

Teacher-Talk: Supporting Teacher Practice

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ABSTRACT

Teacher-talk is a key tool for engaging students in learning. This report examines a process whereby data was used to support teachers in reflecting on their teacher-talk. The context for the study was a small rural New Zealand area school with predominantly Māori students and staff. Emphasis was on strategies that engage, in particular, Māori students. Analysis showed that a combination of data analysis and anecdotal reflection are, in combination, powerful tools for teacher development and change. Mixed methods observations in three participant-teachers' classrooms were followed up with professional learning discussions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies proved a strong base for co-constructed reflection and goal-setting. It was clear, through the process used, that Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) can provide personalised teacher-directed professional development, using the inquiry model as a framework.

Practice paper

Keywords:

engagement, strategies, teacher-talk

BACKGROUND

As an RTLB in an area of predominantly Māori students, in schools in Māori communities, with teachers who are Māori, the focus of work must always promote culturally-relevant practice. This report discusses culturally-responsive teacher-talk, and how RTLB can support reflection and change by classroom teachers. The process was one of professional learning through collaboration.

Practice as an RTLB is often based around affecting change in the practice of teachers. Changing teacher practice can be difficult when teachers are increasingly busy, and schools are in a new professional learning landscape where they have limited control over their professional development. The relationship between RTLB and teacher is crucial to positive and sustainable change in the classroom.

The tension in maintaining positive relationships with teachers, when expecting them to initiate, contribute to, follow, and review planning for individual students, is an ongoing issue.

RTLB work as itinerant teachers supporting schools and teachers to enhance pedagogical and systemic practices, thus enhancing learning opportunities for all students (Ministry of Education, 2011a). As an RTLB, I was, therefore, keen to examine what I could do to support specific changes in teacher-talk, in ways that rely on more than anecdotal reflections on observed practice.

Teacher-talk is everything that a teacher says in the classroom. This includes content, context, tone and vocabulary. Positive, caring and interactive conversation and direction, created by teacher-talk in the classroom, is a key tool for inclusive practice, and, therefore, increases success in learning (Webster-Stratton, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive Education, Pedagogy and Learning

An inclusive responsive mindset is advocated as a key strategy for increasing student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2013). The Ministry of Education defines inclusive education as “where all children and young people are engaged and achieve through being present, participating, learning and belonging” (Ministry of Education, 2011a, p.1). The improvement in engagement of all students in a class, including Māori, is key to increasing their success at school (Ministry of Education, 2012). Teachers in New Zealand are required to promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive learning environment, using successful strategies to engage and motivate students (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Inclusive school-wide practices promote quality talk and, therefore, engagement and success in learning (Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Edwards-Groves & Hardy, 2013). This is evident in classrooms where students initiate questions, and where teachers use varied techniques to explain and model. To be inclusive

in practice means changing pedagogy (Andreou, McIntosh, Ross & Khan, 2015; Bristol, 2015). All students in a class need to be included in ways that optimise learning opportunities, increase engagement and lessen disruptive behaviour (Bickmore & Parker, 2014). Pedagogy and learning can be changed by changing teaching practice (Andreou et al., 2015). Changing practice, then, is the key to “overcoming harmful assumptions, low expectations, stereotypes, biased writing and deficit theorising, the development of self-determination, and the sustaining of indigenous language and culture” (Bishop, Ladwig & Berryman, 2013, p.2).

Each school day may be paved with good intentions, however sometimes this is not enough to achieve success for all in the New Zealand education system (Bevan-Brown, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The disparity between groups of students is continuing and we can, in the simplest ways, build better relationships by becoming involved in co-construction through dialogic discourse and being responsive to the indigenous culture in this country (Arguiar, Mortimer & Scott, 2009; Bishop, O’Sullivan & Berryman, 2009).

Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003) has been a kaupapa Māori response to educational disparity. It centred on the need to engage teachers in rethinking their deficit views of Māori, and providing authentic student voice. The student voices in this research made it clear that when whanaungatanga (relationships through shared experiences providing a sense of belonging) and discursive practice are present, engagement can increase exponentially (Bishop et al., 2013).

Engagement and Teacher-Talk

Quality teaching is the most important influence that the education system can have on student achievement. Effective teaching and learning depends on the relationship between the teacher and student, and the teacher’s ability to engage and motivate the students (Ministry of Education, 2013). This relationship begins with verbal interaction (teacher-talk).

Focused and deliberate teacher-talk is well-documented as an essential component of effective teaching for better learning (Barnes, 2010; Simpson, 2016). Using varied interactions allows teachers to support the learner, reframe behaviours, and to engage in discourse that is proactive and culturally-responsive. As children start school, verbal communication, interaction and direction precede the written equivalent. Teacher-talk is central to how classrooms function and how children learn. It has boundless potential for better engagement in

learning, better relationships and social learning in terms of awareness, conversation and respecting differences (Brown & Kennedy, 2011; Soholt, 2015). Teacher attention, encouragement and praise, of both social and academic behaviours, and the verbal and nonverbal encouragement to learn, to be kind, and to express oneself, are key aspects of teacher-talk. Such things engage, support and promote meaningful connections with students. Webster-Stratton (2012) talks about strengthening positive behaviours and engagement in learning by using structured, positive and responsive teacher-talk. The key is using “persistent coaching and encouragement” (p.496).

The improvement in engagement of all students in a class, in ways that motivate them to share, talk, and do, is key to increasing their success at school. Observation and modelling of the behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions motivates and engages (Bandura, 1977). If we are dialogic in our discourse and if we are openly collaborative in our practice, then we can co-construct a learning environment (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Saglam, Kanadli, Karatepe, Gizlenci & Gosku, 2015). That co-constructed environment is a reality that is inclusive and responsive and therefore more successful for all students (Ministry of Education, 2012; Wells, 1999). Effective teachers use and reflect on the strategies of dialogic discourse and co-construction (Webster-Stratton, 2012).

Proactive Teaching Strategies of Effective Teachers

The Incredible Years for Teachers (IYT) programme, widely promoted for New Zealand schools, emphasises the importance of proactive teaching practices to prevent disruptive and off-task behaviours (Webster-Stratton, 2012). The use of verbal and nonverbal cues of appreciation, of re-direction, and of recognition, are key tools in building positive relationships in and around the classroom, and in fostering internal motivation (Webster-Stratton, 2008). Consistent use of individual, group and class praise and discourse promotes engagement across the classroom. Positive and neutrally-toned warnings, and helpful reminders, engage attention and promote a learning focus (Webster-Stratton, 2008). Consistency as opposed to severity is promoted as a form of social coaching. Being both academic and social, it develops self-esteem and a sense of commitment to individual learning, and to the collective output in the classroom (Webster-Stratton, 2008).

RTLB are supporting more positive and co-constructed learning. They do this by using varied strategies to analyse current practice, and by collaborating on authentic and relevant changes to style and level of teacher-talk. They are sharing

the decision-making and responsibility (Ministry of Education, 2011a). This relates to the planning and reviewing, as well as the learning outcomes. These behaviours and social skills are needed to develop free-thinking confident adults (Ministry of Education, 2013). A key component in this is the use of direct and indirect control of classroom interactions. Dialogic discourse has an “internally persuasive” nature (Saglam et al., 2015, p.322) of openness to adapting or transferring skills and knowledge between learning contexts.

Dialogic Discourse

Analysis has revealed that teachers using IYT strategies can give significantly fewer commands (monologic discourse) to target children, whereby compliance to teacher commands increases (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). Dialogic discourse (co-constructed ideas) leads to divergent thinking, increased monitoring, and deeper learning. The need for dialogic discourse (Saglam et al., 2015) that supports learning and thinking, is a key aspect of teacher-talk for engagement. Dialogic communication is more sensitive and responsive (Dalli, White, Rockel & Duhn, 2011). Engagement is higher and more sustained.

Engagement is about how one relates and interacts with others, and, as a result, how one understands and explains those experiences (Bishop et al., 2006). Teacher-talk that encourages student-talk plays an important role in all classrooms: for verbal fluency, gaining confidence in different contexts, shared learning experiences that are equitable, and in cognition through engagement in learning discussions and tasks (Jones, 2010).

If teacher-talk and classroom discourse wholly reflect the dominant discursive positioning (inherently and insidiously found in colonised societies such as ours), systems of ignorance and oppression are reinforced (Bishop, et al., 2007; Smith, 1999; Walker, 1990). Māori are, then, continuously excluded from appropriate and culturally-appropriate and crucial educational opportunities. We, as educators, are asked to talk less, discuss more, and redirect rather than be authoritative (Jang & Stecklein, 2011; Webster-Stratton, 2008).

Co-Construction

Co-construction is shared (or constructed) learning through discussion, not direction. When working with Māori students and teachers, co-construction is embraced by the concept of whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga in an educational context is about caring and learning relationships (Macfarlane, 2004). It is based on a shared knowledge and manaaki

(caring, in a deeper sense) of who we are in our own world, and the world of the school (MacFarlane, 2004). Connected to this is the principle of ako. Ako is a dynamic form of learning (Ministry of Education, 2013). It is about a teaching and learning relationship where the teacher is learning alongside the student. It is a two-way process, based on the principle of reciprocity. As a recommended practice, it recognises the importance of shared talk (dialogic discourse), of discussion, and shared planning of learning (co-construction).

Ako reflects the ‘tuku iho’ (handed down) aspect of learning in that Māori have whanau, whenua and whakapapa as inalienable rights (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). In the classroom, then, relationships reflect prior knowledge and kaitiakitanga (‘caretakership’) of whanau, whenua and whakapapa (tangata whenuatanga)(Ministry of Education, 2011b). They also reflect a reciprocity of responsibility in terms of relationship, sharing, and working. “Māori are ‘culturally positioned’ as learners” (Bishop et al., 2003, p.5). Ako reflects those dual relationships. This has a cross-cultural link to the dialogic inquiry model where learning is co-constructed (Wells, 1999).

A PROFESSIONAL INQUIRY

The focus question for this inquiry asked how can I, as an RTLB, work with teachers to develop greater awareness and self-reflection when using teacher-talk as a tool for engagement with Māori? Professional inquiry in education settings should lead to improved and sustainable teaching practices that recognise the principles of tangata whenuatanga, whanaungatanga and ako. Johnston, Ivey and Faulkner (2012) describe the need to recognise that the smallest or most ordinary decision made in a classroom can affect the engagement and learning of children, and that we should not underestimate this. Authentic teacher-talk has a key role in building learning communities, on engagement, and on self-regulation. There is a need to nurture a strong emotional and social competence in young children as they grow to avoid disengagement from learning (Webster-Stratton, 2012). To do this, educators at all levels should nurture positive relationships with students, and be aware of the need for student voice in the classroom. Inquiry is needed into appropriate strategies that promote higher engagement in learning by Māori students.

Methodology

As an RTLB, I wanted to work with teachers to develop greater awareness and self-reflection when it comes to using teacher-talk as a tool for engagement with Māori students. Mixed methods research was

chosen to explore this topic as it allowed for an approach involving integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The assumption was that the combination of approaches would lead to a greater understanding of the research question or problem, and to more collaborative and comprehensive analysis (Creswell, 2014; Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2013).

The research was based on a social constructivist world-view, where interaction is a key element to existence. Authentic teacher-talk is a key tool in culturally-locating students, recognising their language and culture and experiences, and then building, with them, relevant and engaging learning opportunities (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Arguiar et al., 2009). As learners participate in a broad range of joint activities and internalise the effects of working together, they acquire new strategies and knowledge of the world and their culture (Scott & Palinscar, 2013; Sullivan, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Observation and modelling of the behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of those we spend time with, will build confidence and knowledge of self. This motivates and engages (Bandura, 1977).

Methods

Observation was used as a flexible research method to collect both qualitative and quantitative information (Menter et al., 2013). The context and settings were the classroom of three teachers, as volunteer participants. Non-probability sampling (non-random sampling) was used to gather data in ways that were purposive (Creswell, 2014). It is convenience sampling in that the participants were readily available each day at school, and volunteered to participate (Creswell, 2013; Latham, 2007). They were selected based on the characteristics of being teachers, and being Māori. An introduction of the inquiry to all the staff of the school produced three volunteers, who worked with the researcher for a six-week period.

Quantitative data gathering allowed for a focus on the frequency of occurrence of behaviours related to teacher-talk. An observation proforma was created that collected ordinal data on teacher-interactions with students (individuals, groups and the whole class - *Interactions With*); teacher-interactions in terms of their status or style (positive, neutral and negative - *Style of Interaction*); and teacher-interactions that involve some form of dialogic discourse, and co-construction (*Strategy of Interaction*).

Both numerical codes and descriptive information were gathered. A numerical database was constructed. Data was collated using basic descriptive statistics to summarise them into manageable groups

and to explore relationships between the variables. Data was transformed into diagrams based on frequencies in the form of percentages, which refined the raw data for clarity and meaning (Menter et al., 2013).

Qualitative data were gathered in the natural context of the classroom, in the form of anecdotal notes and comments. In this way, supplementary information supported the analysis of quantitative data by giving greater awareness of key issues towards improved teacher practice. Qualitative research helped describe perspectives and behaviour that had immediate meaning for participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Human ethics approval procedures for the inquiry were completed in alignment with university guidelines.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed through an inductive analysis process. This was reflective of the grounded theory approach where data were coded, and sorted into themes for teachers to reflect on, towards improved teacher-talk (Creswell, 2013; Menter et al., 2013). Interconnecting levels of data were categorised, building a 'story' of classroom life. Emphasis was placed on analysing the data, generating explanations, and developing next steps for better engagement. The professional learning sessions were 'kanohi ki te kanohi' (face to face), and in a discussion/collaborative format.

Site

The site of this study was a co-educational area school (Y1-10) in rural New Zealand. The school is Decile 1, with a roll that is 98 percent Māori, 2 percent European. Professional learning conversations were had with each teacher, and goals for better engagement were co-constructed. Post-data were collected and analysed in terms of any changes made. Participants contributed to the post-analysis as a group. The three participants were Teacher 1 (T1 – Year 1 students), Teacher 2 (T2 – Year 2-4 students) and Teacher 3 (T3 – Year 8-10 students). All were fully registered New Zealand-trained teachers. All three were Māori, and were from the community in which they teach.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observations were made, interactions analysed, professional learning discussions held, and next-steps developed collaboratively.

Changing Teacher Practice

Observations, followed by professional learning discussions, proved successful within the constraints of the inquiry timeframe. All three participants showed change in how they interacted with their students. Findings are derived from professional learning discussions and the shared discussion following the post-data analysis.

Teacher One (T1): After the pre-data period, I showed T1 examples of how she was using specific praise and feeding-forward so that the students knew what the expectations were. T1 was using 'we' to co-construct new expectations, using questions to re-direct disengaged students, and was a strong user of individual student names, as recognition of their belonging and importance (whanaungatanga).

We discussed goals around the dual use of class interactions (as recognition and as reminders), the use of questioning to promote dialogic discourse and co-construction, and the consistency needed in using a school-wide reward system. Anecdotal evidence and responses led to an increase in awareness and commitment to consistency, and to varied levels of interaction, to engage students.

This was evident in the quantitative data analysis in the post-data gathering period. T1 showed an increase of 8 percent in positive comments. By focusing on a more specific style of praise, T1 lessened the need for negative comment as shown in Figure 1.

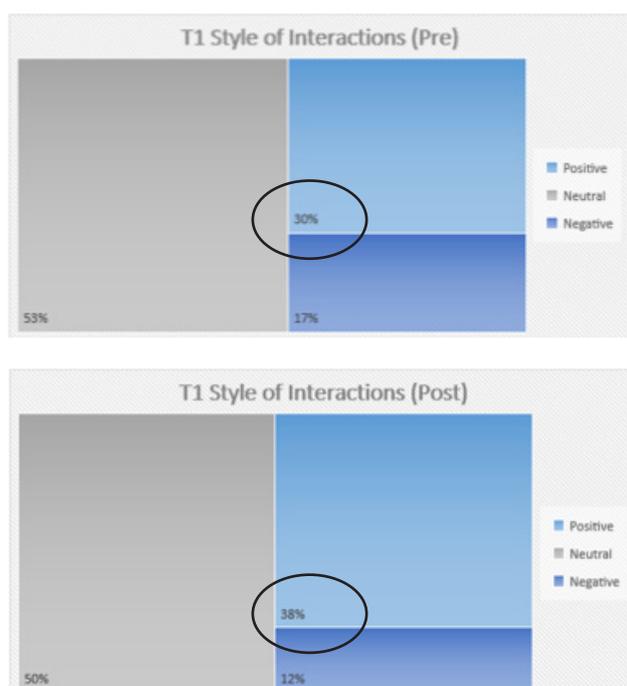


Figure 1. Changes in style of interactions by T1 following professional learning discussions.

Changes were achieved by using more class-level specific praise (Figure 2). This happened alongside a continued reliance on individual interactions. This served a dual purpose of building the collaborative nature of her groups in a newly configured class of Year 1 students, and bringing students back to task proactively and positively.

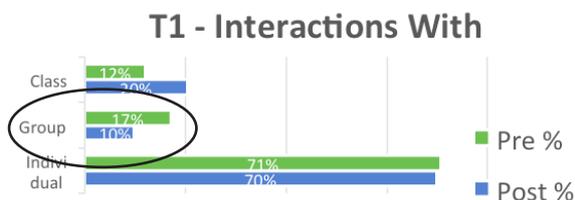


Figure 2. Changes in interactions by T1 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

Change occurred in the area of dialogic discourse and co-construction. T1 endeavoured to use these strategies to build classroom cohesiveness and processes as they began their journey as a 'new' class (Figure 3).

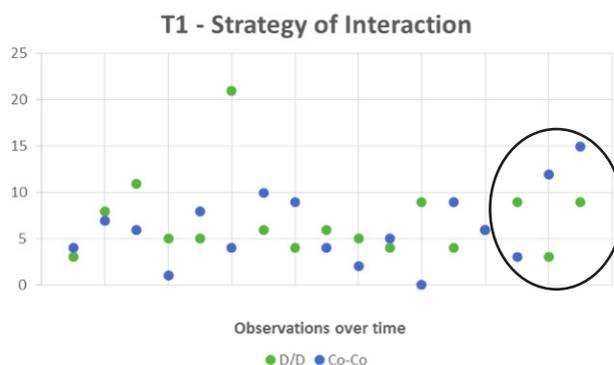


Figure 3. Changes in number of noted uses of dialogic discourse and co-construction of learning by T1 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

Figure 3 shows the beginnings of a steady increase in teacher-talk using dialogic discourse and co-construction in the second half of the observations. Although more difficult, and perhaps less obvious at this junior level, the teacher used a range of question charts provided by the researcher as catalysts to examine how she could improve her questioning.

Teacher Two (T2). After the pre-data period, I acknowledged the high-level modelling of good manners, the use of specific praise, and the use of both verbal and non-verbal strategies to engage/re-engage e.g. looks, moving closer, eye contact, 'Ka pai'. I also acknowledged the strong use of questioning in the guided reading programme. With

T2, I discussed the setting of learning intentions and success criteria as a tool to engage students, to support the development of independent learners, and as a re-direction tool if needed. The co-construction of goals was also in the context of extending levels of questioning especially with regard to kaupapa mahi (topic work).

Some change occurred. T2 was actively practising monitoring and scanning the classroom as discussed, and increased the amount of positive specific praise by 6 percent over a three-week period, significant in such a short timeframe (Figure 4).

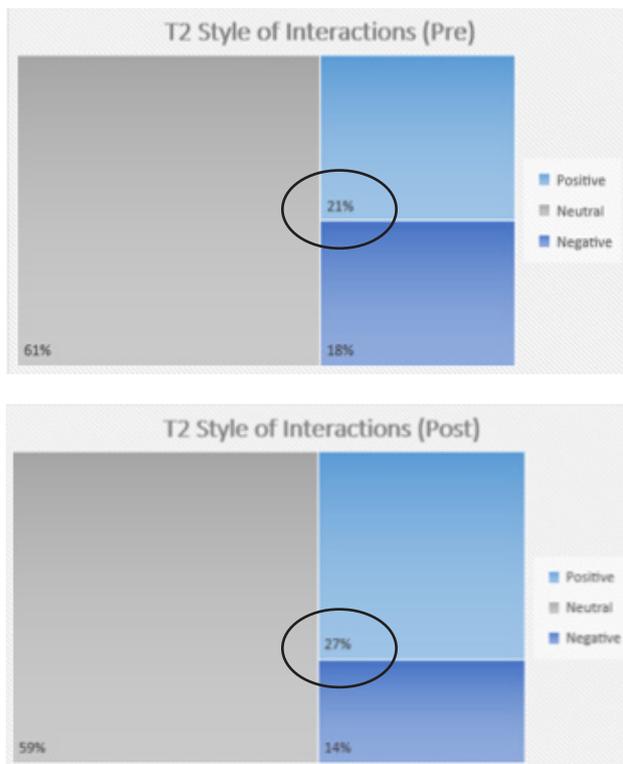


Figure 4. Changes in style of interactions by T2 following professional learning discussions.

T2 used specific praise with individual students well, and often, from the outset. Co-construction of the change-goal was around the need to use group recognition to build cohesiveness and independence in groups, supporting the principles of ako and whanaungatanga. The goal was that students learn together and from each other, not just from the teacher. The teacher-talk to the group increased by 6 percent (see Figure 5).

T2 - Interactions With

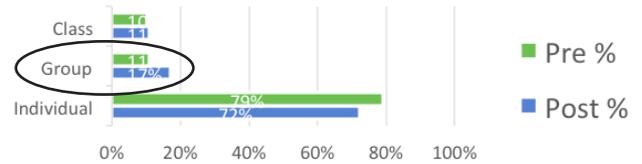


Figure 5. Changes in interactions by T2 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

T2 continued to use a teacher-talk style focused at an individual level, and was moving to include a more varied and global style. The use of class-wide strategies for interaction was a co-constructed goal that showed a small change. When the small amount of change was discussed, the teacher explained that she needed more time to process the change, and was confident to move forward with this. The use of dialogic discourse and co-construction continued throughout the observation periods (see Figure 6).

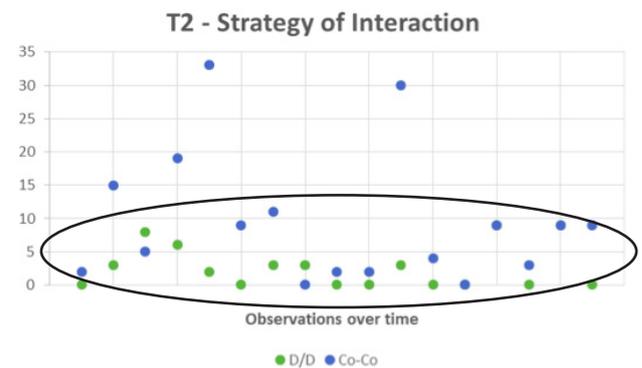


Figure 6. Changes in number of noted uses of dialogic discourse and co-construction of learning by T2 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

The teacher has expressed a need for more professional learning on how the literature can relate to practice in a junior classroom.

Teacher Three (T3). After the pre-data period, I acknowledged the strong use of questioning to re-direct the distracted, the use of both verbal and non-verbal strategies to engage/re-engage, and the strong use of dialogic discourse and co-construction across the curriculum. With T3, I discussed the sharing of the intent and success criteria for the learning. Students then have clarity, and can develop self-managing skills, taking responsibility for their learning. A change-goal to give clarity in terms of

clear predictable rules and specific praise was co-constructed. Resources, in the form of examples of questions to extend thinking, were provided to support further deeper questioning for the extension of more-able students.

Post-data analysis showed that T3 made changes in terms of being more specific in recognition and praise in a neutral way, as opposed to positive in a general way. The specificity of the praise was challenging for the teacher. A co-constructed goal was to use specific praise not just to recognise individual effort but to bring others back to task. The 10 percent increase was noteworthy in such a short (three week) time period (see Figure 7).

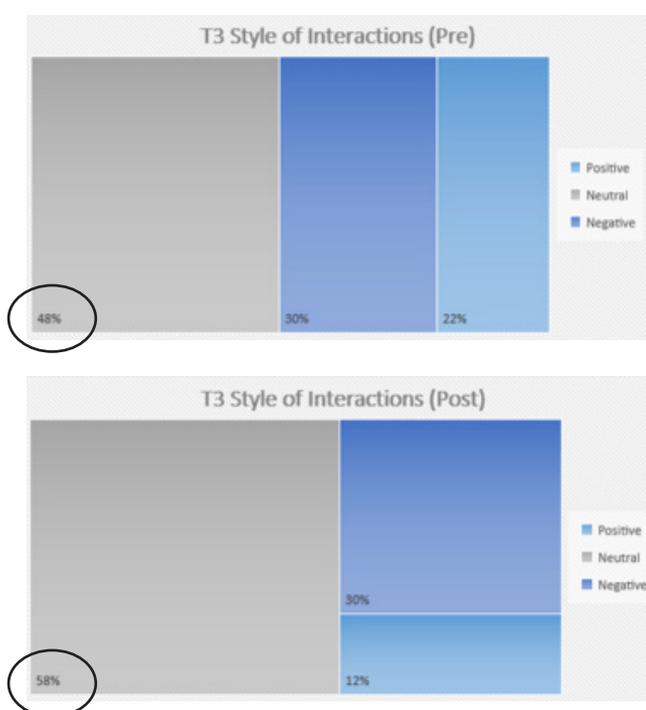


Figure 7. Changes in style of interactions by T3 following professional learning discussions.

Class-wide generalised interaction lessened as a result. Increased specific praise is using teacher-talk more effectively as a proactive teaching strategy. Teacher-talk in terms of level of interaction (*Interaction with*) showed a small increase of individual interactions (see Figure 8) as the teacher tried to be more specific in her style of praise and recognition.

T3 - Interactions With

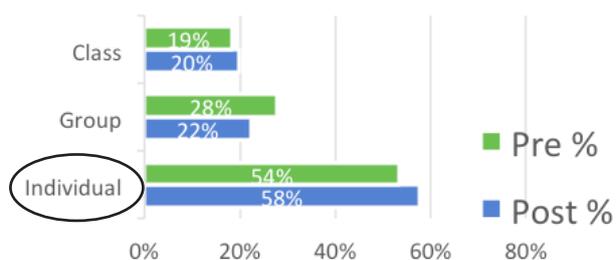


Figure 8. Changes in interactions by T3 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

T3 showed a consistent and high level of dialogic discourse and co-construction with her students, at individual, group and class level throughout all observation periods (Figure 9).

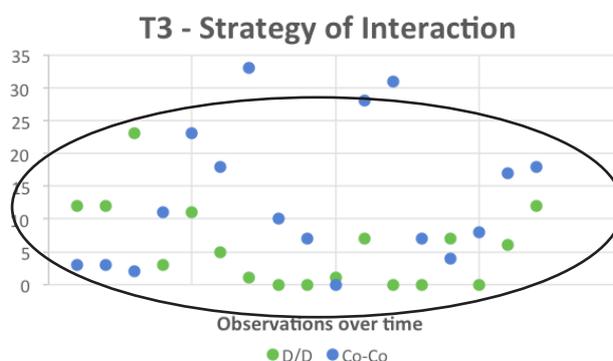


Figure 9. Changes in number of noted uses of dialogic discourse and co-construction of learning by T3 with individuals, groups and the class following professional learning discussions.

The “messy and dynamic” nature of having these extended conversations with students made it difficult to take note of each and every interaction (Nichols, 2014, p.74). The teacher was skilled and passionate about these proactive strategies, and was familiar with the literature around the use of these strategies with Māori students.

Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The use of both qualitative data and quantitative data to co-construct an intervention was generally well-received by participants. Teachers responded positively to individual presentations of both qualitative (anecdotal) and quantitative (graphed numerical values) data, in slide-show format. The visual element was a key component in promoting discussion. Teachers openly discussed the feedback-feedforward style of the presentation, and opinions varied on the usefulness of both forms of data.

The graphs and the notes were a strong visual aid, leaving more time focused on what the data meant (analysis), where it came from (literature) and next steps (co-construction of change-goals). Post-intervention comments showed a reflective approach to analysis by participants. They were committed to further learning and contributed suggestions and questions to the group when we met for a final review of our process.

All teachers expressed the belief that the off-site meetings (for professional learning discussions) were valuable as it meant they could concentrate without interruption. They all also said that there was not enough time between data-gathering and analysis meetings to implement everything they had intended to, and that more work on this at a later date would be useful. We also discussed their desire to have in-depth discussions, along the lines of this inquiry, at staff level in the school. This discussion came as feedback as the inquiry process was completed, and although not part of the initial planning, was valuable in terms of the ongoing relationship with the RTLB working in the school.

Learning from Literature

The combination of data and literature was less successful due to time constraints. The teachers were more interested in the forward-thinking co-construction than linking it to literature. School-wide professional development in recent history, at this school, has focused on pedagogy (principal-led), and on assessment practices across the school (Ministry of Education-led). The teachers were, thus, not completely open to making the connection in such a short timeframe. Just as quality teaching is crucial to student achievement, quality relationships between RTLB and teachers are crucial to engaging teachers in the change process (Ministry of Education, 2013a, 2013b). This relationship begins with open interaction. Ongoing RTLB presence in their classrooms was a key reflection point for the participants as they identified that their understanding and use of proactive strategies needed further support and learning.

The greater part of the discussion centred on the 'embeddedness' of tangata whenuatanga, ako and whanaungatanga. The research behind discourse and co-construction was important, in that all three participants showed competency in combining these approaches. They asked the question "Is it because they are whanau? Do they do this by instinct?" The consensus was that "yes" it could be, and that modern teaching practice also leads all teachers to these strategies. The dichotomy of the dual role of

'aunty', and of teacher, in front of a class of students who are whanau, was discussed. There was less confidence in the ability and need to separate these roles. No data supports either viewpoint. It is a dichotomy found in many schools in this region. To support teachers and whanau, these relationships should be transparent and open. One participant acknowledged that at times the roles are confused in her dealings with students. For Māori students, successful learning involves the inclusion of Māori values and world view, clarity and openness in discourse, and respectful relationships built on shared stories. There was consensus that there is a need to underpin the context of the classroom with the principles of tangata whenuatanga, ako and whanaungatanga: the viewpoint here being the embeddedness of whakapapa, and the evidence-based positivity of co-constructing learning.

Positive Relationships

Through this inquiry process, it was possible to support change to teacher practice and maintain positive relationships with teachers. The study provided personalised teacher-directed professional development that changed teacher practice in small increments. Teachers changed aspects of their teacher-talk, and were reflective of their own styles and strategies. They acknowledged the presence of support coming into the school, and reflected on how a 'buddy' system in the school could produce ongoing checks and supports. As the participants acknowledged, proactive and varied strategies are effective. Ongoing professional learning and support is needed to make even the smallest steps of change sustainable.

RTLB interventions in classrooms, and the related planning and review processes, can test relationships with overworked teachers. It was found, in this inquiry, that by using varied approaches to observations, by being open and collaborative, and by being strengths-based, the tension could be eased. Using 'hard data' (numerical values, graphs, percentages) can be perceived as confrontational or judgemental. Using soft data (anecdotal, situational) can be seen as subjective and opinion (Menter et al., 2013). The combination of the two approaches lessened these impacts and created a more collaborative environment for goal setting for change.

The Professional Inquiry Model

The model aligns with RTLB practice through the RTLB sequence (Ministry of Education, 2012) that gives all RTLB a structured process of referral, implementation and review. The RTLB practice

sequence is inclusive and collaborative. It is a reflective and responsive model. The sequence of building relationships, data gathering, analysis, goal setting and implementation and review is an inquiry model in itself.

Findings reveal implications for ongoing RTLB support of teachers. Participants in the study recognised their need for ongoing personalised professional learning. The RTLB Toolkit sets the expectation for schools that RTLB will provide practical advice and support in terms of increasing teacher (and school) capability (Ministry of Education, 2011). The parameters of this role are guided by the principle of evidence-based practice, where *tika* (research), *pono* (practitioner knowledge and skills) and *aroha* (what whanau bring) work in combination to plan for improved outcomes for our young people (Ministry of Education, 2011a). My experience as an RTLB suggests that there is an increasing need for a more diverse evidence-base of possible tools and interventions in schools. RTLB can use inquiry models and processes to provide this evidence-base at a local level. The use of Ministry-supported portals to share successful inquiry models and outcomes would allow for educators to share best practice in a reflective and professional manner. Until this happens we, as RTLB, can use our knowledge and skills, and evidence-based strategies, to support effective and proactive teaching in our schools.

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward, schools and teachers need leadership that promotes whole-school change and whole school pedagogy based on community aspirations (Bristol, 2015; Edwards-Groves & Hardy, 2013; Saglam et al., 2015). The Ministry of Education is changing the way schools access professional learning opportunities (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Increasingly, RTLB are filling the role of providing personal teacher-specific professional learning as schools sign up for Ministry of Education-directed school-wide approaches (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

This inquiry created a model for using both qualitative and quantitative data to construct a 'picture' of the now, and to co-construct forward planning. It is a model that could be used in full, or in part, to change teacher-talk in the classroom.

Feedback

Giving feedback to teachers can be a source of tension. It can be perceived as judgemental and needs to come from a strengths-based approach. The one important thing about feedback is what is done

with it (William, 2016). Feedback in its best form, not only gives feedback but feed-forward. To expect a teacher to sustain change, there is a need to recognise current and positive performance before moving teachers forward. This inquiry model provides a framework for responsive and proactive support in the form of feedback through co-construction. It is therefore relevant to RTLB practice in other schools and contexts.

School-wide Learning and Pedagogy

There is a need to place the model in the context of the literature and research. This needs to happen at a school-wide level (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). RTLB, nationally, are involved in providing school-wide support in areas that relate to casework. A proactive cluster would embrace such practices as effective use of resources towards sustainability of interventions.

Evidence and Aspirations

"Raising the bar and closing the gap requires a number of shifts in thinking" (Timperley, 2011, p.180). The evidence for 'shift' can be multi-levelled, as discussed earlier, through *tika*, *pono* and *aroha* (Ministry of Education, 2011a). A significant effect on student outcomes comes from the promotion and involvement in learning by leaders. As communities of learners, principals, teachers, RTLB, students and whanau need to discuss shared aspirations, evidence and direction, regularly and vigorously. As educators, we want learners who are "active participants in a learning community" (Saglam et al., 2015, p.322). We, then, can model this by developing interventions that are evidence-based and co-constructed. The RTLB service, nationally, has a key role in leading and supporting increased achievement in our schools. RTLB and teachers can make sustainable change in practice, and in outcomes for students, predicated on trustful relationships.

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