.

Portfolio and power

When the collection of artifacts is given over to the practitioners, albeit within an agreed format such as the Conceptual Job Description, we demonstrate a degree of professional trust. Much of the power is in the hands of the teachers. They decide what best demonstrates their teaching attributes and then table these examples with their peers in open and constructive debate. Schools using a Quality Learning Circle approach then enable teacher visits as *learners* to each other's classrooms following these discussions to verify the talk that they heard. Many schools manage this cycle of discussion and observation twice a term and, as a consequence have engendered a powerful culture of professional growth and development.

Portfolio and promotion

A number of students in the 300 level course that I have conducted in this area have stated, somewhat surprisingly, that constructing a portfolio alerted them to their worth

as teachers. Over a term or two, focused around what they actually do in the classroom from a pedagogical perspective they realise they are doing a very good job. Some have then gone on to use this record to gain promotion either within their existing school or in the wider region.

Portfolio and proof

Although my own tendency is towards a regime of low control – high trust, there is a legislated mandate of assessing and reporting that all must acknowledge. Proof is required that congruence exists between talk and action, that goals are achieved, and that teachers do, in the main, what their job descriptions prescribe.

The Digital Teacher Portfolio, constructed around the Conceptual Job Description enables these three levels of proof. Scanning the six pages for *Filestamps* gives a quick guide to where particular teachers are currently placing emphasis. Over time, it would be expected that all sections had some entries. Indeed, the schools that I have visited have made this a part of their policy. Page six is a goal page and it is a simple matter to activate the evidence for any of the goals that teachers have selected. Combining portfolio development with QLC operation and the consequential visits ensure that all “walk their talk”. These aspects provide a very strong level of proof while still encouraging individual action and group participation.

A School Development initiative.

In designing a school development plan, school leaders need to declare the underlying assumptions on which their thinking rests. They may, for example, decide that *teachers talking together about their work* will be a central focus of the plan. This would be the logical outcome if they believe that, regardless of what may be planned or intended by central authorities, only teachers at the local level can do the teaching. It follows, therefore, that teachers need to be trusted to implement the agreed goals of the school. As they go about their work, they need structured opportunities to talk with each other, as we know that they learn from each other. Most teachers are keen to improve the teaching and learning in their rooms, and constantly adjust what they do to match student interest and learning.

A school development plan, therefore, that begins from this platform, will include many opportunities for collaboration amongst staff, will celebrate both success and diversity, and will enable a group process of authenticating progress and critiquing work quality. Portfolio development is critical to this process.

Teaching is an imprecise activity largely hidden from observers because the *action* goes on inside the heads of the participants. We relate *what we think is happening* by providing a narrative, which recognises the context and the emotion that surrounds the event and offer portfolio artifacts as evidence of intention and outcome. When teachers talk together about their work, they allow their colleagues to suggest alternative interpretations about what happened. This analysis can extend to proposing the theoretical construct that might lie behind the action. In many groups this interpretation will be advanced as a question. For example,

A small group of teachers are providing examples of student collaborative work and, after hearing one narrative, a teachers says “so you feel quite strongly about everyone in the student group being given a particular task before they begin. You believe this is necessary for the activity to be successful? What led you to this understanding?”

The ensuing conversation is likely to clarify how this teacher came to adopt this particular practice. It is also likely to uncover a range of alternative viewpoints. Such challenge and counter-challenge, provision of example backed up by experience, and genuine interest in alternative viewpoints, leads to highly motivated teachers building on each other's experience. In this kind of example we are using a definition of teacher professionalism which could be defined as teachers making decisions “in the best interests of their students” (Wildy and Wallace, 1998:123).

The school development plan, that we are constructing will be strong on process, will be clear about the direction the school is heading, but will leave more open the particular actions teachers might engage in within their rooms. Using the ideas developed in this chapter, a school may decide to implement Quality Learning Circles as the central focus of their School Development plan. To have reached this point, the school staff will have engaged in a range of preliminary activities and have a high

level of trust in the professional activities of each other. QLCs are not appropriate where schools are in crisis or as the vehicle for top-down managed change.

Having moved to this point the staff then decide to construct portfolios both as a means for compiling evidence of professional development and as a process for providing colleagues demonstratable examples of current effective teaching practice. This would signal a shift from compliance to community values and would emphasise the school's desire to engage in data based discussion and decision making. If at the same time the principal engaged in personal portfolio development there would be strong evidence that a learning community had indeed developed. Such a process might signal a change in the locus of control but an institution, which emphasised learning as a priority at every level in this way would likely release energy and commitment within and across classrooms. The major power, in this scenario, would be focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching.

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