Evaluation of First-Time Principals Induction Programme 2003

Report to the Ministry of Education

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Background

This evaluation is intended to provide feedback on the design and delivery of the First-Time Principals Induction Programme as experienced by participants in 2003. The University of Auckland Principals Centre was contracted to deliver the Ministry of Education designed induction programme to all first-time principals who enrolled in the programme in 2002-2004. The evaluation provides a snapshot in time, as the programme continues to evolve in response to new research, Ministry of Education priorities, and feedback from principals.

The First-Time Principals Induction Programme has been made available to all new principals in state funded, integrated, and independent schools in the primary, secondary, area, and kura kaupapa Māori sectors since 2002 and the take-up rate has been around 98 percent.

Programme overview

The programme vision highlights the expectation that principals will manage complex and multiple demands, manage change, and improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. It emphasises the educational leadership role of the principal, and seeks to encourage them to develop a long-term commitment to their leadership learning. It focuses on helping principals develop the knowledge and skills to function as leaders of learning, as well as assisting them to deal effectively with their management responsibilities. Principals are encouraged to focus their work on the improvement of teaching and enhancement of student achievement, and to interpret and use evidence to determine goals and achievement targets.

The 2003 programme consisted of three main components: residential courses, mentoring, and online learning. The residential component required each participating principal to attend 12 days of residential courses in the first week of the school holidays following the first, second and third school terms. The mentoring component involved three on-site school visits to each first-time principal by a trained mentor facilitator, and ongoing phone and e-mail contact over three terms. The online learning component, New Principals Online (NPO), was a confidential website for first-time principals, providing opportunities for online discussion and professional learning. All principals received a laptop computer to enable them to participate in this part of the programme.

Evaluation has been an essential part of the programme, and principals were surveyed at the end of each residential to ensure that the programme was responsive to their needs and contexts.

Research Questions

This evaluation attempted, at the request of the Ministry of Education, to examine:

- the differential impact of each aspect of the programme on principals' learning and behaviour;
- any gaps in the programme in terms of curriculum coverage, or areas that need more or less emphasis;
- the timing allowed for reflection and practical application of learning both during and between residentials;
- principals' consideration of how they are contributing to students' learning;
- the profile of 2003 first-time principals, and the extent to which the programme catered for their differing needs;
- the "value-added" effectiveness of the programme from the perspectives of principals and their mentors; and
- the extent to which the programme fostered the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies required for successful school leadership.

Method

The sample comprised 34 principals from eight geographical areas- Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Taranaki, Christchurch, West Coast, Dunedin and Southland. Twenty-four principals were from the North Island and ten were from the South Island. We attempted to match our sample with characteristics of the 186 participants in the 2003 school cohort (school type, decile, and grade) and included principals of different ages, gender, varying levels of prior experience and qualifications, and principals from different ethnic groups.

Data for the evaluation was obtained from interviews with the 34 principals and 16 mentors in November 2003, (Phase One) and follow-up telephone interviews with 32 principals in August 2004 (Phase Two). In addition, documentary sources including ERO reports and the planning and reporting documentation from 28 schools provided further data. Milestone reports from the University of Auckland also contributed to the evaluation.

Findings

The evaluation of the first phase suggested that the First-Time Principals Induction Programme was positively received by the majority of the participants. It is important to acknowledge that a one-year induction programme consisting of three 4-day residentials and mentoring support

cannot, however well designed and delivered, equip participants with sufficient knowledge to be an effective principal, particularly in the area of pedagogical leadership. It can, however, provide a robust platform for principals to build such knowledge over time. The first phase of the evaluation indicated that:

- There was immense diversity in the sample of first-time principals in terms of their previous professional learning and practical experiences of previous leadership, as well the types of schools and school contexts. While the majority of new principals appeared to have relevant prior experiences for their new roles, about a third had been appointed to principal's positions without the background to begin their work with confidence. These principals faced a very steep learning curve in their first year, and most required significant support from their mentors and other sources.
- The induction programme catered well for this diversity as the majority of principals believed that the induction programme was well tailored to their learning needs.
- Some principals with significant prior academic educational leadership study considered that this should be acknowledged in the design and delivery of the programme, while some very inexperienced principals needed to develop more knowledge and skill than could be reasonably expected from an induction programme.
- Mentors felt well prepared for their roles and were seen to have developed effective mentor relationships based on mutuality of trust and respect, and a mutual valuing of the relationship.
- Mentors' assistance with the day-to-day challenges of the principal's role was valued more by principals than their help with the portfolio related to a major teaching and learning goal for the school.
- Mentors were particularly valued by principals with limited local networks. They helped reduce feelings of isolation and assisted principals to develop self-efficacy.
- While mentors had the operational and interpersonal skills to assist principals they may require more in-depth training and ongoing support than the contract currently provides to assist principals to develop in areas such as curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation, and the improvement, assessment, and analysis of student learning.
- There was confusion amongst the principals and mentors about the purpose of the portfolio. If the preparation of a portfolio is to assist professional learning then a more convincing case about its potential to contribute to such learning needs to be presented.
- The residential and mentoring components of the programme improved principals' perceptions of their understanding and performance of the functional aspects of running a school.
- The induction programme appeared to have developed principals' understandings of the importance of pedagogical leadership and the commitment to ensuring and improving learning outcomes for all the students in their school.
- The online component appeared to have had minimal impact on the principals' learning and behaviour.
- Principals indicated few gaps in curriculum coverage, or areas that need more attention within the induction programme.

- The opportunity the induction programme provides first-time principals to meet together and to establish a network and community of interest, should not be under-estimated.
- The 2003 programme was too compressed to allow for reflection and practical application of learning between residentials.
- Principals also expressed the wish for more "gaps" within the residentials to allow them to avoid exhaustion and information overload and enable them to gain more benefits from networking with other principals.

The University of Auckland's 2003 evaluations identified similar areas for programme development, and these are being addressed in 2004. For example, the programme has been extended over an 18 month period; there are options within the residential programme for experienced and novice principals; mentors have a stronger role in the residential programmes; and there is greater attention to matching mentor support to analysed principal needs.

The information from the follow-up phase suggests that the majority of the sample of first-time principals:

- consider that they are leading and managing their schools effectively;
- are aware of their importance in contributing to environments where students are successful learners;
- are able to provide evidence of understanding of planning and reporting against achievement targets;
- are learning to work with others to build school cultures that support the learning of teachers and students;
- acknowledge the contribution of the FTP induction programme to the four areas identified above;
- would benefit from further opportunities to strengthen their personal knowledge of key learning and assessment principles, to assist them to provide informed leadership to others;
- are participating in professional development activities likely to enhance teacher and school effectiveness.

Future professional development may need to strengthen their ability to:

- work alongside others to develop shared skills and approaches to school development;
- move beyond a focus on narrow outcomes to the development of empowering and effective pedagogy;
- see beyond their current horizons, so that they are able to initiate innovation as well as respond to external demands.

Overall the evaluation concludes that the 2003 The First-Time Principals Programme was well conceptualised, well delivered, and aligned with Ministry of Education goals to improve the performance of students, and reduce disparities in achievement in New Zealand schools. The Ministry of Education and the First-Time Principals Programme Project Team have supported the development of a dynamic programme, which continues to develop in response to new research,

new initiatives, and feedback from participants. An additional benefit of participation in this national programme is the opportunity it has provided for networking with other principals, and in building national understandings about principals' responsibilities in leading learning. Overall, the FTP appears to be an initiative with the potential to impact significantly over time on principals' work and how they perceive their role as school leaders.

1. Introduction

This section outlines the background to the First-Time Principals Induction Programme, the aims of this evaluation, and explains the structure of the report.

Background and aims

In 2001 the Minister of Education announced a series of initiatives to support principal development in New Zealand schools. One of the initiatives resulted in the development of an induction programme for new principals by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, in association with the Universities of Waikato and Massey; the First-Time Principals Induction Programme. The original programme design was strongly influenced by research by HAYGroup consultants[1] that the Ministry of Education had commissioned. The First-Time Principals Induction Programme has been designed to assist newly appointed principals in their roles as professional leaders within their schools and communities. This voluntary programme, available at no cost to participants, has been made available to all first-time principals in all New Zealand schools since 2002 and the take-up rate has been around 98 percent. Principals from the full range of primary, secondary, area, kura kaupapa Māori, state-funded, integrated, and independent schools are eligible for the programme.

The University of Auckland Principals Centre was contracted to deliver the Ministry of Education nationally designed induction programme to all first-time principals who enrolled in the programme in 2002–2004. The induction programme was first offered in 2002, and has since been substantially modified with the approval of the Ministry of Education in response to participant feedback and to reflect new ministry research and initiatives.

The 2003 programme consisted of three main components: residential courses, mentoring, and online learning. The residential component required each participating principal to attend 12 days of residential courses in the first week of their term 1, 2, and 3 school holidays. The mentoring component involved three on-site school visits by a trained mentor facilitator, including ongoing phone and email contact to each first-time principal over 3 terms. The online learning

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[1] HAYGroup. (2001). Identifying the skills, knowledge, attributes and competencies for first-time principals. Shaping the next generation. Report to the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

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component, New Principals Online (NPO), was a confidential website for first-time principals providing opportunities for online discussion, and professional learning. All principals received a laptop computer to enable them to participate in this component of the programme. Research is an essential part of the programme, and principals are regularly asked to evaluate aspects of the programme to ensure that the programme is responsive to their needs and contexts. The programme is described more fully in the following section: Programme overview.

Programme overview[2]

The vision of the programme acknowledges that principals are expected to manage complex and multiple demands, manage change, and improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. The programme emphasises the educational leadership role of the principal, and seeks to encourage principals to develop a long-term commitment to their leadership learning. The programme focuses on helping principals develop the knowledge and skills to function as leaders of learning, as well as helping them to deal effectively with their management responsibilities. Principals are encouraged to focus their work on the improvement of teaching and enhancement of student achievement, and to interpret and use evidence to determine goals and achievement targets.

Residential courses

In 2003 there were three residential courses of 4 days each (12 days total) over the year: 14–17 April (Auckland), 14–17 July (Wellington), 29 September–2 October (Auckland). Each residential was organised around a theme. The themes were: Residential One–The Learning School; Residential Two–The Reflective School; and Residential Three–The Improving School. Over the three residentials the following aspects of educational leadership were addressed:

- knowledge of leadership;
- quality of information;
- quality of teaching;
- quality of student experience;
- quality of community involvement;
- quality of resource management; and
- quality of relationships.

Each residential included keynote addresses on school leadership and management, case studies presented by experienced principals, and skills workshops which linked content to participants' own school contexts. The particular needs of principals from different school sectors and types of

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[2] This information has been summarised from the programme's 2003 website:
www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/firstprincipals (The website has now moved to:
http://www.firstprincipals.ac.nz.)

schools were addressed in school-sector workshops and seminars on principal-identified topics. During the first residential the concept of a professional portfolio to document learning and as a vehicle for reflection was advocated and reinforced during mentor visits and subsequent residentials. Each principal was encouraged to identify a teaching and learning goal and document and reflect on progress towards its achievement. A reference group of participants representing all types and sector groups of schools provided feedback to the project team to ensure that the needs of each sector group were heard and responded to.

Mentoring

Each principal was assigned a mentor who visited them for 3 half-days in the first 3 terms. This was supported by telephone and email contact. The purposes of mentoring were described by the project team as to:

* promote the role of principals to run a school committed to success and enjoyment in learning;
* increase principals' understanding of knowledge leadership;
* provide principals with feedback on the progress they are making; and
* support principals in the development of their portfolio related to a major teaching and learning goal for the school.

The mentors were all carefully selected experienced principals who, as far as possible, had experience in a school similar to that of their mentee. There were 3 separate training days for the mentors to prepare them for their 3 half-day visits.

Online learning–New Principals Online (NPO)

NPO consisted of a dedicated website accessible by password only to the principals in the First-Time Principals Programme. It was designed to be a safe and supportive online environment where they could discuss issues of importance to them, and share information and ideas. It was also intended to reduce the isolation that new principals can experience. NPO also provided links to the Principals Electronic Network (PEN) and the Ministry of Education Leadspace website and to a range of quality online resources.

Research questions

NZCER has been contracted to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the current design and delivery of the First-Time Principals Induction Programme for the ongoing modification and development of the programme.

Our evaluation addresses the following key questions posed by the Ministry of Education:

* The First-Time Principals Programme consists of three strands: mentoring, online learning, and residential course. What impact has each aspect of the programme had on principals'

learning and behaviour? What are the principals doing now that they wouldn't have been doing or doing as well without the different aspects of the induction programme, related to both student learning and the functional aspects of running a school (for example, personnel, financial, resource management relationships with boards of trustees)?

- How do principals consider they are contributing to students' learning? Has this changed over time?
- Are there gaps in the programme in terms of curriculum coverage, areas that need more emphasis, areas that need less emphasis?
- Is the time allowed for reflection and practical application of learning both during and between residentials optimal?
- What is the profile of the first-time principals? Does the programme cater well for the differing needs of all principals? For example, are there groups whose needs are not well met?

The evaluation is required to attempt to determine the "value-added" effectiveness of the programme from the perspectives of principals and their mentors. A critical question for the research has been the extent to which the programme fosters the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies that have been identified as those required for successful school leadership.

In our approach to this evaluation we were mindful of the research evidence on the critical role of knowledge, skills, and competencies underpinning successful school leadership. We were also required to use the HAYGroup Competencies for First-Time Principals to analyse the interviews and ascertain trends and issues. The HAYGroup Framework identified four key "clusters" of competencies required for effective principalship. These competencies, which are underpinned by "deeply held personal conviction", are:

- vision and leadership;
- striving for excellence;
- self-efficacy; and
- building community relations.

Since the HAYGroup model was developed research has emphasised the need to specifically focus school leadership on practices that can result in increased student achievement (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2004). This emphasis has been reflected in subsequent programme design and in our approach to this evaluation.

The Ministry of Education required the evaluation to build on evaluative material already collected by the Principals' Centre, Auckland University in 2003 to:

- analyse the relative effectiveness and impact of the three strands of the programme, namely the residentials, mentoring, and online learning;
- ascertain principals' considerations of their contribution to students' learning; and
- ascertain whether the programme caters well for the differing needs of all principals.

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In the first phase of the evaluation, information on the relative effectiveness and impact of the three strands of the programme was obtained from interviews undertaken by NZCER with participating principals and their mentors, and from the 2003 milestone reports (and associated information) sent to the Ministry of Education by the University of Auckland Principals' Centre. A complete set of milestones for the induction programme was made available to NZCER by the Project Team.

Principals' considerations of their contribution to students' learning were also explored during the interviews.

Information from principals, mentors, and milestone reports was used to ascertain whether the programme catered well for the differing needs of all principals.

NZCER conducted most of the principal and mentor interviews for this phase in November 2003. Some of the mentors were unable to participate until February 2004. The first milestone for this evaluation was sent to the Ministry of Education and the project team in March 2004. Both the Ministry of Education and the project team provided oral and written feedback to the first milestone. The project team asked for further details about three key areas: the alignment of evidence with the key findings, details of the sample, and representativeness of quotes; as well as acknowledgement of the ongoing development of the programme since its inception. Further information about the first two areas and more information about the sample of principals interviewed has been included in this report. Because our evaluation is in relation to the 2003 programme, and the programme continues to evolve in response to internal evaluation reports, current national education goals and priorities, and new evidence on effective school leadership practices, this evaluation is necessarily a snapshot of the programme at the time. At the time this report was written the project team had already responded to some of the suggestions for further strengthening the programme. It was agreed that the final report would include an overview of programme changes provided by the Project Director (Appendix Five).

In the second phase of the evaluation, (the follow-up), principals were interviewed by telephone to ascertain their views of the longer-term impact of the induction programme, their current learning needs, and their approaches to Ministry of Education planning and reporting requirements. In addition, we obtained copies of their school documentation on planning and reporting of student outcomes from the Ministry of Education to examine how principals were approaching the process of planning for school change and improvement. Our contract also required us to use information about principal leadership and management in available ERO reports for schools in our sample.

Structure of this report

Section Two describes the selection of the sample (principals and mentors) and the methodology we employed to address the research questions in the first phase of this evaluation.

Section Three provides information about the sample of principals who participated in this evaluation: the professional and personal backgrounds they brought to their new role, their prior understandings of the key responsibilities of principals, and their preparation for their new appointment. This material was gathered to provide insight into common patterns and differing needs.

Section Four reports principals' views on the residential component of the programme.

Section Five reports on principal and mentor views of the mentoring and online aspects of the programme.

Section Six presents indications of principals' views on the impact of the programme components on their leadership knowledge, practices, and personal commitment to ongoing learning at the end of their induction programme.

Section Seven summarises the findings from the first phase of the evaluation.

Section Eight reports on the follow-up of the principals in August 2004. It outlines aspects of the overall induction programme that this group of principals now considers to have assisted them most as a beginning principal, and the extent to which they think that the programme assisted them with the planning and reporting process. This section describes how principals have approached the process of planning and reporting and the understanding demonstrated in the Planning and Reporting documentation submitted to the Ministry of Education. Information from schools with confirmed ERO reports since the end of the induction programme has been included in this section.

The concluding section summarises the strengths of the induction programme, and suggests areas where the programme may be strengthened.

2. Methodology

The sample: principals

The sample was selected from the 2003 cohort to ensure coverage of primary, secondary, area schools, kura, and intermediates; rural and urban, and large, medium, and small schools/kura. A larger sample was taken of kura/wharekura since there are relatively high numbers of first-time principals in this sector. The University of Auckland provided NZCER with a database of the names and demographic information (gender, age, teaching experience, and professional qualifications) on the 186 participants in 2003, and details of school factors such as location, decile level, and school size. We selected a sample of 34 principals from the total cohort in eight geographical areas — Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Taranaki, Christchurch, West Coast, Dunedin and Southland. Twenty-four principals were from the North Island and 10 were from the South Island. As far as we were able we attempted to match our sample with characteristics of the 2003 school cohort (school type, decile, and grade). Also we tried to include principals of different ages, gender, varying levels of prior experience and qualifications, and principals from different ethnic groups.

Initially, 34 principals were contacted by email and invited to participate. If they were interested in participating they were sent further information (Appendix One) and phoned to make arrangements for interview. They were all sent copies of the interview questions prior to the interviews (Appendix Three). Not all of the principals were prepared to be interviewed during the suggested timeframe for the interviews, due to other commitments. Five principals in the North Island and one in the South Island who were invited to participate were not able to do so when we were in their area. They were replaced by others who agreed to be interviewed.

The sample of principals who participated in the study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1   Overall participant sample of first-time principals

Principal number	School type	Location	Decile	Grade	Principal age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years experience	Qualifications
1	Primary integrated	Christchurch	10	U4	31–40	f	NZ Euro	11–15	MEd Mgmt
2	Intermediate	Waikato	6	U6	41–50	f	NZ Euro	20+	BE Dip Ed Ldrsp
3	Primary	West Coast	4	U1	31–40	f	NZ Euro	1–5	B. Tch Lng
4	Primary	Auckland	3	U5	21–30	m	NZ Euro	6–10	Dip Tchg Dip Sch Mgmt
5	KKM	East Coast	2	U1	51–60	f	Māori	11–15	B Tchg
6	Secondary	Canterbury	8	U10	41–50	f	NZ Euro	20+	MA (Hons)
7	Secondary	Northland	3	U6	41–50	m	NZ Euro	11–15	BSc
8	Primary	Otago	4	U1	31–40	f	NZ Euro	6–10	BEd
9	Primary	Otago	9	U2	51–60	f	NZ Euro	20+	TTC
10	Primary	Waikato	1	U3	41–50	m	Pasifika	20+	Dip Tchg
11	Secondary	Waikato	2	U5	51–60	m	NZ Euro	20+	ME Admin
12	Full primary/ integrated	Wellington	8	U2	31–40	f	NZ Euro	11–15	BA
13	Primary	Southland	8	U2	41–50	f	NZ Euro	16–20	BEd
14	Area	Northland	5	U4	41–50	m	NZ Euro	16–20	Grad Dip Bus
15	Secondary	Wellington	7	U6	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	M. Bus. Studies
16	Primary integrated	Hamilton	2	U3	31–40	f	Māori	11–15	BEd
17	Primary	Auckland	1a	U4	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	Adv Dip Tchg
18	Composite/ Independent	Far North	8	U4	31–40	f	NZ Euro	16–20	MSc Dip Tchg
19	Secondary/ integrated	West Coast	6	U3	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	Dip Tchg
20	Primary	Auckland	1b	U4	41–50	f	NZ Euro	20+	BA
21	Primary	Northland	1	U1	31–40	m	Māori	6–10	BEd
22	Secondary	Auckland	9	U8	41–50	f	Māori	20+	BBS
23	KKM	Bay of Plenty	2	U4	41–50	f	Māori	20+	Dip Tchg
24	Primary	Waikato	3	U1	31–40	f	NZ Euro	1–5	Bachelor's degree
25	Primary	Wellington	5	U3	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	BEd
26	Intermediate	Southland	6	U4	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	DTch (Higher) Cert Ed Mgmt
27	K K M	Hamilton	1	U3	51–60	f	Māori	11–15	Higher Dip Tchng
28	K K M	Wellington	3	U1	31–40	f	Māori	11–15	B Tchg
29	Primary	Wellington	2	U4	31–40	f	Pasifika	16–20	Adv. Dip Tchg
30	Area	Taranaki	7	U1	41–50	m	NZ Euro	20+	Dip Tchg
31	Primary	Christchurch	7	U5	41–50	f	NZ Euro	20+	Dip Ed (Adv) Dip Ed Mgmt
32	Primary	Northland	1	U2	31–40	m	Indian/ S African	11–15	BA (Ped)
33	Primary	Taranaki	5	U3	31–40	m	NZ Euro	11–15	BEd
34	Primary	Canterbury	9	U1	21–30	f	Māori	6–10	BEd

The following tables compare the characteristics of the NZCER sample with the total cohort of principals in the First-Time Principals Induction Programme. There were some minor gaps in the FTP database, and where possible this information was included from Ministry of Education data held at NZCER.

Table 2 Types of schools

	Primary	Intermediate	Area/composite	Secondary	Kura
FTP total (n=187)	137	8	11	28	7[a]
%	72	3	6	15	4
NZCER sample (*n* = 34)	19	2	4	6	4[b]
%	64	6	12	18	12

[a] 5 Primary & 2 Area/composite
[b] 3 Primary & 1 Area/composite

Table 3 Deciles

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FTP total (n=186)	19	14	18	16	29	21	17	17	20	15
%	10	8	10	9	16	11	9	9	11	8
NZCER sample (n=34)	6	5	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	1
%	18	15	12	6	9	9	9	12	9	3

Table 4 School grade

	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9
FTP (n=186)	57	30	23	35	16	13	6	5	1
%	31	16	12	19	9	7	3	3	1
NZCER sample (n=34)	8	4	6	8	3	3	0	2	0
%	24	12	18	24	9	9	0	6	0

Table 5 Age of principals

	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60
FTP (n=186)	8	62	86	29
%	4	33	46	16
NZCER sample (n=34)	2	12	16	4
%	6	35	47	12

Table 6 Gender

	Male	Female
FTP (n=186)	80	105
%	43	56
NZCER sample (n=34)	14	20
%	41	59

A chi-square test was applied to ascertain whether those *in* the sample had the same characteristics as those *out* of the sample. In each case the chi-square test was not significant, indicating that the sample of principals is not different from the overall group.

The sample: mentors

Following the selection of the principal sample, the mentors who supported these principals during the induction year were identified. Seventeen mentors worked with our sample of principals. All 17 were invited to participate in the evaluation. They were all sent information about the evaluation (Appendix Two) and copies of the mentor questions (Appendix Four). Although all of the mentors agreed to participate, one mentor did not provide a suitable time for interview and did not return the questionnaire despite phone and email reminders.

The mentor sample included recently retired secondary principals, and practising principals from rural, urban, and integrated school settings. Two retired principals mentored primary and secondary principals away from their home bases and had large groups. For example, one mentor supported 12 first-time principals spread through Canterbury, West Coast, Nelson, and Marlborough. At least five former principals were now educational consultants offering help in the areas of principal appraisal, career planning, school review, strategic planning, and property management.

Nine of the mentors worked with one principal from our sample, five worked with two, two worked with three, and one mentored five first-time principals.

Interviewers and interviewing

The research team consisted of five interviewers, namely three researchers from NZCER, including one Māori researcher, one interviewer from the South Island, and one normal school principal interviewer, who conducted interviews in Wellington and Taranaki. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Research instruments

The evaluation team developed and piloted two instruments for use in the first phase of the evaluation: a structured face-to-face principal interview (Appendix Three); and a questionnaire for the mentors who were assigned to each principal (Appendix Four). Mentors were offered a choice of being interviewed face-to-face, by phone, or completing their questionnaire themselves and returning it to NZCER.

We consulted with both the Ministry of Education and the University of Auckland project team and received constructive advice about the draft evaluation questions. Detailed discussions were held with the Project Director and Academic Director about the proposed methods of review. We had been asked initially by the Ministry of Education to focus on the portfolios prepared by principals, as it was thought likely that portfolios would include evidence in the form of key school documentation that could be used as a basis for exploring principals' learning. The University of Auckland project team informed us that this approach was unlikely to be productive given that few principals had completed portfolios. We therefore did not use the portfolio as the framework for the principals' interviews, but encouraged principals to share them with us where this was appropriate.

Principals' interviews

The interviews focused on principals' understandings of leadership before and following the induction programme, their responses to the different components of the programme, and their views of the impact of the programme on their development as an educational leader. The interviews also provided the opportunity to pinpoint each principal's goals for their ongoing professional learning and support in 2004. Each interview took between 1 and 2 hours.

The principals' interviews sought their views in relation to the Ministry of Education questions, the HAYGroup competencies, and to our leadership framework which we developed from our analysis of the literature on principal leadership. The NZCER leadership framework had four key dimensions:

1. principals' knowledge and beliefs about effective school leadership and management;
2. school-wide policy and direction to support student and organisational learning;
3. understanding and leadership of classroom teaching and learning; and
4. understanding and awareness of self as a learning leader.

The questions were designed therefore to uncover and explore the impact of the induction programme on new principals' understanding and development in relationship to the Ministry of Education questions and four key dimensions of principal leadership. To what extent, for example, did the induction programme influence the ways that principals think about and carry out their roles? To what extent did the various components of the programme help them to appreciate their personal and professional challenges as a principal? Were there any difficulties encountered in applying their new knowledge in practice? Which aspects of the induction programme or other experiences enabled them to carry out their work in ways that supported their own ongoing development in the interests of the teachers, children, and communities where they worked? Where possible we encouraged principals to show us documentary evidence of changes in their leadership and management approach as a result of their involvement in the programme.

Mentors' interviews

Interviews with principal mentors provided an additional perspective on the development of first-time principals during the period of the induction programme. We sought to ascertain their views on the strengths of the induction programme and areas that could be developed in subsequent programmes. Also we sought their understandings of their roles as mentors, the skills they believed to be important to do this role well, their views of the training they received for their roles, and their suggestions for the development of this aspect of the programme. Specific questions were asked about what they focused on during the visits to principals at their schools. This provided some triangulation of the information from the principals and the university documentation.

3. Profiles of first-time principals

This section provides a picture of the diverse nature of the principals in our sample. We include quotes from 23 different principals that illustrate the nature of this diversity. While we ensured that the chosen comments reflected the different profiles of the principals we have removed identifying information in this report to protect principal anonymity.

Backgrounds of principals

Principals differed greatly in terms of the backgrounds they brought to the principalship. Six of the 34 principals had 10 or less years of teaching, with two principals appointed to principalships during their first 5 years. Both of these were teaching principals in very small U1 schools. While the smaller schools tended to have principals with less than 10 years' experience, one school with a roll of 37 had a first-time principal with over 20 years' teaching experience. Most of the principals were aged between 31–40 (13) or 41–50 (16), with only 4 over 50 years of age. Fifteen of the principals had over 20 years of teaching experience prior to being appointed as principals.

Pathways towards the principalship

While first-time principals had followed different paths to becoming a principal, we found that overall they could be classified as either bringing relevant prior knowledge and experience to the principalship position (the experienced group), or without previous relevant experiences (the novices).

New principals with previous experience

Principals in this category (24) had backgrounds that made it more likely that they would be successful in their new roles. For most of this group, planning for the principalship role had occurred over some years and had been part of a very deliberate career plan. One principal said she had been doing an apprenticeship for the principalship for the last 10 years by slowly taking on leadership and management roles in the school. Some brought experience from outside teaching, such as running their own business, or working in large organisations, to their new role. They all had experienced a range of management roles within their previous schools that had developed some of the knowledge and experience to tackle the challenges of being a principal, although none had felt totally prepared for the day-to-day reality. Many of the primary principals

valued their wide teaching experiences in teaching teams, and with children of different ages because they considered that this had prepared them for their curriculum leadership roles as this comment illustrates:

> I had taught at a variety of class levels so had a good appreciation of working in different teams and curriculum at various levels. So a lot of watching and learning from those people and the various team leaders that we had, along with the Board of Trustees, really gave me a lot of skills. (Male, primary)

Conversely, unfamiliarity with the Year 1–8 curriculum was a challenge for two principals appointed to area/composite schools. All of the six secondary school principals had been deputy principals and four had been deputy principals in their current school.

Several of the principals in the sample had steadily accumulated experience in a range of leadership positions in a previous schools. For one principal these included senior teacher, assistant principal, deputy principal, and acting principal positions, as well as working for ERO:

> Two principals in particular gave me lots of opportunities to grow on the job, lots of understanding about what the job actually involved and of course hands on when I was acting principal and we built an administration area and two classrooms. I'd never had anything to do with property and health and safety up till them. (Female, primary)

Common to the majority of this group of principals was a history of positive role models, usually during their teaching career, but extending backwards into their secondary schooling by two principals. One principal remembered her first principal predicting, in her second year of teaching, that she would become the principal of a large secondary school one day:

> I had no doubt that always stuck in my head because I thought what an accolade to be given by someone who I admired so much. I've tried to model his style of leadership which I thought was exemplary. (Female, primary)

Ten of the principals made mention of working alongside good leaders who had given them opportunities to try out ideas, innovations, lead projects and groups of people. They had also been encouraged to see themselves as future principals and were given leadership responsibilities within their schools.

> That was sort of an influence to become a deputy principal, and then he always said, 'Look, you're going to be a principal.' He was really good; he let me do a lot of things that principals do, or let me have a look at it and we would discuss things just because he was generous and grooming me for that type of role. (Male, secondary)

Several principals acknowledged the professional mentoring that previous principals had offered them:

> I've worked under some absolutely remarkable people in my time as a teacher, who I really believe have been my mentors. I had the opportunity to be acting principal when they were overseas. (Female, primary)

Reasons for wanting to be principals were many and varied. Several of the new primary principals had spent time in the acting principalship role in the same school where they were teaching and realised that they had an aptitude for the role. One principal was pressured by the whānau, community, and the staff at the school to apply for the job from her position as deputy principal and then Acting Principal. Her 20 years' experience in the school, beginning as a kaiāwhina and kaiarahi reo, along with her membership of the community (tangata whenua) were primary reasons for this.

For four of the women, their pathways towards the principalship had emerged after having their own children. When they had returned to teaching they had found themselves working alongside others who were less capable and were increasingly frustrated by this. Once they had experienced time in the acting principal's role following vacancies in their own schools, they soon realised that the principal's job was one they could and should contemplate. Several of these principals had also embarked on programmes of academic study to enhance their leadership knowledge and skills. Nine principals had completed qualifications in educational leadership and/or management and had made it known that they wanted leadership experience. They were confident in their knowledge bases, were engaging in reflective practice, and above all were particularly aware of the challenges they might face when working with groups of staff through change initiatives. They were fortunate to be working alongside principals who talked freely about their visions, beliefs, and actions with them:

> She was a great influence on it by pointing out certain skills that I had and also pointing out a professional path of learning and preparing for becoming a principal. .... She worked on the basis that if she dropped dead the next day, I would be able to roll into the seat and be able to seamlessly take on the principal's role, so as a result I had access to lots of information that was pertinent to being a principal and I also had times when she was away when I was relieving in the seat followed by the Certificate of School Management which I got through Massey, so those papers also helped a lot. I got five of these papers in the admin area. (Male, primary)

Several principals realised that they had been explicitly "groomed" for the principalship by a previous principal as this recollection demonstrates:

> In hindsight, she was obviously grooming me for a principal's role because of some of the things, now that I look back, and I have heard other people's experiences. I think, wow, yes, she didn't have to show me that, she didn't have to give me that responsibility, but obviously she had a big picture. (Female, primary)

All of these principals therefore had confidence that they had the necessary background knowledge and experiences to provide a solid foundation for their new roles.

The novice group

Ten of the principals tended to apply for their positions on a whim, or on someone else's advice. They all had limited experiences to equip them to begin their new roles with confidence. Seven of

the principals were appointed from basic scale A positions. Another had been employed as a relief teacher prior to his appointment as a principal. Two others had not had substantial background experiences relevant to the type of school where they were appointed as principal. Most of this group had not researched the schools to which they were appointed:

> The school I went to I knew nothing about. I applied on the blind, three schools and this was the one that I was appointed to so I knew very little about the school. I wasn't even sure where to find it for my interview. (Male, primary)

One principal felt she had had minimal relevant experience for her job as she had been teaching at the tertiary level. She had never considered that she would ever be a principal of a school during her career. She was a member of the kura whānau as a parent and was approached by the "kuia" of the kura, a retired teacher who was the acting principal, to apply for the position. She did so in response to her feelings of "aroha" for the kuia and her workload in that position.

One of the principals appointed from a scale A teacher position was pressured by her whānau and hapū to return to her iwi kāinga (tribal home) and take up the position. She had been a kaiāwhina and a kaiarahi reo for 14 years prior to training as a teacher and while she felt her previous experience helped her be a "teaching principal" it did not help her to be an "administrative principal".

These principals were obviously less prepared and they were typically appointed to the smallest, most isolated, and most problematic schools where they had to combine classroom teaching with their principal responsibilities. As one principal of a school where the board of trustees had been dismissed said:

> It's actually quite amazing how many first-time principals pick up schools that are on the scrap heap – when really under a different model it should be experienced principals. But it's not the *Tomorrow's Schools* model is it? With market forces people who are more experienced don't have to take on the difficult jobs. No sound education for these sorts of schools. (Female, primary)

Participants' prior understandings of the key responsibilities of principals before the induction programme

Participants also varied in their awareness of what the principal role entailed. For the least experienced their understanding was rudimentary, although the following comment was probably tongue-in-cheek:

> I thought we had to set the alarm off in the morning and open the doors. (Male, primary)

At one end of the continuum, those who brought little experience with them apart from their own classroom teaching had some appreciation of the task, but usually lacked the full picture and were vague about what they needed to learn:

> My understanding was that I guess just to make sure the school met all its compliances. I wasn't sure what the compliances were but I guessed that people would tell me as we were going along. (Male, primary)

> None. Well actually I knew in my mind that we would do strategic planning and budgeting and of course I was hoping to step into that; none of it was done so I had to sort of step in and do that to begin with... Yes so that was a pretty steep learning curve. Otherwise not a whole lot really. (Female, primary)

One primary principal, appointed from a scale A position said that she used to think "What do they **do** all day?" She was aware that "when parents got miffed they went to see the principal" and she said that although she "had heard of NEGS and NAGS and having to promote the school" she did not really understand these responsibilities.

In the middle of the continuum were the principals who had a good grasp of parts of the principal's responsibilities, and realised that there were areas where they had more to learn. One principal who had prepared for the role by taking relevant courses over the years, and who had BoT experience as a parent acknowledged that:

> Knowing that in theory and experiencing it first hand is a different story of course. But, yes, I knew what the responsibilities were and I clearly knew my gaps. I had identified those clearly and was trying to work towards those; you know, the last few years knowing where I was heading I was picking up roles. (Female, intermediate)

One principal knew prior to taking up the position that there were few systems or policies in place and this guided her views on her key responsibilities. She also commented that one of her major responsibilities was around teaching and learning, although she said she was not sure how she was going to do this aspect. She said:

> I understood that I needed to be a part of ensuring that these systems were set up. I also knew that this had to be done with and through the whānau. I felt that one of my major responsibilities was ensuring that the teachers were able to deliver and monitor and assess quality teaching and learning programmes for the tamariki, but I wasn't too sure how I was going to do it at that stage. (Female, kura)

All of the secondary/composite principals had been deputy principals. With one exception they tended to have had an administrative view of the principal's position as these comments illustrate:

> To meet all the legal requirements; the first one is staffing, that's the most important. Getting the staffing right is the key; meeting all your legal requirements, making sure that you run a financially sound operation so basically you don't get into debt; interfacing with the community, so good communication with the community; building up networks with other colleagues, although it is not a responsibility it is necessary because you can tap into them for information and perspectives, that sort of thing. (Male, secondary)

> Were there any things that I wasn't thinking of before I went to the course? Yes, I think there were bits that were missing from my understanding. Certainly, I had a clear job description that talked about human resource management, curriculum, administration and those sorts of things. Probably the biggest bit that was missing for me was the oversight of

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how you measure teacher effectiveness and how you measure in a school whether you are doing what you say you are doing. I had not quite realised how big that was going to be for me. I had more of a focus on, okay, I'll be interviewing lots of prospective parents and I'll be looking after the staff in the way that [the previous principal] did. (Female, independent composite)

A common theme running through all of the principals' responses was their prior awareness of building effective working relationships with staff, community, and BoT members. They were very aware that interpersonal skills would underpin their ability to get things done. Those in smaller schools saw that while they had the key role they did not want to be isolated from the rest of the staff.

Those who had had a period of time in their jobs before beginning the induction programme all felt that this prior experience had been helpful to them as this principal explains:

I had acted and been appointed in the role for a full year before the course which placed me in a different position to many. Some had not even begun their first term. Some things I'd well and truly covered; others I had an idea of what I needed to find out. (Female, secondary)

Only one of the principals referred to responsibilities included in a job description. For her, the first-time principal induction course had served to "enlighten" her about a much more extensive range of responsibilities in the area of personnel management. She explained:

I don't think I understood that it involved quite as much as it did and I don't think I understood the responsibility that you take on for people and people's whims, needs, desires that goes outside the realm of teaching. I had a glorified vision of the fact that I was here, I was going to make incredible differences for children as far as curriculum and the teaching and learning were concerned and I don't think I really understood the levels of paperwork that I was going to be responsible for. (Female, primary)

At the other end of the continuum were those who had engaged in academic study on leadership. They brought a much greater appreciation of important aspects of the principal role, as this comment illustrates:

I appreciated the importance of leadership rather than management. The nuts and bolts, day-to-day running of the school, in my mind, should be done by the management team. My role ultimately was to set the direction for the school and make sure that everything was in place to get us there. And that's leadership, that's creating the right environment, getting the right people involved, giving them appropriate responsibilities, establishing systems that allow them to do their job, supplying funding where you can. (Male, primary)

Experiences in first year of the principalship

Taking up their appointments

Once appointed, the principals' preparations for their new roles varied to a considerable degree. One had a weekend's notice, some had spent small amounts of time with their predecessors (anything from 30 minutes to a day), while others had 4–6 months between jobs to prepare themselves. Very few had any substantive interaction with the outgoing principal. Frequently they had not met the outgoing principal at all or had been provided with a token orientation to the position:

> My total training from my predecessor was 2 periods. We covered budgeting in a very superficial way. He gave me a very casually handwritten timeframe from the beginning of Term 4 to the closure of the year. (Male, secondary)

Those who had the longer timeframes recalled how they had read the school's latest ERO report, requested that other documentation be sent to them (for example the budget, accounts, annual report) and had ongoing contact with the BoT chairperson. In addition they had also met with staff, participated in staff appointments, and had begun to work on the strategic plans.

One person, who had previously worked for ERO, had used this time to undertake a very thorough review of the school's documentation and started the year with her own goals for improving the school's planning and reporting systems. Since she had completed this analysis independently of the rest of the staff, she then faced the challenge of obtaining staff "buy-in" for her desired changes.

A male principal purchased a new wardrobe befitting his new status. He saw the role of principal as requiring people management and technical skills. He felt confident with his people management skills, but thought that he:

> ...didn't have a great deal of knowledge on the likes of budgeting and the management side of things. (Male, intermediate)

There were fewer challenges for incoming principals who had been on the staff of the school prior to their appointment. One woman described how the departing principal had constantly offered "handy hints for office management" in the term leading up to her new job. Her transition was therefore very straightforward as it was a case of maintaining existing ways of working which was reassuring. However, this was not true for one of the other teaching principals in a two-teacher school who was surrounded by uncertainty with only one staff member, (the secretary), remaining at the school. She explained how daunting this had been and said, "I wasn't prepared. It was just take every day as it comes and write a new list at the end of it and get on with it".

Another principal who had worked in the kura and lived in the area prior to her appointment commented that although she felt comfortable with the way the kura was running and was familiar with the whānau and students, she was unprepared for the transition from teacher to principal. She relied heavily on those around her to "keep things going until I started catching up to speed".

Those with little prior experience in management and leadership were anxious to get started but had little idea of how to go about it. A young woman appointed as principal of a two-teacher school recalled:

> I had the holiday to stress about it. I came in far too often into school and I got the classroom all set up how I wanted it. I had tried to look through some of the documentation but quite honestly it meant nothing to me and I am still trying to find stuff even at this stage, even after a year, you know it takes a long time to get through everything. (Female, primary)

Several of the newly appointed principals discovered the enormity of what they had undertaken before school began. Five had been appointed to very troubled schools where ERO had identified serious problems. One principal had been unaware that there were financial difficulties as well and he felt ill-equipped to deal with these. Another principal found that the board of trustees had included an older, more positive, ERO report instead of the most current ERO report in the application package to conceal current school problems.

In over two-thirds of the first-time principals' schools there was minimal or unhelpful information on how well students were learning. This meant that the majority began their work without important knowledge about possible directions for their work. Several principals found that their schools did not even have a strategic plan:

> I inherited a school with no strategic plan and therefore how can we achieve goals that are not set with any sort of long-term vision. The board was very lackadaisical and I inherited a change of board structure. (Male, secondary)

Early visits from the local College of Education advisory service and the Ministry of Education had been appreciated because there was outside recognition that principals were facing major issues that had not been resolved by their predecessors.

Five of the principals had enrolled for the induction programme as soon as they were appointed, and some attended their first induction before they had begun their new position.

Challenges in first year

In each of the interviews the principals illustrated their answers with specific examples of challenges they had faced or were continuing to resolve. These ranged from competency issues with staff members, community education issues, governance and management tensions with a board chairperson, staff relationships and management of change, encouraging staff to make improvements to their practice, network reviews, balancing teaching and administrative roles as teaching principals, raising student achievement, developing a strategic plan and appraisal system from scratch. An extreme example was that of having to deal with a sexual abuse case against a staff member:

> I'm working with a charge of sexual abuse by girl students against a male staff member. I probably made a fundamental error in that I went to CYPS and the police for advice, and then found that I'd approached a pit-bull for a chew of his bone. They wanted complete

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control and I refused to give it… It's taking up a lot of time and energy trying to protect staff, kids, and trying to keep everybody else reasonably happy. It's been a difficult job. Thank God for Dr Speights! (Male, further details protected)

One principal had to take sick leave for term 4 and so was constantly worried about what she had to catch up on when she returned, and also how the school was "ticking over". She said that while she was confident things were going to plan because of the efforts of some excellent staff, it was nevertheless a pressure on her as the principal.

Most of the principals who had not engaged in academic study in educational leadership on entry to the principalship were concerned with practical survival issues, such as how to deal with Ministry of Education forms, and getting their heads around terminology that had little personal meaning to them. While they were aware that the school had to have a strategic plan, for example, they saw this as a compliance requirement rather than as a mechanism for charting and steering the school's direction. One principal who was interviewed at the beginning of the year following the induction programme commented that the big challenge for her was to actually "continue with the paperwork begun last year and try and be consistent about this and to continue the good work the previous principal had implemented within the school".

Time management and delegation were areas where several principals identified learning needs. One principal said that he needed to learn how to prioritise work because "everything that comes along I deal with immediately rather than prioritising". Another said she needed to review her personal assistant's work duties because she was currently operating as a personal secretary to the rest of the staff with little time available to the principal.

Undoubtedly the biggest challenge for many of the first-time principals was being faced with an ERO review in their first year. Thirteen of the principals in our sample found themselves in this position. One principal received notification of an ERO visit for the first week in term 1. This principal made a case to the local ERO office saying she considered it "inappropriate for them to arrive the same day as the principal was taking up the appointment". The visit was then rescheduled for a date 6 weeks later in the term. One principal had a review 10 days into her job and another had a review in the third week.

Principals who knew what to expect during a review were able to approach it strategically and use the visit productively. The principal with a review in his third week appreciated that ERO provided an external view of strengths and weaknesses of the school without having to find them out for himself. He made it clear to his staff and BoT that it was their review not his, and that any credits or otherwise would be due to their work. The principal who had a review after 10 days on the job commented that the review was "a 99.9 percent improvement from the previous review" and that now it was a matter of "keeping school-wide and consistent practices up". A principal of a school where a Commissioner had been appointed noted:

> I used it to build action plans. It's a bit silly that they let the school get so very bad and then they review us constantly. You wonder if they shouldn't be out looking at the other schools

they haven't got time to visit that are going down the gurgler. But I just try and make the best out of the reviews and find out what they can tell us. (Female, primary)

Another principal of an independent school also appreciated its review and described it in glowing terms:

> It was a fantastic experience for everybody; they were very positive, but they had that challenge there as well. We got a thank-you card from them, which we thought was amazing. We had a lovely lunch with them and they were in every classroom and they did the things that a normal ERO team does. I have been ERO'd in state schools as well and they did ask us what level we wanted them to look at because they don't have a requirement to look in great depth at independent schools but we said, 'Yes, please, look at everything.' Some of that report back was verbal and wasn't written up and that was very useful. (Female, independent composite)

Another principal described his ERO review as a helpful source of early feedback on his leadership:

> Yes, we did have an ERO review mid year 2003. It was a wonderful process for myself and the staff. Staff were briefed in terms of being open, communicating everything being new or everything that ERO required them to share. I learnt about my leadership in this process that in terms of making information available or readily available, supporting the review process but not being a hindrance to it. Ensuring that I took care of my staff through the process by supporting them, keeping parents and the wider community informed. I think all that led to the process actually being viewed as non-threatening by any member of staff. It was actually a very good process for us. We quite enjoyed the review and we quite enjoyed having the reviewers on-site. (Male, primary)

This positive view was, however, not shared by principals who had little previous experience of the process of ERO visits. Some of these principals had not realised that there was an expectation to address areas identified in the previous ERO report as needing attention. They were out of their depth and the experience was demoralising and disempowering. One of these principals was clearly still "shattered" by his ERO visit and at the time of our interview he appeared to have limited strategies to deal with the longstanding issues that had been highlighted by ERO:

> Knocked me over... I really wanted to resign straight after that. I said to the board, 'Well here's my resignation.' Had me crying...it can destroy you. But if it wasn't for the staff and [mentor] and other principals who rang me up and said 'Look you hang in there'...so, yeah, it can destroy you. It wasn't a comfortable place to be in. You tend to bury yourself with a whole lot of the other good things and try not to poke your head out too far just in case it gets knocked off again. That is what it felt like. I had just been knocked to bits. (Male, primary)

However, one principal from this group found the ERO visit exactly what she needed to deal with some of the ongoing issues in her school:

> ERO was great. Their visit validated the concerns that I had been expressing to whānau. Concerns that I believe they were not hearing. (Female, kura)

Future learning challenges

Principals were asked to identify three things that they needed to learn next and indicate how they intended to learn these things. Their answers ranged across all of the responsibilities required of principals and suggested that while many were still getting to grips with the enormity of their roles, a number of their challenges appear to be part of the ongoing principal role. Their identified learning needs, and strategies to address them, are grouped as follows:

Principals' identified continuing learning needs	Principals' strategies to address learning needs
Self management (workload and balance with family responsibilities, time management, communication skills, dealing with "the emotional stuff")	Personal effort
Working with others (dealing with staff resistance, "weaving around everyone's egos", using staff strengths better, learning to work with whānau)	Personal effort
Particular demographic and contextual issues (increasing the school roll, building projects, establishing a BoT, inducting new BoT, raising funds)	Personal effort ("getting out into the community more") Local networks (other principals) Ministry of Education staff ("ministry property man")
Policy and direction (planning and reporting, developing school-wide understandings of school goals)	Local networks Ministry of Education resource people
Financial, property, and staffing management ("being sharper on the property side without being consumed by it", "developing a 10 year property plan", "finding out what you can/cannot spend money on", "establishing and monitoring budget", planning and reporting, staffing returns, staff banking)	Local networks Ministry of Education resource people
Keeping school focus on learning (learning more about curriculum, developing links across the school, challenging children to reach higher, improving literacy)	Build stronger connections with community, including early childhood centres Professional reading, including websites Use of external consultants
Improving teaching (getting into classrooms, learning to evaluate teaching, learning more about pedagogy)	Use staff strengths to assist

Principals' strategies for their continuing professional learning appeared at this stage to rely heavily on their personal and professional networks.

Summary

Most of the principals identified a steep learning curve in their first year. They had challenges in all aspects of the principalship. They were faced with getting to grips with the "nuts and bolts" of the administrative aspects of the role, and sometimes they felt unable to get on top of these details to take a wider view.

It is clear that the principals came to the induction programme with vastly different experiences and understandings of what it means to be a principal. There was a group that already had undertaken formal study in leadership, who also brought significant management experience; a group with a background of academic study but little management experience; and the unprepared group with neither formal study nor experience. They therefore began the induction programme with very diverse needs. At the time of the first interviews they still had diverse needs, and appeared to rely on the support of their networks to assist them to address them.

The next section reports on principals' responses to the content and delivery of the residential component of the First-Time Principals Programme and their views on the usefulness of the mentoring and Principals Online components of the programme.

4. Principals' experiences of the FTP Induction Programme: the residential component

This section summarises principals' experiences of the residential component of the induction programme. It includes quotes from 21 of the 34 principals. We have indicated where quotes reflect the views of a substantial number of principals or whether it is a minority view, selected to highlight the diversity of views among the participants.

Background

The HAYGroup report recommended that the priorities for development for the first-time principals should be:

1. "Nuts and bolts" – e.g. finance, property, administration, compliance, staff management, community relationships.

2. An understanding of the school community and how to build the right relationships. An understanding and appreciation of the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for schools.

3. Educational leadership – approaches to improve learning outcomes, the role of the educational leader.

4. Leadership and the development of the personal competencies.

5. Management – an advance on the nuts and bolts, developing systems and processes, people management, strategic planning, change management processes (HAYGroup, p. 49).

While our report has not been organised around the HAY priorities, we have endeavoured to meet the Ministry of Education requirement to determine whether these recommendations were reflected in the residentials as experienced by the principals. We also read the principals' evaluations of the residentials supplied by the project team with a view to checking consistency with the NZCER evaluation interview data. The project team's evaluations included questionnaires at the conclusion of each residential asking participants to rate elements of the induction programme such as the keynote addresses, skills workshops, case studies, compliance practice and research sessions, and networking opportunities, as well as quality of delivery and the contribution of the residential to the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to carry out the job of principal effectively. The response rate for the questionnaires ranged from 84–86

percent. Overall, the evaluations conducted by the project team showed that principals rated the residentials highly, although some aspects were evaluated somewhat less positively.

The project team also reported the results of a principal self-evaluation questionnaire that had been distributed to principals prior to the first residential (77 percent response rate). In addition, separate evaluations of the NPO/PEN workshop facilitated by the Ministry of Education and of the mentoring programme (84 percent rate) were conducted by the project team.

We have not wished to duplicate material already presented by the project team, so our report uses the project team's evaluations to add information and deepen the discussion of key evaluation areas.

Views of the opportunity to participate in the FTP Induction Programme

All of the principals in our sample were appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the induction programme. This is consistent with the data from the project team's evaluations. The principals were positive about the venues and location of the residentials, particularly the principals from outside the main centres. There were numerous comments appreciating being treated as professionals with hotel accommodation, good food and accommodation, and being in the midst of a lecture theatre with other first-time principals from throughout the country. They felt it a privilege to attend the residentials and were therefore determined to make the most of their learning opportunities. One said, "I decided before I went that I would sit or stand with new people every time to hear their stories because you can learn so much from other principals". Another principal said that she was very excited about the FTP programme because she thought that she was "ready" for it. She said that she began the first residential "feeling quite a whole person":

> So that course for me was fantastic and everything I needed. I was able to select, choose, dissect. I have to say to you though that I really felt that to the teachers of the smaller schools who might have been principals in Year 3 or 4, it must have been extremely daunting. But for me, I felt it was strongly related to what I was doing. I was ready; I could handle the theoretical side of it because I had a good grip on the practical day-to-day side of school life. So the theoretical stuff and the higher thinking stuff were just right down my alley and I could then use it and relate to the workshops later. I felt it extremely rewarding, but you know I could see because of the path I was taking, I came into that course with a real rich fullness in education, but, having said that though, although I enjoyed that because it was the gritty stuff I wanted, how to do finance and for the principals who come from small schools and who have only been teaching for three or four years, I don't think they were that keen on all the other stuff. I think they just wanted the 'tell me how, tell me what to do tomorrow' but for me, fantastic. I have to say they were very well chosen; the residentials were well put together. They fulfilled what I was looking for. (Female, intermediate)

The kura principals we interviewed regarded the opportunity to be together at the induction course as an "added bonus" to the learning opportunities they were experiencing:

> Residentials and mentoring had a huge impact. I doubt very much I could have made it to the end of the year without having either. I very much doubt that our ERO report would be the same either. (Female, composite)

> I learnt heaps on this course to help me at school. The good thing about residentials was that they helped with meeting with other KKM principals who were going through the same issues as us. (Female, primary)

> Networking with other KKM principals was good even though we mostly knew each other the opportunities to get together professionally aren't always there. (Female, primary)

Relevance of residentials to principals' perceived needs

Majority view

There was strong agreement from 85 percent of our participants that the content of the residentials was well tailored to their core needs. They also appreciated the challenge faced by the project team in developing a programme that could address the multiple contexts, knowledge, and experience of its participants as this comment shows:

> I think the residentials, and obviously Auckland University who created the programme, really had to use a scattergun approach because the range of principals who were there was huge. We are talking from kohanga reo [sic] to secondary, a huge spread and while there are common threads in the job, no two principals do their job the same way and so I think the choices we were given were great. If I wanted to know about SUE Reports I went to that particular workshop and if I didn't understand I went back to that workshop and asked more questions. If I wanted to learn about budgeting, that's what I did. If my brain was full and I wanted to listen to a motivating principal talk about what they had done at their school, I chose to go to one of those. That is what I found was the neat thing about the residentials; I think some of the principals got a bit hung up on, hey, can't they tailor this more exactly to what we want without realising that it is not practical to do that. As I say, they have to encompass a wide range of clientele, for want of a better word, but our little network groups that were formed liaised with David and his group with regard to setting up and involving us in the programme in that regard. I think it would be dangerous to let first-time principals have too big an input into the construction because we don't know what it is all about. (Male, primary)

The comments made by principals support the positive ratings reported in the projects team's evaluations. The following comments are typical of those who found the residentials addressed the myriad of aspects they needed to learn about:

> I thought that the residentials were brilliant; from each one I got a whole bunch of new stuff to come back and try and implement. The nitty gritty stuff, you know, bank staff, setting targets, the law, health and safety that I found the most helpful in terms of what I needed

because that is the kind of stuff you have to have. How to fill in your register reports and sign them off and how to fill in your interview staffing at the end of the year. You have to do those jolly things; all that kind of stuff, which is the nitty gritty day-to-day stuff, I found that very valuable. (Female, independent)

The whole thing just kept me buzzing every day that I was there, despite the social evenings that sometimes occurred. There was so much that was informative and to the point and having the choice of getting involved into what workshop I dialled myself into meant that my needs were being met. I was just blown away by the whole thing. I just came back buzzing with a whole lot of bits that I had got to talk about and people I had got to meet.... Some of it went back to a principal down the road. He has been principal 20 odd years and I am talking bank(ing) teaching staffing to him and he said, 'I'm sure you cannot do that.' Well, a term later he was telling me 'Yes, you can, it's wonderful.' That was one little thing, which had come out of the course that just had a whole lot of we principals going and the networking that came out of it as well. There are not many courses that I go to that I have looked forward to the next one so much as these. (Male, primary)

I think it was a really good mixture actually because they had research to help you with just sort of deeper thinking, yourself, challenged your own thoughts, challenged your own theories that you had had about children's learning. Also to challenge what it is that you are supposed to do as a principal, you know the changes that need to be made in your school. I had to think about a few things, "Oh my goodness, I do that, I'm one of those people that they are talking about", you know so those things helped me sort of re-define a few things in the school that I had just let happen (Female, primary)

Views of those with extensive prior knowledge

Four of the five principals who considered that they had strong prior academic knowledge suggested that the programme could be more tailored to their different needs:

> The weakness of the whole induction programme was that it did not recognise prior learning so it put everybody through the same course, or over the same hurdles and did not allow for the fact that there were some people who hurdle these hurdles a million times and actually needed swimming, Everybody had to hurdle, everybody had to go through the swimming, you know what I mean, and so what was being said about learning and behaviour and administration, and instructional leadership was actually being belied by the course. (Male, secondary)

> I do think that there should have been some consideration made for those of us with postgraduate qualifications. I don't know how, but perhaps yes, they could have separated those people out and perhaps looked at separate issues. (Female, primary)

One of these principals commented that the programme had underestimated the expertise of some of the first-time principals. She said:

> "They didn't give us opportunities to lead. They gave us a lot of 'this is how you do it etc'... We had a lot of people presenting to us but they didn't actually ask for that input from the group. I would have liked them to give us a homework exercise to prepare something for the group which could be used for discussions. (Female, secondary)

Views of those with limited prior knowledge

A minority (eight) of principals felt that while the content of the programme was appropriate, they personally had inadequate prior knowledge to be able to benefit much from what was being presented. For these people the course was described in terms such as "going way over my head". It was not possible for the presenters to scaffold the learning of these people because they appeared to be operating in what has been described as "zones of bewilderment" (Kelly, 2003). This group of principals described their efforts to find sessions that were "relevant to the problems I was facing" and one principal said that he was unable to link the material to his work situation: "People put it in front of me but I couldn't see it." One struggling principal had dealt with her incomprehension by taking as many notes as possible in the unrealised hope that she would find time to make sense of them later. The following is an extreme example from a principal who was unable to distinguish between tasks that required high level knowledge and those that were very basic:

> Just little things like how you deal with your community. How you deliver newsletters. How you present your school in terms of signage. How you promote your school and yourself. (Male, primary)

Other principals were aware of the challenges faced by this group of principals and wondered if there was a way that these needs could be identified early. One principal said:

> ...the programme hit leadership first to people who were struggling with the basic management tasks of being principal...we all came to the first residential with specific problems, some of which we had inherited...it would have been helpful to have these addressed (at the outset).

> It may help these principals if they have the opportunity early in the residential to surface their concerns. (Male, secondary)

Views of kura principals

Two principals of the four kura in the sample commented that while the course related to much of the work they do as principals, they were aware of, and sometimes struggled with, the notion that the course was primarily designed for principals of mainstream schools. One of the principals said:

> There were a lot of connections that I could make. There were also vast differences in the way that kura Māori operate in terms of management and visionary responsibility. (Female, composite)

When the interviewer asked her further about this she said that in her kura the "politics" of dealing with the whānau as well as providing leadership for them has been difficult. She said in her kura the whānau is not limited, in numbers or roles, like a conventional board of trustees and this is an area she would have liked to find out more about on the course. She also commented that in her kura the principal does not provide the vision but rather has to uphold the vision of the whānau, which she perceived to be rather different from what often happens in mainstream

schools where principals often come into schools with "their" vision that they "try and sell to the parents". This does not happen in kura, which are driven from the aspirations of the whānau. The other principal said:

> It was intensive and work related especially if you were in mainstream. Fortunately for us we had X and X who worked with us and it's still Pākehā but X is a principal of a kura, too, so she could talk to us about how she did things in her kura, those things that worked in kura. It was awesome to talk to other principals who were in the same situation as you. (Female, primary)

Secondary and area/composite principals

The secondary and area principals in our sample tended to have more mixed views of the relationship of the content of the residentials to their needs. In its evaluation of Residential Three, the project team noted that 15 percent of the secondary principals indicated that some of the keynote content did not apply or was less useful to them (p. 28). Given that we interviewed principals after the third residential this may have influenced their responses. Their equivocal responses may also reflect their wider exposure to leadership development in their previous roles as deputy principals of large schools prior to the FTP programme.

Timing

There was agreement that attendance at three residential courses in one year was too much and that the third residential should be carried over until the following year to extend the programme to 18 months duration. While some wanted the residential courses to begin before the end of the term and carry over into the first weekend of the holidays, others said it was difficult to leave their schools in term time. Those in favour of 2 days in term time argued that this would give them some extra time in their holidays because all were spending considerable amounts of time at school anyway and simply weren't getting sufficient time to recuperate. One board of trustees had acknowledged these extra commitments in the holiday time by granting their principal a week's leave in term time as compensation. While this was an unusual action to take, it was much appreciated by the teaching principal who carried a huge load in a two-teacher school with a beginning teacher. This lack of personal time in the holidays had been a problem for a number of other principals and two admitted to not having attended one of the residential courses because they needed family time.

It was also apparent that at least one break needed to be scheduled within the residential course so that people could have some relaxation time. Without breaks those attending were struggling to sustain their concentration levels because they were unaccustomed to large amounts of passive listening and sitting still. Some saw the irony in that those attending the Wellington residential course were handed a "things to do in Wellington" package, yet the programme did not make space for any exploring or relaxation time. Another principal indicated that those attending the

last residential course had looked rather tired and she felt the course had suffered from a lack of enthusiasm and energy.

While the course material was considered to strongly relate to the principals' jobs, the question remained about the most appropriate timing for the various topics to be introduced. Residential Two, which received the highest overall ratings in the project team's evaluations, was identified most often by principals in our sample as being particularly relevant to their needs:

> The content of residential 2 was more focused on what's happening in schools…if you're comfortable in your position and the (management things) are under control, you're far more relaxed and can start becoming visionary as far as leadership is concerned. (Male, secondary)

This comment reinforces our finding that there was an optimum state of readiness for first-time principals to reach before they could really benefit from the course. The timing of the first residential course was helpful for one of the principals who said:

> It was very timely after 10 weeks in the job because by then I knew what it was I wanted to know. Sometimes I didn't know what it was and when it was brought to my attention or my thoughts were challenged or I took time to reflect, it changed my mind about a lot of things and it almost set me up for the next term. I came back with heaps of ideas. The BoT must have thought 'She needs a rein, lead her back in, what have we done?' (Female, primary)

It was also accepted that it was hard to please everybody because the starting points and expertise varied amongst the first-time principalship cohort. For example, some principals had already completed their strategic plans in the earlier part of the year and found that the placement of this topic in the second residential had come too late to be useful. Others were grateful for its emphasis at this later residential course. The same could be said about the sessions on ERO, particularly the "how to prepare for a visit" because some were going to encounter an ERO visit in their first year of their principalship, some in their first term, while others were expecting a longer delay. Thus it could be useful to repeat these topics across all three residential courses so that they could be more timely and meaningful in their link with actual practice.

Keynotes

The majority of the principals appreciated the calibre of the presenters and felt motivated and challenged by their messages. They spoke about the keynotes giving them a broader vision about educational issues they may not have previously thought about:

> And the more leadership speakers like Stewart Middleton, John Edwards – the bigger picture inspirational ones which are always good – it's always good to hear – it just does something – touches you – builds you up, makes you feel a little bit stronger. (Female, primary)

The emphasis on leadership theory at the first residential received a mixed reaction. Some of those who already had a strong background in educational leadership enjoyed hearing the information again, because it was sometimes presented with a different slant, refreshed the material for them in their minds, and affirmed that they "were on the right track". They welcomed the familiarity of some of the leadership theory because it provided a balance against other areas that presented steeper learning challenges. Others considered the leadership information to be somewhat redundant for them, given their previous learning. It was suggested that some consideration be given to those who had completed postgraduate study in leadership by offering them a different option at this time. Three principals with completed qualifications in leadership described the leadership lectures as "scratching the surface", "squeezing a lot into one lecture", and "lacking some depth" for those new to the theory.

A minority of principals found the keynotes to be "boring" and "dry as dust". These tended to be people who saw the role of the principal in "nuts and bolts' terms, and who did not perceive research to be relevant to their work. A few principals with limited experience of academic study found it difficult to sustain their concentration for an extended period of time. Others realised that they needed more exposure to the key messages in the keynotes. One of these principals said: "While the keynote speakers were very interesting and a lot of the theory was excellent the biggest problem was coming straight back into the job without a chance to really reflect and think how can I use this?" This principal hoped that these links would come in time but worried about his ability to remember the details of what was useful.

The emphasis given to meeting the needs of diverse learners, particularly raising Māori achievement, for the third residential was well received. For those working in conservative communities, the opportunity to be confronted by up-to-date research findings, and being reminded about their obligations under the Treaty gave the principals strength to proceed even though they faced resistance from their communities.

Overall, principals reported enjoying the content and focus of the keynotes, as well as sharing the experience with other principals:

> It was wonderful to sit in an auditorium with 200 others and be able to laugh about your job as well…and then having the workshops afterwards to get other people's insights into how they would handle the different situations and being able to talk with others in education. (Female, primary).

Workshops, case studies, and compliance practice and research (CPR) sessions

While questions focused on the impact of the residentials as a whole, principals identified ways in which the workshops, case studies, and CPR sessions worked well for them. The opportunity to work in smaller groups according to school types after the keynotes was well received. The

principals were ready to talk after sitting for blocks of 90 minutes. The workshops gave the principals opportunities to talk and relate the course material to their daily work situations.

Facilitators were sector-based and viewed by principals as knowledgeable although it was noted that some were more skilled at working with groups of adults. One principal in the secondary group was particularly critical of the controlled format of the workshops. He wanted more flexibility and said, "We'd just be getting warmed up into the exercise, and we'd be stopped and asked to return to the large group or make a new combination". He was more appreciative of the facilitator who stopped and checked that the group was content to continue with the topic or whether they wanted to spend more time on specific aspects.

Being able to make choices in the sessions was seen to be important. For those who had entered into their principalship roles in the previous year, some of the nuts and bolts issues had already been solved and they had a clearer idea of what they needed to know. However, information overload and wanting to learn about everything was problematic for some of the principals. One principal had her own strategies for this and said that she "needed to read the notes and talk to people to put things into perspective and accept that there were some things she could not do immediately".

For some principals, receptiveness to course content was often coloured by anxiety about unresolved school issues such as the need to find a replacement teacher for the new term. Again, this comment suggested that more time may be needed in the residential courses for those people to unload their personal issues and seek support from others around them who were either facing or had resolved similar challenges. The Māori principals commented that sometimes they found it hard to make choices, for example, in some sessions they could choose to be with the mainstream groups or stay as a group and deal with issues common to themselves. They felt that this was sometimes limiting to them because they wanted the choices that all the other principals had but also wanted to be with their Māori colleagues. One principal said:

> I wanted to know what the primary principals were talking about but I also needed to be with our kura group. (Female, primary)

Information about appraisal and learning conversations was particularly appreciated in the second residential. Opportunities to practise these in the workshops and receive feedback on their interactions were valued. Three of the principals even showed us their prompt cards entitled "climbing the ladder of inference" at the interview and indicated how they had since used them in their school settings. The learning conversation tool was identified as the most useful aspect of the residential course by 16 principals. These comments were typical:

> I've been able to use it to raise issues with staff. I've found it valuable. I don't always get it right but now I'm much more confident at tackling those tough issues. Before I would take the low road and not tackle things head-on. (Female, primary)

> Yes, I think that was very good for me because that whole idea of sacrificing the issue or the person and trying not to sacrifice either has been really important for me. I have always believed that you have to deal with the problems head-on and I have had to deal with a

couple of professional situations this year where I have had to pull people into line and I don't back away from it, but probably before going to this, I would have sacrificed the person and you cannot do that when you are a principal. It has worked on a number of occasions. It backfired on me on one occasion and I've really been mopping up ever since, but I think I got impatient in that particular case. It wasn't the model, just my [lack of] practice, that's all that's at fault. (Female, independent)

One of the Māori principals commented that they (some of the Māori principals) were instrumental in organising a session on relating the Treaty of Waitangi to the NEGs and the NAGs, during the final residential. They considered this important because the Treaty is relevant to Māori and non-Māori, and also most principals had some Māori students at their schools.

Given the emphasis in the programme on the use of evidence to inform practice, we examined the project team's evaluations of this area. In the evaluation of Residential Two, participants were asked to evaluate three aspects of the keynote "Collecting Quality Information". Responses to these questions were indicated on a scale from 1–7, with 1 ("very little") being a poor rating and 7 ("a great deal") a high rating. The first question asked principals how much they learnt from this keynote address. This question had a median response of 6, from 156 responses, a high rating. Principals also evaluated this keynote highly overall. The third question asked principals to rate "How much more do you think you need to learn about this aspect of principalship in order to become a more effective school principal?" The median response to this question was 5, indicating that most principals who completed evaluations judged that they still had considerable further learning to do in this area.

Despite principals' acknowledgement at the end of the second residential of the need for more learning about evidence-based practice, only 18 principals chose to attend the two sessions on student achievement, data enquiry and analysis offered in the third residential. This session was 11th out of 15 in terms of attendance. The most well attended sessions were: budget planning (95 principals), education and the law (75), performance appraisal (70), disciplinary procedures for staff (57), and managing competency (52). Their choices may reflect principals' pressing need to get on top of the "nuts and bolts" knowledge before they felt able to address deeper issues of learning and teaching, where the knowledge required has to be built up over time. Certainly there would be more obvious consequences for failure to set budgets, or deal appropriately with appraisal or competency issues. Or, having submitted their 2003 planning to the Ministry of Education, principals may not have been aware of the knowledge they would require for meaningful analysis of their evidence. Curiously, despite the low take-up of further learning which would have assisted them with their planning and reporting responsibilities in the evaluation of Residential Three, only four principals specified planning and reporting as an area where they still felt they were not well enough prepared.

It is difficult to interpret these responses. It is likely that principals had access to further professional development in evidence-based approaches to learning and teaching between the second and third residential which increased their sense of capability. In addition, their mentors may have assisted them to develop their knowledge and confidence in this area. It is also possible

that they underestimated the skills they would need to collect, analyse and interpret their planning and reporting data.

Networking opportunities

The opportunity to network with other principals was valued for both social and learning reasons. One person described the value of networking in the following way:

> It's really interesting that some of the biggest highlights are meeting with each other, networking and having the chance to sit down [with others]. Even if it's over a glass of wine at night , sit down and say 'What are you doing with this here? I don't know how to handle this. How are you doing with this?' We still send each other stuff. The networks that have been established is one of the big things that came out of it. (Female, primary)

> One is the actual induction course has given me the opportunity to network with so many other people who lead in their schools and as a result I've struck up some really firm and effective relationships and I draw on the skills, and I'm sure others draw on my skills, so that we can use it to productively benefit students specifically in our school. (Male, primary)

Two principals suggested that in the first residential more time was needed for sitting around and networking. She said:

> You could almost see people in the workshops jiggling because they wanted the lecturer/facilitator to speed through what they were doing so they could just grab the person beside them and say 'What you were talking about before, I've got that issue as well. Let's talk about it.' (Female, primary)

By the third residential principals had established strong networks that supported their learning. One principal summed this up by saying, "By the third one you had those friends and you can almost sit with them and solve your own problems".

> The networking helps. You've got more of the tentacles out to access information. So you don't feel perhaps as inadequate as you do when you first begin. Some of the management tips, just the resourcing of the information. Being able to plot out your staffing over a year, I didn't know you could do that. (Female, primary)

The portfolio

The introduction to portfolios at the first residential did not convince first-time principals that it was a worthwhile use of their time. It was repeatedly said by principals that the sessions on portfolios at the residential courses were poorly presented, "boring", and used examples that did not sufficiently link to what principals saw as their work.

Others were critical that portfolio completion was a requirement of the programme. There was a commonly held view that this requirement underestimated what new principals had to do in their

first year and it was seen as an unnecessary paper trail and compliance demand. In claiming to know which directions to take in terms of the action plan and strategic plan, one principal said quite firmly:

> I knew where I was going and as far as I was concerned, I was only answerable to my board chair. He's happy with it, we're happy with it, and what happens in this school is all that worries me. How I do it is my business, To say we have to do this. Well we don't have to do that. It's just nonsense. (Male, primary)

Principals did not appear to realise that the purpose of the identification and tracking of a learning and teaching task was directly related to current expectations for principals to be able to lead their staff in the analysis and discussion of student achievement information for the purpose of improving learning and teaching. They saw it as an extra task on top of all of their other responsibilities. Their resistance to the portfolio suggests that a different approach is required, if principals are to benefit from the professional learning opportunity that the portfolio process offers.

Summary

Overall it would appear that the content of the residential programme was well tailored to the needs of the majority of principals. Principals were aware that the full spectrum of needs was potentially infinite, and that it was unrealistic to expect that these could be fully addressed in 12 days. Principals had a clear preference for content that enabled them to survive in their new roles, and the induction programme provided multiple opportunities for them to engage with this information. The social processes built into the programme were as important to participants as the formal learning.

The diversity of the group presents challenges to the design and delivery of the programme. It could be worthwhile to investigate how those with already completed qualifications in educational leadership could be catered for given that this group has identified that they would like this to be acknowledged in the programme. The needs of those who are unused to learning in formal contexts and those who have little prior knowledge as a foundation for understanding new knowledge present additional challenges. The follow-up phase of this report provides some information about how this group has fared since the completion of the induction programme.

The course team is exploring ways to encourage principals to "buy in" to the notion that the construction of a portfolio can be a valuable professional development tool. We will return to the issue of the portfolio in subsequent sections of this report.

5. Mentors' and principals' perspectives of the mentoring component

Mentors' perspectives

Each mentor in our sample was asked to comment about the mentoring component of the induction programme and on the training that was provided to assist them with this role.

Mentors' views of their roles

All of the mentors considered the critical aspect of their role was to provide individualised support as issues arose for the principals during their first year. They encouraged the principals to use them as sounding boards to discuss issues and talk through strategies. Trust and confidentiality were crucial to their working relationships with these first-time principals. One mentor described this as "providing a high trust, low defensive environment where principals are able to say what they like about a range of problems and positions and know they are listened to, cared for and given assistance to go forward". Another mentor explained how the mentor could be the person who could be asked the "daft" question by saying, "You can admit to your mentor that you don't know something when you wouldn't want to tell your board of trustees or other colleagues".

One of the Māori mentors talked specifically about her role in consciously developing a "relationship" with the principals she was mentoring, based on trust and respect, so that they felt confident to discuss issues openly. While some of the Māori mentors and mentees already knew each other, she commented that relationship building or "whakawhanungatanga" occurs as a "normal" occurrence when Māori meet and interact and it is invaluable not only in her role as a mentor but also for the Māori mentees. This always involves establishing whakapapa links. Another mentor commented that the meetings with mentees they already knew were more informal and relaxed.

The mentors were committed to being a "helpline" if necessary. They saw it as helpful that they were perceived to be independent and available. They believed that they were there to advise and guide principals, help clarify directions, offer reassurance and, when appropriate, share their professional knowledge and expertise. Depending on the confidence levels of their mentees, mentors could also pose reflective questions to challenge and facilitate new learning. While it might have been tempting for the mentors to tell the first-time principals what to do, the mentors had been encouraged to use questioning to get them to think through the options themselves,

asking "Have you thought about...?" or "What if....?" However, sometimes this approach was not appropriate. For example, the mentors considered it more efficient to be more directive when technical issues arose. This saved time and allowed more issues to be addressed in the mentoring session.

Several mentors stressed that while the principals typically had immediate issues to be addressed during the mentoring sessions, it was also important to keep them focused on learning. This focus was frequently in danger of being lost amidst the many and varied issues of the moment which could "swamp these inexperienced principals". In describing the next learning steps for one of the first-time principals, a mentor commented:

> xx has done a number of things that are typical of new principals — painted the school, changed the uniform etc. but the next issue for xx will be coming to grips with the issues of teaching and learning and finding out what is actually going on in the classrooms around the school.

Helping the first-time principals to move away from these nuts and bolts issues and concentrate on learning and teaching matters was the biggest challenge for the mentors. For this progress to be made, both mentor and principal needed to share the same commitment to learning and teaching and the belief that their actions would impact positively on children's achievement.

Another important role the mentors identified was to ensure that their first-time principals had other support networks around them. They saw that professional networks would lessen principal reliance on their mentors and facilitate self-reliance. One mentor said:

> We should be able to confidently cut the umbilical cord as it were, knowing that these people have a whole raft of other people they will approach...because they don't realise that even as very experienced principals we are constantly on the phone to our colleagues saying 'I am in the proverbial, what do I do now?'

This may explain why several mentors continued working with their mentees after the end of the formal contract because such additional networks either were not in place or insufficient for the first-time principals' needs.

Key mentoring skills and knowledge identified by mentors

A range of interpersonal and professional skills and knowledge were identified by the mentors as being important for their mentoring roles. These included respect for the ideas and opinions of others, an empathy and ability to listen, personal honesty, and at times the courage to say what needed to be said. No mentors identified the need for them to have skills in improving teaching, the analysis of practice, and helping principals to explore causal relationships between teaching and learning.

A practical knowledge of management issues was seen to be important as was up-to-date knowledge about curriculum and administration with its associated rules, regulations, and shortcuts. One mentor argued that managing the administration was often the source of the new

principals' most frequent headaches. One of the Māori mentors considered knowledge about political and cultural struggles, and understanding the dynamics of human interaction were important in her role as a mentor of principals in kura kaupapa Māori.

Credibility in the eyes of principals was seen to be very important. All of the mentors were required to be current or very recent principals and principals knew that their mentors fully appreciated their challenges, understood the policy changes, and how these might impact on practice. A comment from one of the recently retired mentors indicated that it would be preferable for policy changes to be explained by Ministry of Education personnel rather than through someone else and therefore subject to interpretation.

One mentor who was a primary school principal had a secondary school principal mentee who felt that a primary school principal had nothing to offer him. The mentor organised a secondary school principal for him however the 'new' mentor found that the mentee still feels the mentor has nothing to offer him.

One mentor felt that the mentors had to 'buy in' to the programme in order to be a successful mentor. She said

> You have to have a commitment to the principles of the programme and a desire to help others by sharing your experience and knowledge.

Adequacy of the mentoring training programme

All of the mentors had attended a residential course and were familiar with the format and content of the induction programme. Those who had participated in the 2002 mentoring programme were appreciative of the additional frameworks in place for 2003. These included the programme agendas for each visit and having a point of comparison with the 2002 cohort. Several mentors indicated that their involvement in the programme and its mentor training had been invaluable professional development. One said: "I learnt a lot about myself. It made me think more deeply about relationships and better ways of providing assistance." Another mentor said that her participation in the induction programme and her mentor training was the best professional development she had ever had. One mentor was realistic enough to admit that no training programme could prepare the mentors for every eventuality. He said:

> The training is experiential and like in any job, what they do say is — wisdom is a combination of knowledge and practical experience and a lot of it is, you make the error, you analyse why the error was made, how to avoid it next time and that is part of the learning as well. I don't think you would ever train somebody so thoroughly that they could go out there and get it absolutely 100 percent right, because there are many varying circumstances. But generally, yes, I would say that the training programme has been very professional.

The value of participation in the residential programme was also apparent in comments from other mentors who wanted opportunities to attend more than one residential course. Several of the

mentors identified professional benefits for themselves in their participation in the induction programme. One mentor had even funded her own attendance at a second residential course because it had been so worthwhile. She said:

> For me with eight out of my 12 [first-time principals] out of the city, the residentials were important for keeping contact with my group. At these residentials issues get raised in conversation and often arise from speakers/workshops. They are lost by the time the principals get their next visit.

Another indicated that hearing the messages the principals were getting made it easier to have dialogue on the next visit. Such opportunities for mixing and socialising were believed to enhance relationships.

Time allocated for the sharing of experiences with the other mentors was appreciated. This was particularly appreciated by mentors who had joined the team after the first year of the programme. One mentor described the facilitator questioning which was practised at almost every mentoring training session as follows:

> There were practical sessions where you sit down in teams. Three of you — one is the mentor, one is the principal, and one is the observer. Because we strike such a variety of situations, we were able to actually make those very, very real and then see how our fellow mentors handled it.

Similarly, the learning conversations technique was also considered to be invaluable.

One mentor considered that the mentor contribution to the programme was undervalued. He said:

> They didn't utilise the value of the mentors enough...that we were actually an important link with the people we were working with and I think they thought they were the ones making the impact instead of it being a shared responsibility.

A further reminder of the useful contribution made by mentors was their willingness and availability at the residential courses to answer questions from their mentees. Sometimes this was just giving extra clarification on information conveyed at the keynote sessions whilst at other times they were able to help the principals make links to their individual work contexts. One mentor commented that attendance at the residentials helped to consolidate the relationship between mentor and mentee. She said:

> I attended two residentials and this definitely helped consolidate my relationship with my mentees. I was able to pick up on, not only the 'big' messages that were given, but also on the great deal of incidental yet important discussion relevant to the principals' roles and responsibilities, and feed back on this.

Frequency of contact

While the programme allowed for three paid visits to each principal, as well as ongoing phone, email, or fax contact the mentors reported that they provided more face-to-face contact than the contract required. Some mentors arranged seminars for their groups, had informal conversations

at principals' meetings, or met with their groups socially and professionally. While it was noted that some of these principals had several mentors in addition to the induction programme, others were more dependent on their assigned mentor and it was important that they had someone to call on for support.

Areas where mentors considered they assisted first-time principals

Mentors identified personnel issues as the most commonly discussed problem areas facing the first-time principals. Some of these were problems the principals had inherited such as staff incompetency and various governance and management tensions regarding roles and responsibilities. Others related to property, banking staffing, and budget management. A mentor who worked with several principals of small rural schools noted that their days were dominated by immediate issues such as running out of water, buses breaking down, and a shortage of firewood to heat the classrooms. School closures, and redeployment, were sensitive issues for some principals in Northland and the West Coast.

Parental issues loomed large in some schools, particularly in one school where the mentor had to assist the principal to obtain a trespass order against a parent. Similarly, where a principal needed to suspend a pupil, the mentor was able to talk him through the process.

One of the Māori mentors assisted her mentee in her reporting back to the whānau and BoT, in a complex situation which included dealing with inherited incompetency problems. The outcome was that the principal began to gain the trust of the divided whānau and BoT, by showing them that she was developing needed systems and processes.

Some principals requested mentor guidance in relation to ERO visits. Thirteen of the first-time principals had ERO reviews in their first year of being a principal. This was very stressful for those who were unfamiliar with the requirements for the review, and those who had come into schools with major problems, but proved helpful to more confident principals.

Mentors also assisted with governance and management issues in relation to particular school contexts. The politics of some "delicate" situations meant that the mentor was the only "safe" person to openly discuss sensitive issues with, particularly in smaller communities where individuals were known to each other, and interconnected in many ways. In some cases excessive school resources had been assigned to support staff, and the reduction of their hours required skill and a degree of bravery on the part of the principals.

All of the mentors ensured that their principals' burning issues were addressed at the scheduled meetings. While the programme specified particular agenda items for each meeting, the mentors needed to be flexible in order to meet individual needs as these arose. In some cases this meant that the visits with principals could extend longer than the anticipated time. One mentor said:

> I always took the time to cover all areas and so our meetings went way over time. I did not want to leave the principal until such time as they had said all they wanted to. They needed

to off load or share or sound out. Likewise I did what was requested of me from the FTPP.

One mentor said: "It was unrealistic to expect the principal to set aside (their burning issues) to address another agenda." He was critical of the wording of the Principals' Self-Evaluation Questionnaire that principals were meant to have completed prior to their mentor visit. He said, referring to this document:

> For instance, have you seen this? It talks about 'How confident are you of raising standards of teaching and learning in this situation?' for instance. Again, here 'Is there a culture of high expectations for student achievement?' You know I couldn't have answered that here and I was in the same position as these people, exactly the same, no different. Nineteen principals wouldn't have had a show of knowing (how to answer) this.

It was noted that some of the issues these principals were facing were "biggies" involving legal cases and dismissals. It was important in such instances that the principals sought wise counsel and took care to document processes and refrain from discussing the matter with colleagues at the school site. Where enforced isolation was necessary, the presence of a neutral mentor was indeed helpful.

In commenting on the huge variety of personnel issues, one mentor said: "They vary across the board including under-performing staff, staff conflict, drinking caretakers, and secretaries who refuse to type letters for the principal because they don't see it as their job." Others found that principals had issues with long-serving staff who were reluctant to change, and with being accepted as the principal. Other aspects of the principal's role, for example, running staff meetings and listening to and accepting other people's viewpoints, required the help of the mentor. This mentor felt that more time could be made available in the residentials for principals who needed help with skills such as these.

One principal had quite serious health problems, prompting the mentor to provide support by focusing discussions on what is best for the principal and so she was able to have term 4 off on sick leave knowing that her decision to do so was best for her well-being:

> Me kī i te tuatahi ko te mea nui ko te tangata, tuarua te oranga, tuatoru kia noho pai te wairua o te tangata.

Assistance with budgeting was required in some cases. This included banking staffing. One mentor commented that most new principals lacked "a feeling for these things" and they had to manage large budgets. He gave the example of two schools that were struggling financially. When he looked at their finances he found that they had term deposits of $330,000 and $200,000 of which they were unaware. One principal in a kura was not allowed access to financial data or budget control.

Several mentors provided help in curriculum areas, mainly in literacy and numeracy, and encouraged appropriate professional development. Other mentors assisted in the areas of data collection and analysis particularly in areas of the school where the principal lacked personal

teaching experience. Assisting principals to see the links between data, such as the application of attendance data to student achievement, was another area where mentors provided help. Helping the principal with strategies to gain support from other staff members for more evidence-based approaches to learning and teaching was identified as important, as well as developing skills to challenge a complacent staff culture.

Several mentors provided additional help with appraisal. While appraisal had been given good coverage in the residential programme, some principals still required help with its implementation. This was described by one mentor as "…dealing with reluctant staff, timetabling the process, moving from a 'tick box' format to goals based, as well as the nuts and bolts, i.e. who signs, who views, how long documents are kept, who has a copy". This mentor felt that there should be an opportunity for learning about the appraisal of support staff in the residential programme.

One mentor provided guidance to one mentee in managing workload issues where she was dealing with a number of professional and personal dilemmas. This mentor also helped another principal network with fellow colleagues who work in the same Māori medium setting. This helped the principal to deal with the pressures unique to her school setting with the advantage of realising she was not alone in her struggles.

Mentors attending residential courses were also advantaged by listening into discussions of burning issues in the workshop sessions because they could continue to provide follow-up or even arrange regional meetings for their group for topics having wider appeal.

Challenges in being a mentor

Each of the mentors needed to tailor their approaches to suit the very different personalities, life experiences, and confidence levels of their mentees. As could be expected some of the new principals were more confident than others. Principals with stronger backgrounds in school management were able to use their mentors more strategically, particularly in relation to processes such as curriculum review and schooling improvement.

There were other principals whom mentors saw as very much in need of support because of the difficult situation that they had inherited, compounded by their minimal prior experience with leadership roles. In these cases principals tended to try to "tackle everything at once" and the challenge for mentors was to get the principal to slow down and make a list of priorities and associated timelines. In one of the most challenging schools, all of the mentoring visits were not able to be actioned as the principal was teaching and he could not find a reliever. This principal was seen to require ongoing support, as his networks did not have people with the background to assist him. One mentor commented that sometimes principals were "their own worst enemy":

> Sometimes people just don't know what they don't know.

Another principal who required ongoing mentor support throughout the programme also came from a teaching position with minimal leadership background. She had difficulty entering her local principals' network, and the mentoring role was described as providing support, helping to sort out priorities, a shoulder to cry on, but above all reinforcing the message "You can do it. Just take small steps". Lack of confidence in her new role, and a difficult school context made it necessary for the mentor to model being assertive through the "learning conversation" technique. The mentor believed that if the mentoring had not been available to her, she would have "concluded the year with very little spirit to carry on".

Two of the mentors reported that one of their principals showed some resistance to the theoretical underpinnings of the programme. One mentor described one of his mentees as being an "effective practitioner with a love for teaching (but who was) not inclined to dwell on the theoretical". Another mentor found himself constantly trying to convince one of his principals to keep up-to-date with recent research that impacted on programme development and assessment.

Others found that their visits served to rekindle enthusiasm for the goals and provided opportunities to affirm the new principals' work to date. Several mentors mentioned that while their principals were good at talking things through, there were times when the mentors needed to challenge their thinking and assumptions by asking probing questions. Issues were discussed openly and honestly and the mentors had a sense of satisfaction in watching their principals gain confidence.

However, one mentor was unsure just how much she was able to assist one of her principals. While a good rapport had apparently been established, the principal had opted to work alone on one particular issue. This was quite a contrast to the openness of the other principals who had not hesitated to communicate with their mentors.

One Māori mentor with two mentees commented that her greatest challenges were determined by the level of support provided by the whānau. The principal with the least supportive whānau provided a greater challenge than the principal with "a good whānau and collegial support within her kura".

Portfolios

The one aspect where most mentors did not think that they had been successful was portfolio development. One mentor, with responsibility for mentoring several principals, did not appear to have understood the purpose of the portfolio as he commented "Why would we want somebody to have a portfolio?"

It was clear that while most mentors appeared to have shown considerable persistence in encouraging the principals to engage in the portfolio process the majority of principals remained resistant. It was suggested that it should be seen as a second year project rather than "something else to squash into the first year".

One mentor was particularly proud of her role in helping one of her group with his portfolio. She said:

> X was completely opposed to the concept after the residential number one introduction. I bullied him into trying it after a visit when he couldn't lay his hands quickly on material he wanted to show me. He now operates seven portfolios related to his strategic goal areas and has a much better system. Written reflection is minimal but the process is underway.

Another mentor described the portfolio as a "bug bear" and noted that one of the principals in the study had not made a start on the portfolio until after term 2. The starting point for this portfolio had come from the topical issues they had discussed and the suggestion that brief, critical reflections on the ERO review, personnel issues, professional development, action plan review, community support, ICT initiative, and progress with the budget would be useful.

Others found their principals were more "action orientated" than reflective and had a paper trail which served to document evidence around their action plans.

One mentor suggested that the portfolio be made a compulsory part of the programme and be submitted to ensure it was actually done. He had concluded that for many of the principals the portfolio was well down on their priority lists because often the needs of others were attended to first and the portfolio was seen as more of a personal issue, and hence, disposable. It is difficult to see how completion of the portfolio could be a requirement of a voluntary programme.

One mentor considered that the end point of a portfolio was self-review, and many principals were not at a stage when they had enough experience to be reflective: "It is only going to make a difference if people can see that it will make a difference." One mentor held the opinion that some principals would never embrace the portfolio concept because their personal style did not involve analysis of their practice and never would do so. An example was one principal who tended to concentrate on one issue at a time without seeing the links and consequences of decisions on other areas. While some mentors tried hard to assist principals with their portfolios, in some cases the goal that a principal had set early in the year was regularly "swamped" by all the other matters that arose. Similarly, basing the goal on a teaching and learning theme within the first mentoring visit was seen as too early. Priorities at that stage were often issues such as staff appointments, buildings, and strategic plans.

Two mentors questioned the need for the portfolio to be presented according to a set format. They considered that if the purpose of the portfolio was to be a vehicle for reflection then there were multiple ways that this could be achieved. The importance of this question was apparent in the example of a principal keeping an extraordinarily comprehensive reflective diary. The mentor considered it to be quite an intellectual piece of work but noted it did not fit the parameters of the first-time principals' portfolio: "It had not included artefacts but was extraordinarily hard-hitting and backed by theory. It was also very professional but as such could only be described as a reflective diary." However, since it had been a learning tool for its author the mentor considered it had met the intended purposes but wondered if the programme's personnel would agree. Another mentor found one principal preferred to "talk" through her action plan and so while "everything

was covered" and the mentor considered the principal had been reflective, the documentation did not support this.

Two mentors found that teaching principals particularly found it hard to find time to devote to the portfolio and were concerned about the impact on their workload. One mentor suggested that ways need to be found to incorporate this aspect into their everyday job so it is not seen as "an extra".

The different perspectives on the portfolio shown by the mentors provides further support for our view that it is not working as the project team intended. The project team's evaluation of Residential Two noted "many principals are not yet clear about the Teaching and Learning goal, what it is, its scope or how to go about implementation, and evaluating how successful implementation was" (p. 18). A possible explanation for the difficulties in this component of the programme could be the capability of mentors to provide knowledgeable guidance to their mentees. We were not able to ascertain the extent to which mentors actually impacted on principals' progress with their learning and teaching goals. Substantive knowledge of target setting, measurement, and analysis would be required to assist principals with their learning and teaching goals. There may have been an assumption that mentors had this background as the amount of time addressing portfolios in the mentor training was not extensive. The probability that few mentors would have had previous experience in the preparation of a portfolio themselves, indicates that further verification of mentor capability in relation this programme's priorities may be indicated.

Mentors' suggestions for improvements to the programme

The mentors considered that the first-time principals were fortunate to receive such quality professional development at no cost to themselves so early in their careers. They also agreed that the programme should be extended into the second year with some suggesting 18 months and others a 2-year programme. Having three residential courses in one year was another criticism. One mentor said: "The first-time principals find giving up the holiday breaks a real strain as they seem to go from one term to another without a break." Another mentor said that while he did not think that mentoring should go beyond the last residential, the whole programme could be stretched over a longer period of time, rather than compromise principals' much needed holiday break times.

Others suggested that continuing contact network groups should be established at the end of the programme because the principals appreciated getting together from time to time.

One mentor considered that the extended timeframe would make it possible for the mentors to support the budget and annual planning processes from data the first-time principals had collected in their first year of their principalships.

Another mentor said that the programme should be extended to support new principals in their first 2 years in the same way new teachers are supported for the first 2 years. The mentor also said

that extending the participation time may help overcome the workload issues for teaching principals. One mentor suggested that rather than extend the whole programme as it is, it may be prudent to extend it focusing on particular issues that need more of a longitudinal analysis, such as some areas of planning and budgeting.

Another suggested that the programme consider making some full-time mentor secondments, raising the mentors' salaries and allowing those mentors who wanted to attend more than one residential course the opportunity to do so. The remaining suggestions related to meeting the individual needs of the first-time principals. One mentor of teaching principals felt that the programme needed to acknowledge the particular challenges of the teaching principalship role. Another was conscious of the need to better serve the first-time principals who were more qualified, experienced, and confident in their abilities so that the programme did more than affirm their work but led them towards even deeper learning.

One mentor suggested that perhaps Year 3 and four principals should be mentors as the issues that FTP's are dealing with are more likely to be similar to the issues the Year 3 and four principals had recently encountered.

Summary

Overall, the mentors were highly positive about the mentoring component of the First-Time Principals Induction Programme. It was considered to be worthwhile but was not necessarily essential for all of the principals. Some of the principals had excellent support networks and were adept at asking for help from a variety of people. For other principals, mentors felt that without their support, the principals and their schools would have been seriously at risk. For those who were new to their districts, the mentors were able to facilitate other networks and encourage their attendance at local meetings.

It is clear that the mentors were well focused on the majority of their expected tasks. While they had to devote considerable time to the "nuts and bolts" this is in line with a recommendation from Hay Group. They were aware that unless their immediate issues were dealt with, the principals would not have had the "headspace" to engage in leadership issues the programme was intended to promote. While a number of mentors considered that they were particularly helpful in providing principals with feedback on their progress, and in focusing their attention on issues related to learning and teaching, their own knowledge base and skills in data collection, analysis, and interpretation would appear to be important in terms of the quality of assistance they were able to provide for principals in this area.

Mentors' attendances at the residential courses appeared to have enhanced the shared understandings of the key messages of the induction programme but it was noted that the programme funded such attendance for just one course. Both mentors and mentees had found it beneficial to hear the same messages and be able to talk with each other immediately after the

sessions. The training offered to mentors, while valuable, is "not the same as being there" as part of the overall residential programme.

Principals' views of the mentoring component of the First-Time Principals Programme

Questions were asked about principals' views of their mentor's role, the contact they had with their mentors, the support given with core activities and the professional portfolios, level of challenge, and any improvements for the ways in which mentors were used in the programme.

Levels of contact

All of the principals reported having the numbers of visits prescribed in the contract. As well there was ongoing email and phone contact, depending on the individual needs of the principals. While all of the principals appreciated having individual mentors as part of the induction programme, some made more of this opportunity than others for various reasons. As could be expected with such diversity of school contexts, principal backgrounds, and personalities, there was some variation in the amount of contact initiated by the principals themselves. Some left the mentor to make most of the contact rather than seeking it themselves, while others contacted their mentors frequently, and received more than the allocated visits. The youngest principal in the South Island sample was particularly conscious of possibly being a nuisance to her mentor. She said: "My biggest fear at the beginning was like, I can't ring my mentor again, he'll think I am just so hopeless and he will just be so busy himself because his school is heaps bigger than mine."

Another principal made the suggestion that the mentors should decide themselves just how much help any given principal might need. This was perceived as striking a balance between being a support person and also challenging the principal to respond in new and different ways. In recognising these variations, the principal said: "Early on the mentor has got to identify those in the deep end who are struggling and need more support. So I would say flexibility would be the key and whilst three visits was more than ample for me, I could have cut it down to two, there might be others who needed four."

Principals reported that several of the mentors also held additional meetings in their local areas for their groups. This kept local networks alive and meant that some issues could be introduced to groups as a whole rather than being repeated on an individual basis. The Otago/Southland group had gone a step further and arranged their own weekend get together with invited speakers to explore particular topics and issues of concern. One North Island principal suggested that it would be beneficial to have the mentors organise a session at the residential course so all the people assigned to that mentor could network amongst each other.

Seven of the principals intended to work with their mentor after the end of the course because they had found the help so valuable. There was a clear wish expressed from several principals that mentor involvement in the programme be extended into the fourth term or into the second year.

Principals' views of the mentor's role

Mentors were typically described as being "lifelines", "supportive", "encouraging", "accessible", "good listeners", and "knowledgeable". One principal claimed that the mentor helped with "anything and everything". They were perceived to have a willingness to share their knowledge, to be honest and competent, and to be willing to give positive and critical feedback. The principals found it reassuring that there was a willing, informed, and impartial point of contact if difficulties arose. They appreciated that mentors took a personal interest in their progress and that some would informally check on progress between visits. For many, the mentors provided affirmation that they were doing a good job.

It was seen as helpful to have someone to talk to who was "out of the area", and someone who was not "in competition" with them and therefore seen as more trustworthy.

Those who had mentors who were practising principals sometimes saw their mentors as role models as this comment shows:

> I love my mentor. He is friendly, easy going, good to get on with, but really focused and passionate about what he does and it is good to see that passion; it gives me a bit of energy and drive. I have always been there for kids but to hear him and see him and see him work and the hours I know he puts in. (Male, primary)

The principals noted that their mentors had good communication skills. One principal particularly enjoyed the reflective discussions with his mentor noting that he acted as a sounding board as well as providing gentle challenge:

> He would probe and we would get on a wavelength that we were looking at...you could see him mulling over. He would let me talk a fair bit and that was fine because he would listen and evaluate and then maybe point me in, not necessarily a direction, but would provoke me with a question or a comment. (Male, secondary)

The mentors' ability to use effective questioning was appreciated by another mentee who said: "Just by (the mentor) asking that question, (I'm not) trying all the different doors and finding which ones are the right ones." The ability to offer both support and challenge was seen as an important part of the mentor role by several principals. One principal said that her mentor would challenge her with comments such as "You say you're doing this, but how do you know you are doing this?" and "Well come on this is the core business!" The mentor's flexibility was deemed to be important by the mentees. This is illustrated in the ways in which one mentor was willing to talk about issues of importance for a mentee after they had addressed the programme's agenda for the scheduled visit. One principal recalled having taken walks around the school with his mentor that provided the opportunity to ask questions such as "Does that look good? Is that the way it

should be? What can you see what I'm missing? What are the things that I should fight my battles over? What are the things that I should let slide?"

Another talked about the ways in which her mentor had helped her to verbalise her thoughts and how this had led to greater clarification about the issues with which she was grappling.

One or two principals felt that the role of the mentor from the perspective of the project team could have been explained more clearly at the first residential so that there was a full appreciation of their responsibilities.

Mentors' attendances at the residential courses were appreciated but it was noted that the programme funded such attendance for just one course. Principals found it beneficial when their mentors had attended the same sessions as they had as it meant that their mentors were better able to assist them.

Two principals were a little disappointed that their mentor was not from their same sector group. This meant that they could not get immediate help in some areas such as financial management because the sector contexts were so different. For example, their mentor had used a bursar for financial matters in the secondary sector whereas as principals of small rural primary schools they did not have such assistance. However, they were quick to add that their mentor had been a useful listening ear on a number of occasions when they had needed reassurance or help in clarifying issues. Like most of the principals in the sample, these principals had learnt to cultivate multiple mentors for different purposes. This meant that they took care not to be a burden to any one person and could utilise particular strengths in those around them.

Although some of the mentors in the sample were retired principals, this was not mentioned as a difficulty from the principals' perspectives. When answers could not be provided on the spot, these mentors had used their networks and relayed information back to the principals at a later time. However, a definite strength for one of the groups involving the smaller rural schools was having a mentor who received the same Ministry of Education circulars across his desk and who could offer guidance as to how to proceed with ministry requests for information.

Areas where principals identified that mentors assisted

The principals clearly valued the "nuts and bolts" experiential knowledge that mentors brought to their roles. One of the major areas where principals identified where mentors had assisted was managing personnel issues. One principal said: "I was having trouble with one of my young staff here and I was able to chew it over with x who helped me to clarify the issues; x gave me some ideas about how I could deal with it, or gave me an example of something tried in a similar situation." One principal had personnel issues she felt unable to discuss with her mentor because of the mentor's connections with the school's community. This was unfortunate because the principal was herself new to the district and had not formed other local networks.

Principals were more interested in having their mentor address their immediate needs than those they saw as programme goals. The mentors were required to help each principal set goals to enhance student learning and establish an action plan to attempt to achieve these. The intention was that it would be a single, school-wide goal that would impact on students' learning. These activities then became a regular point of discussion for the mentoring sessions. Several principals considered that the goal-setting requirement was too artificial as this created unnecessary pressure to provide evidence for the mentor as indications of progress made since the previous visit. One principal said that the expectation to work on a school goal also put pressure on the mentor "to make sure she had data to take back to wherever she was coming from on my goal". While admitting that it seemed like a worthwhile idea, she did not see it as practical for a new principal who was struggling to come to terms with a huge range of issues at the same time to be able to select just one goal from all the possibilities. She said: "Oh my god, that goal when the mentor is coming you get that feeling about the goal when you have really got 4,000 of them."

Where the requirements of the programme coincided with principals' needs the mentors' help was more appreciated. Thus if the school was due to have an ERO visit, the principal was more interested in being able to demonstrate that their students were learning and more willing to engage in data collection.

As discussed earlier, most of the principals failed to see the value in developing and using portfolios. One principal claimed that the "mentors were as confused as the rest of us about what was even supposed to be in the portfolio". Principals said their mentors had tried to engender enthusiasm for the portfolio including suggesting how portfolios might be seen as a useful tool. For six principals these became resource boxes relating to goals in the strategic plan and records of progress made. The portfolio also provided another paper trail and an opportunity for the mentor to react to the goals and progress made. For one pair, the topic chosen for the portfolio was the development of a thinking skills programme. Another principal said:

> Sitting down with my mentor and doing the action plan nutted it all out for me... We talked about what I'd have to do first and what I was going to do next and my timeframe. It was great...and sometimes it is nice to do that with somebody else. (Male, secondary)

One principal who had not found the portfolio briefing session helpful was pleased to admit that it had subsequently been a useful exercise more due to personal trial and error rather than anything emerging from the residential programme. This principal also offered to talk about the portfolio at the next induction course to help convince others that it could be a "reasonably worthwhile thing to do".

Summary

The principals rated the mentoring component highly, as it provided informed and confidential assistance in areas where they needed help. Given that the majority of principals were getting to grips with the day-to-day challenges of getting to know their staff, communities, and students, learning to adjust to the interpersonal challenges of the transition to the principal role, and

developing knowledge and skill in basic management requirements, they were most appreciative of help that met their immediate and developmental needs. There was strong interest in the value of extending the mentoring into the second year for those who needed it.

There appears to be some tension between the understandable wish of the project team to keep the focus of the mentor visits on important learning and teaching issues, and the collection of data on the progress of the learning and teaching goal, which a number of principals regard as a university or ministry requirement. Relatively few of the first-time principals appear to welcome mentor involvement in goal setting and data gathering. It is possible that principals may not focus on the "core of education practice" (Elmore, 1996, p. 1) until they feel that technical tasks are under control.

Online support

The third component of the induction programme was New Principals Online (NPO). Responsibility for the development of the NPO site was shared with the Ministry of Education. This section reports the principals' and mentors' views of principal use of NPO.

The project team's evaluation of the facilitation of the NPO/PEN workshop at the first residential was highly positive with almost half of the participants giving a top rating of 7 to the relevance of the skills covered in the workshop. Participants also considered that the skills were very well taught. There was more variability in their views of the necessity to use LEADSPACE to assist them in becoming excellent principals, although half gave ratings of 4 or more. Most principals thought that they still had a significant amount to learn about NPO and PEN, and the majority indicated that they used NPO and/or PEN less than once a month during term 1. They identified a number of reasons for their limited use of these sites, and these reasons had not changed when we interviewed them later in the year.

The majority of the principals claimed that they "never" or "rarely" logged onto NPO although many found the Leadspace site very useful. Most had a good idea of what could be found on this site and were accessing it on a regular basis.

There were several reasons why NPO appears not to have engaged the principals.

1. Lack of time was identified as the major deterrent for using NPO.

All of the principals noted that finding the time to use this facility had proved difficult given the busyness of their jobs. One principal who had used NPO several times had done so because she was curious to see what sort of discussions featured. She indicated that there were people who posted regular comments but she wondered how they found time given her own pressures to get everything done in the day. This opinion was shared by another principal who described NPO as something you might explore when you weren't busy and had time to browse but in the same breath said, "Who's not busy and has time to browse?"

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2. Principals did not perceive NPO to contribute to their knowledge and understanding of leadership issues.

Several principals were dismissive of the NPO concept describing it as "a modified chat room with some additional material". One principal had dismissed NPO after a couple of experiences commenting: "It was the biggest waste of time. I'm not interested in hearing about somebody's verbal diarrhoea… I go on for information when I need it." Another referred to NPO as "a great play opportunity" and said she'd had fun putting faces to names at the first residential course but after that had run out of time to do more.

Some of the principals who were confident in online environments "didn't see the point" of this component when they had what they saw as better and more efficient ways of accessing information online.

Some principals commented that it was not a priority for them to access the site within the context of their workload pressures.

In a contrasting view, one principal who appreciated NPO said that she had sent a message out to the home page of NPO following a residential course with information about a resource that others had wanted. She also thought it was a "shame that more people didn't access NPO" because she considered it had so much potential for support and sharing of expertise.

3. Technical difficulties caused frustration and reduced motivation to visit the site.

Principals had been "turned off" by their early attempts to access the site, despite later improvements. For example, one principal said that there had been "so many passwords and changing passwords. I can't be bothered with it. It didn't become a priority for me". Another secondary principal claimed that he had "never used NPO. I could never figure it out". One principal lived in a rural area that did not have access to appropriate band width to allow access and, while frustrating, she was not sure if she would have used NPO. Another mentor found the urban principals used it more than the rural ones, who became frustrated waiting to be connected.

Its interactive component was somewhat problematic because it took time for responses to appear. This lack of immediate response was mentioned as a source of frustration for some of the principals who used the site.

4. Lack of computer expertise was a problem for some principals.

While mentors were asked to check use of NPO and provide assistance when they made individual school visits, some mentors reported that they found it difficult to provide assistance given that the site was confidential to principals and therefore mentors lacked personal experience of the site. While the mentors reported that most of their principals had made some attempt to access and use NPO, this had not been sustained over time. Mentors had checked on its use but only one mentor had provided individual tutorials to help the principal with access. There was also a practical workshop at one of the residential courses.

5. Principals preferred to access other sources of support, especially those from large cities.

One principal explained this to us as follows:

> Basically, it seems that the people in Auckland don't really use it. The people outside of Auckland, especially rural, do. It seems to be if you can get the information quickly and easily you do, but if you can't, i.e. rural and you've no one else to talk to, that's great. We are pretty fortunate in Auckland, you've got someone…for me I've two principals that I can walk to, they are that close. The ministry is extremely forthcoming in giving information, if you have got any concerns. It's just really easy to get the answer, whereas if you are out in the country it's really hard. (Male, primary)

Interviews with rural principals confirmed that NPO had more appeal to the principals of the smaller and more isolated schools. Of the sample, it was the principals from these schools who had been the ones to place "stickies" on NPO in order to get answers to some of their questions. However, it was noted that delays encountered in receiving replies meant it was often better to target one individual with a phone call.

Summary

The comments from the 2003 sample of principals and mentors illustrate that NPO has yet to realise its potential as a valuable support and challenge for the learning of principals in the First-Time Principals Induction Programme. Principals have yet to be convinced that the online learning opportunities available on NPO are worth the investment in time they require. It has to be easier for them to access, and to get help when they need it. The project team has identified some strategies to promote greater principal involvement, which include monitoring principal use of the site and encouraging those who are not participating. However, principals will not participate unless this component is more convenient and more useful than the networks they currently employ.

6. Principals' views of initial impact on the First-Time Principals Induction Programme on their leadership knowledge and practices

While the earlier sections of this report have reported on principal and mentor views of the three components of the First-Time Principals Programme (namely the residential, mentoring, and NPO), this section reports principals' views of the extent to which the programme fosters the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies identified for successful school leadership.

This section presents some preliminary data which suggests that principals have improved their understanding of the principal's role in leading their school towards a culture of successful learning and teaching. This is an important first step in the acquisition of several types of knowledge required for effective school leadership. Walters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004), identify four key types of knowledge:

- experiential knowledge – knowing why this is important;
- declarative knowledge – knowing what to do;
- procedural knowledge – knowing how to do it; and
- contextual knowledge – knowing when to do it.

Principals report a much clearer understanding of *why* it is important for them to be the learning leader in their schools. Knowledge of what to do and how to do it also appears to have been broadened in a number of important areas, and these are discussed in this section. At the time of the interviews, only 7 months had passed since the first residential. There was little time for principals, particularly those with limited relevant prior knowledge, to reflect on what they had heard, make sense of it, and attempt to put it into practice.

There was little documentary evidence available to us in 2003. While we read the ERO reports for the reviewed schools, the information in these reports tended to report on the systems and approaches of previous principals rather than the 2003 group. We decided to use 2004 ERO reports to inform the follow-up phase of the study.

It is not possible to establish a definitive link between the induction programme and principals' leadership practices, as there have been multiple influences on principals' learning. For example, principals acknowledged that previous or ongoing academic study had contributed

to their leadership knowledge. Previous management experiences were also likely to have contributed to declarative and procedural knowledge in some areas of their work.

We found that in many of our interviews it was inappropriate to press too strongly for documentation when we felt that this was premature for particular principals. Some principals became anxious when asked for "evidence" of the impact of the programme and they may have felt that they, rather than the induction programme, were being judged. The material presented in this section therefore should be seen as preliminary indications of the impact of the programme.

We have organised this section using material from the interviews summarised under the HAYGroup competencies of effective principalship, namely: vision and leadership; leading others; striving for excellence; self-efficacy, and building community relations.

Vision and leadership

The HAYGroup framework identifies key competencies involved in vision and leadership as: conceptual thinking; working with and through others; and change management. Our interviews sought to explore how principals thought the induction programme had developed their conceptual understandings of what it means to lead a school that is focused on enjoyment and success in learning. It is apparent that many principals had developed their understandings significantly since their participation in the induction programme (*see* initial understandings on pp. 26–27). One principal said that the induction programme had "made me challenge my own thinking and others' thinking". This is an important observation since, for new learning to occur, reflection on current beliefs is essential.

The induction programme appears to have impacted positively on principals' ability to see "the big picture" of school leadership. Both the residentials and the mentoring components were described in terms such as "lifting horizons", "broadening visions", "opening eyes", and "opening doors", suggesting that for many participants the induction programme has provided a platform for new learning and thinking.

However, one of the kura principals felt the induction course did not have the impact she needed in the area of leadership because she perceived that the course was aimed at principals of mainstream schools and so did not necessarily cater for some of the needs of principals in kura kaupapa Māori. She said:

> It is not easy to marry up mainstream thinking of the role of the principal as the boss with my ideas of kura Māori where the tumuaki and kura are very much intertwined with whānau aspirations, needs, and expectations. There needed to be more of a kaupapa Māori 'look' at how to balance the needs of whānau for autonomy with the needs of a tumuaki to get things done – sometimes whānau can also see the tumuaki as having to 'take over' and it's difficult to know when to do it. (primary, composite)

Another kura principal commented that as te reo Māori is her first language it was "difficult to be switching language codes all the time to fit in with the language I use at school". However she is aware that it would be impossible to have such a course delivered in te reo Māori.

Several principals considered that the induction programme provided a strong focus on the importance of teaching and learning as this statement illustrates:

> It really focused me more and provided me with a more comprehensive understanding of the core business, which is the teaching and learning, and I am really pleased that that became the focus. The compliance stuff is all important and there is so much that I still don't know, and am still doing wrongly, but I think that the expertise that was made available to us through the various university researchers — it was just so good to be able to have the time to consider the research that was presented and how that links to the core business — providing you with ideas and directions. (Female, secondary)

The same principal described the residential and mentoring components of the induction programme as providing a coherent "package", each reinforcing the importance of leading learning:

> Well it's been highly effective — both of them really. In terms of the leadership, the educational leadership and the focus on learning and teaching, it's been spot on and supported by the mentor. So it's all had a connectedness — a link — and the whole programme it's been linked... It's probably been the best professional development programme that I've been on and even if I compared it with the Secondary Principals Conference, it's not a patch on this. (Female, secondary)

For others the induction programme affirmed their current beliefs and gave them the confidence to share them with others. One described it as having given her the confidence to move forward as a leader. Another group was reassured that there was an evidence base to their personal knowledge, and appreciated having the theoretical background to support their beliefs.

Some of the more experienced principals did not consider that the programme had reinforced rather than changed their conceptual thinking or knowledge as they already had those understandings when they began their induction.

Leading others

Principals appreciated the emphasis on developing their teachers, and on building teacher commitment and capability:

> They pushed the staff; the need to have quality staff, the need to have your staff as a team, with a shared vision. The people aspects that I have talked about already came through as being super important; basically a school, and it doesn't matter what resources you have got or how wonderful your buildings are painted, it's the people and I think that that started to come through particularly in the last two residential course. (Male, primary)

There can be no doubt that the skill that principals found to be the most practical in working with others was that of the learning conversations. It appeared to work for them as a tool and a process for dealing with difficult issues. Principals described how they had used "learning conversations" to focus attention on areas of concern and build commitment to more effective ways of doing things:

> And here is the reflective questioning; the learning conversations so that when I have something that is of concern, I have a question, 'Why do you do this?' so that people are not being told that it is not okay, but have to justify it. (Female, independent primary)

Striving for excellence

In exploring the impact of the induction programme on this competency measure we looked for evidence of a results orientation, analytical thinking, information-gathering processes, and holding people accountable for results.

Impact on school-wide policy and direction

The majority of the principals claimed to be working towards creating systems that promoted excellence. Those with more experienced backgrounds had moved rapidly to create systems that "set the direction for the school", "got the right people involved", and gave them clear mandates and support to do their jobs. However, not many principals felt that their systems were yet sufficiently organised to show to outsiders. There were, however, two principals who were able to use documentation to illustrate the impact of the programme on school-wide policy and direction.

One of the youngest and most "striving" principals was able to furnish us with a document entitled "2003 School Review: Summary of findings", instigated following a residential keynote by John Edwards, and a later local workshop. The summary reported on community and staff views on future directions for the school. As a consequence the school was "re-branded", and the mission statement changed to "Building Tomorrow Today". This principal thought that both the staff and community now had the basis for the first part of the school's new charter, and he said that the induction programme had helped him with…"a good clear focus, because that was what I guess I was a little unsure of". As we talked he was able to illustrate how his thinking had developed and changed as he and his teachers charted their school improvement journey in 2003. For him this had been of more benefit than what he described as a "pretty portfolio" in that:

> At the moment we are re-designing all the appraisal system, and I have obviously got articles that go with my thinking, but essentially this is…. To me the reflection is evident in the fact that it keeps changing, so obviously I am working on it and making changes. As each model or as each example emerges there is a link, you can see the obvious link between the old and new. The fact that there is pen on this one shows the original was bearing in then, came in on top of it, make the changes and now there's the reasonably

organised one which will get published not in that form, but that's the one with all the right words in the right place etc. and then we will publish that. (Male, primary)

He had not prepared a portfolio because he did not think that he would have gained any further learning from the extra work. When asked about evidence that his teachers had had input into the appraisal process he described how the first draft had been firmly rejected by staff:

I would just come back and say 'Look this is what I am thinking' and they will say 'No, we're not going to look at that.' So then you've got to say 'Well what will you look at? What will affect what you are doing?' So we have basically, out of this, come out with three themes if you like, so next year is looking at academic learning time and their engaged time in learning.

A female principal was able to provide strong evidence on the impact of the induction programme on the overall direction of her school. Her initial reason for completing a portfolio was because she gained university credits. Her goal setting included a new draft charter comprising the school's underlying mission, vision, and value statements and its strategic and annual plan. Each of the strategic goals was supported by clearly specified objectives, targets, action required, and timeframes. This principal had used her portfolio as a basis for her planning and reporting documents and these had been commented on positively by Ministry of Education personnel. In her view the information on planning and reporting that was provided at the induction course was more useful than other models she had received. She said that after the sessions at the induction programme she reported to the Commissioner at her school, "I have it sussed. We can do it" and that the Commissioner took copies of the handouts for use in other schools. In this instance there was some preliminary evidence of higher student achievement in targeted areas, careful analysis of results, and discussion of implications for future action.

The sessions on planning and reporting had a big impact on the kura principals. This included working on better systems that are more focused, developing systems of reporting that are more meaningful to whānau, and including whānau in planning. However one kura principal said that the ERO visit had more of an impact in prioritising important policy directions than the induction course.

Performance agreements

The majority of principals were clear that their performance agreements should be aligned to the strategic goals of the school, and while some of them had inherited previous agreements they intended to ensure that new agreements reflected school priorities. There was general agreement that the specification of performance goals in new contracts is compatible with the messages from the residential courses. The principals generally accepted that it was their responsibility to furnish evidence of their progress towards achievement of the school's strategic goals, although few had made much progress in this area, and most school boards did not appear to have included this sort of evidence in principals' performance plans.

Improving teaching and learning

There was no doubt that principals were aware of their responsibility to foster student achievement and effective teaching:

> The biggest way was giving me the mantra 'And how does this improve teaching and learning?' That's the mantra. With some emphasis that that is the basis; I could talk about the things that I have done through Massey and I could get all very academic about it, but really the underlying bit that should come out from the induction programme is, well, does that improve teaching and learning? If you just keep asking that question, it's very powerful and so it did cut through a lot of the crap really. (Male, primary)

In discussing this responsibility principals tended to refer to performance-driven accountability as the key driver. They described performance targets and outcome data, and talked about raising achievement levels. Few principals showed us any data they had collected.

As would be expected, some principals had a greater understanding of these concepts than did others. In some cases principals' efforts appeared to reflect good intentions rather than strategic intent. For example, one teaching principal of a rural decile one school reported that he had set a target for all Year 5 children to be reading at or above their chronological ages although he added: "We have some slow Year 5s but at least it was a goal for us to try to get them up there."

Principals indicated that the induction programme had emphasised that they needed to assist teachers to use data to pinpoint areas to develop and to track progress. The need for accountability appeared to have been accepted by the principals. One principal argued this accountability was not "a rod for people's backs" but a way to be sure that what they are doing is targeting the right areas and "making a difference".

Helping teachers to grow professionally

A number of principals were able to articulate their better understanding of the sorts of professional learning that improved teachers' professional practice, as illustrated by this comment:

> I think one of the primary focuses for me was to ensure that the professional development of each teacher was carefully thought out and mapped out with the teacher, looking at the curriculum overviews for the year and beyond. Looking at the needs of students. Also about collecting school-wide data, relevant school-wide data, ensuring that the process was fair and just for teachers and students, to ensure that results were collated, analysed and looked at critically so that we could assist teachers in implementing plans to ensure that things were done more effectively to benefit student learning. (Male, primary)

The induction programme had helped some principals to realise that professional development was not just an "add on" to teachers' work, but occurred in the day-to-day opportunities that they had to learn from their work:

> One thing I have learnt is that you don't necessarily have to send people to outside agencies or to lots of different courses outside the school in order to ensure effective PD. There are many strengths that each member of staff has and these can be used to good effect in terms of ensuring PD can happen, that is effective PD can happen at a local level and that is within the school. Also we've further drawn the strengths so that there is a great deal of sharing and this ties in with the culture of the school so that I think effective and great PD can happen in-house. (Male, primary)

Others, while they saw professional development as best occurring in a "whole-school" context, still regarded it as an "event" rather than contextually embedded. A minority still regarded attendance at "one-off" courses as valuable as long as they were reported back to other teachers.

Feedback on teaching

The importance of provision of feedback to teachers on their teaching was highlighted in the induction programme and we asked principals if they had learned how to do this. The majority of principals indicated that they understood why feedback was important and that they were beginning to do it. For one intermediate principal feedback was seen as part of the reflective process:

> Intermediate schools, which can become narrow, rest on our laurels and churn out stuff, so getting feedback is absolutely essential so you can identify those trends and so you are doing that through your appraisal system. And also through our staff development sessions where reflection is becoming a bigger part now and that is a direct result of this course too. (Female, independent)

In some cases the new principals had identified a school culture of low expectations, and complacency about teaching. It appeared from the interviews that principals had gained confidence in their right to challenge low-performing staff. Three of the secondary principals had confronted teachers whom they considered were not "giving kids a fair deal". One secondary principal described how he held staff accountable for students' results in external examinations. He told teachers that "courses will not run if the qualifications are not coming out of them. The course is there for their growth and their attainment and you have to make sure they are getting the qualifications".

Another principal said that the induction programme had taught her the importance of using data to inform her decisions. She said:

> We took some data last year which I fed back to the teachers that I was not happy; that the data showed that we were failing our students; that we weren't catering for them effectively and that they were not being given a good education here. It probably was not as bad as that but I made it sound like that and that we had to do something about it. (Female, independent primary)

One principal said she recognised during the induction course that this was an area in which she needed to improve and on return to school encouraged learning conversations with her staff. This

strategy helped to increase the "talking that went on in the staff room about learning" as well as encouraging teachers to "open up" to the idea of peer appraisal. Another principal said that having a small staff meant that they were always talking about students and learning in an open dialogue and this was seen as a form of feedback for the teachers.

Some of the principals were confident about visiting classrooms so that they had a better appreciation of "what goes on" in them. Some principals reported their intentions to come to grips with the curriculum in all areas of the school, particularly at levels where they had not taught before. Some were intending to use the expertise of teachers in their management teams to develop their own understandings, while others, on the advice of their mentors, were participating in Ministry of Education professional development contracts.

Several principals said that they intended to visit classrooms regularly and ask teachers to explain their programmes and the ways they work, although this had not been fully implemented at the time they were interviewed. The lecture on classroom observation was identified as important by several principals, and they were intending to focus on teachers' allocation of time to learning (rather than management) in planned classroom observations. It is unlikely that the induction programme was able to do more than convince principals of the need to provide feedback on teaching, since provision of sensitive and appropriate classroom feedback is a skill which develops over time, and which requires a sophisticated understanding of how to promote children's learning.

Principals generally did not appear to bring "big ideas" about teaching to the induction programme. The majority of principals appeared to restrict their discussion to the improvement of academic outcomes, and did not include wider perspectives on what students should gain from schooling, what they need to learn, how expertise develops, or fine-grained knowledge of ways in which teachers can foster student engagement in learning. Elmore (1996, p1) refers to this knowledge as the "core of educational practice".

> ...how teachers understand the nature of knowledge and the student's role in their learning and how these ideas about knowledge and learning are manifested in teaching and class work. The core also includes structural arrangements in schools such as the physical layout of classrooms, student grouping practices, teachers' responsibilities for groups of students and relations among teachers in their work with teaching as well as processes for assessing student learning and communicating it to students, teachers, parents, administrators and other interested parties.

While majority of principals had accepted the challenge to make a difference for children and young people in their schools, it was evident that most would require ongoing professional development to both broaden their perspectives and focus their efforts to enable them to make significant changes to the core of educational practice.

Teacher appraisal

Several principals considered that they had a better understanding of appraisal following the induction programme. Some had attended sessions where they learned more about the process, and how to do it, while one principal commented that she still needed to have had more time looking at appraisal and performance management systems. The following comment suggests that this principal has developed an appreciation of important elements of teacher appraisal:

> I think on this question it points to ensuring that the performance appraisal is conducted regularly, that it is done in consultation and conjunction with the teacher so that the process is non-threatening, that I as principal and the curriculum leader at school ensure that the teacher feels supported at all times and that where there are great successes, these need to be celebrated and taken further. Where there are shortcomings that we identify them, prioritise them and put in place strategies to ensure that these are treated as areas of need and that I support the process so that teachers get the feedback in terms of what they are doing, how well they are doing it and how they could do it better. (Male, primary)

We had the impression that principals may have had a fairly technical approach to the process, as they appeared to think that the use of performance standards would give them the information they needed to enhance performance. Only one principal explicitly queried whether the use of performance standards was likely to improve teaching. He said that "if you want true development as a teacher then you have to look at something that affects that person's teaching. What goes on in the classroom, what goes on in the head".

Evidence that students are better learners

While some principals thought that they were putting processes in place it was too early for them to be sure that their students were becoming better learners. Others were able to identify areas where gains were evident. They identified the following improvements:

- improved reading levels;
- increased levels in NCEA credits and achievement;
- data from numeracy project showed increase in children's confidence and self-assessment skills; and
- high academic performance for decile level of school in external examination results.

Some of the teaching principals did not appear to have developed a perspective that extended beyond their own classrooms, and one of these clearly depended on the input of an external consultant to gather and explain the meaning of data on student learning.

Participation in professional development contracts appeared to have supported principals' professional learning about student learning as these responses show:

> Most certainly. One is for students to be successful learners effective teaching has to take place. Students need to be part of the process in terms of understanding what it is they are learning, and to this end we use quite a few of Russell Bishop's ideas as well as incorporating ideas from Unlocking Formative Assessment and that is based on the works of

John Hattie and his team out of Auckland University. Our school is part of the R.A.P.U. initiative that is one of 18 schools involved in reporting, analysing, planning, and using student achievement data so we were quite lucky. We didn't just have an ERO review but we also had an independent review about our students' learning and this focused only on their achievement in literacy and more to do with reading and comprehension... In terms of evidence, yes, based on the evidence we collected on students' achievement in terms of being successful learners in the literacy component, we looked at information we gathered towards the end of term 1, plotted it against information gathered in term 3, and there is significant positive growth taking place with the teaching of reading and comprehension. At this stage my concern lies more with comprehension because I think we've got a fair bit of work to do in that regard next year. (Male, primary)

Absolutely. (We've) been doing ATOL. The teaching has not altered a great deal, but knowing what is being learned and how that is being tailored to fit the children has improved a great deal so that what is now being taught is far more focused and they are getting the message from me that less is more. Also, I am trying to cut down the number of areas that are being covered within the curriculum; let's do it better, broader, and less often, but for much longer time. (Male, primary)

Principals' discussion about assessment indicated that they saw it in fairly technical, "pre- and post-test" terms. This may reflect their lack of knowledge of more recently developed tools and assessment approaches. While most of the principals emphasised the use of external benchmarks to provide information about children's learning, one principal described a more child-oriented and metacognitive approach when asked how he would know his students were learning.

Well, they would know what they were learning and what they have learned. They would be able to talk how they managed to get to it so that their actual thinking is out there and they could show their thinking in some form; for instance, they may have written a plan of some form, or a diagrammatical plan of how they will go about their studies. Their thinking is being looked at as well. They are able to say where they were and where they are now. They can say they need to do this and either ask how they get the resource or where do they go to get the resource and they are realising that they don't know everything and that they are looking for help and realising if they get into a conversation that they can access the help. Also, that they would be working with other children, in most cases, that they would be able to co-operate with other children in order to get their ends met. (Male, primary)

Self-efficacy

Principals identified several areas where they considered that their self-efficacy had improved as a result of the First-Time Principals Programme. For many principals they had grown in self-assurance as the programme had assured them that they were doing the right things, as well as doing things right. This gave them the confidence to "stick to their guns" and be prepared to make and justify difficult decisions.

They had also learned that it was important to tackle issues when they were first identified rather than engaging in conflict avoidance strategies and hoping that problems would go away. Mentors

had played an important role in talking through difficult issues with principals and in confirming that they were addressing issues fairly and directly.

It is not surprising that principals needed to learn skills in managing their workloads, and identification of key priorities, given the breadth of their responsibilities. Several considered that the induction programme had given them a helpful approach to managing their time. The analogy of "rocks in the jar", that is scheduling the important things first, was identified as very helpful by several principals:

> Putting the rocks in the jar; the planning each week to plan your work and then you work to plan. Putting the important leaderships in there in violet time which is in the diary and that becomes in violet time and that can be when I am teaching and when I have important meetings which cannot be altered for anything else and so they happen. Everything else, the administration, happens around it. (Male, primary)

Building community relations

The HAYGroup competencies in this area are interpersonal insight, stakeholder awareness, and influencing others.

We have little information on whether the induction programme enhanced principals' interpersonal insight, although there are some indications that feedback from their mentors may have contributed to better self-knowledge and understanding.

Principals appeared to be well aware that they had to be responsive to a range of stakeholders in order to fulfil their roles. They were trying to learn about their communities and their relationships to their schools. In some cases they were prepared to challenge community perceptions (such as low expectations of students) by demonstrating that students could be successful in a range of areas. Some of the principals of the kura found that dealing with the "dynamic" of the whānau was at times difficult but also rewarding when "it worked". Issues arose equally because the principal was tāngata whenua or was not, or because the principal was already a member of the kura whānau or was not. These were issues and contexts that principals had to negotiate with skill and many needed the support of a mentor to do so.

Some principals considered that the induction programme had given them knowledge about how to work with their boards of trustees including "ensuring that meetings stay focused, that we adhere to the agenda and to constantly point out to board members that we are there serving the needs primarily of the school and its students". One principal had not realised that it was not prescribed to have a board meeting every month, and so had moved to two meetings a term.

Another principal described how he had worked "really hard" at upskilling his board, even travelling to out-of-town seminars with them to motivate them to contribute more in their roles as governors. He described it as "quite ironical that I train my employer, give them the skills so they can turn around and get rid of me".

Principals identified a range of approaches to their responsibilities under the Treaty, although principals of schools with low Māori enrolment generally did not think that it had much relevance to their schools. Those with significant numbers of Māori students appeared to be developing strategies to connect with their Māori communities, and ensure that Māori students were achieving well. A Northland principal provided a helpful description of the impact of the induction programme on his approach to the Treaty:

> One of the keynote speakers: I think they worked in a team of two, who talked to us about the Treaty of Waitangi. Quite beneficial. I must admit though that having been teaching in the North for quite a while I think I'm quite in tune with not just the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi but about establishing effective relationships with the Māori community, which I think is hugely meaningful and one of the most important things is getting to know every child, not just the Māori child, but every child. Through the child you get to know the family and in that way you ensure that the principles and practices relating to the Treaty are adhered to. (Male, primary)

The principals of kura kaupapa Māori all responded positively to the question about reflecting the Treaty of Waitangi in school approaches and practices, replying "it's not an issue for us", "it's just what we do". As one principal pointed out this may be an area they could contribute to further courses:

> I bet us in kura all get this question right but not all the others would. This seems to be one area where we might be on top and so why don't we teach the others about this in future courses? Of course it would make us have to think really hard about what we actually do but it would be worth it. (Female, primary)

7.   Key findings of Phase One

Key findings

The evaluation of the first phase suggests that the First-Time Principals Induction Programme has been positively received by the majority of the participants. It is important to acknowledge that an induction programme cannot, however well designed and delivered, equip participants with sufficient knowledge to be an effective principal, particularly in the area of pedagogical leadership. It can, however, provide a robust platform for principals to build such knowledge over time. The key questions posed by the Ministry of Education about the effectiveness of the First-Time Principals Induction Programme (*see* pp. 7–8) sought to interrogate the "platform" provided by the programme. The evaluation to date has elicited the following information in relation to these questions.

- The majority of principals believe that the induction programme is well tailored to their learning needs.
- The principals who have already engaged in significant prior academic educational leadership study consider that this should be acknowledged in the design and delivery of the programme. In particular they believe that there should not be a requirement for them to attend sessions where they already have expertise.
- Some principals on the induction programme have had very limited teaching experience, no relevant leadership, and little professional preparation for the responsibilities of a principal. The gulf between their knowledge and understanding and that of the other participants is obvious to themselves and to others in the programme. This gulf appears to be so wide that it cannot be bridged by an induction programme, however well designed. The issue is not with the induction programme but with their appointment to principal's positions before they are equipped to handle them without considerable external support.
- Mentors felt well prepared for their roles and were seen to have developed effective mentor relationships based on mutuality of trust and respect, and a mutual valuing of the relationship.

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- Mentors assistance with the day-to-day challenges of the principal's role was valued more by principals than their help with the portfolio related to a major teaching and learning goal for the school.

- Mentors were particularly valued by principals with limited local networks. They reduced the feelings of isolation, and helped principals to develop self-esteem.

- While mentors had the operational and interpersonal skills to assist principals they may require more in-depth training and ongoing support than the contract currently provides to assist principals to develop in areas such as curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation, and assessment of student learning that the programme seeks to promote.

- The residential and mentoring components of the programme have been received most positively by the principals. They appear to have been well aligned in that material introduced in the residentials is followed up by the mentors. This alignment strengthens the possibility that the information will be consistently reinforced.

- There was confusion amongst the principals and mentors about the purpose of the portfolio. If the preparation of a portfolio is to assist professional learning then a more convincing case about its potential to contribute to such learning needs to be presented.

- The residential and mentoring components of the programme improved principals' perceptions of their understanding and performance of the functional aspects of running a school.

- The induction programme appears to have developed principals' understandings of the importance of pedagogical leadership and the commitment to ensuring and improving learning outcomes for all the students in their school. This is an important outcome, and it needs to be supported by a policy environment that expects principals to continue their professional learning in this area.

- There was evidence that principals had developed knowledge and skills in the HAYGroup competencies of effective principalship.

- The online component appears to have had minimal impact on the principals' learning and behaviour.

- Principals found there to be few gaps in curriculum coverage, or areas that need more attention.

- The opportunity the induction programme provides first-time principals to meet together and to establish a network, a community of interest, should not be under-estimated.

- The project team and principals and mentors agree that the 2003 programme was too compressed to allow for reflection and practical application of learning between residentials.

- Principals expressed the wish for more "gaps" within the residentials to allow them to avoid exhaustion and information overload. It would also enable them to gain more benefits from networking opportunities.

8. Phase Two: Follow-up

Introduction

According to a review carried out for the National College of School Leadership (2003) "research and evaluation of leadership development programmes is generally weak or absent altogether". An EPPI-Centre Review (Bell, Bolam, and Cubillo, 2003) on the impact of school principals on student outcomes in six different countries, provided "some evidence that school leaders can have some effect on student outcomes, albeit indirectly" (p. 2). The New Visions for School Leaders programme in the UK (Bush and Glover, 2003) reports principals' perceptions of the impact of leadership development on their practice. The National College for Leadership has recently used Ofsted data to support the claim that leadership initiatives have contributed to increased "excellent/very good" evaluations of leadership and management in UK primary schools from 15 percent in 1996/1997 to 41 percent in 2002/2003, and in secondary schools from 19 percent in 1996/1997 to 48 percent in 2002/2003 (Du Quesnay, 2004).

This phase of the evaluation the 2003 First-Time Principals Induction Programme is not intended to provide evidence of principal effects on student outcomes, although it uses interview and documentary evidence to describe the approaches principals and teachers in their schools are using to improve student outcomes.

In August 2004, we re-interviewed the principals in our sample. Our intention was to identify which aspects of the overall induction programme these principals now considered to have assisted them most as a beginning principal, any information they now thought was missing from the programme, and the usefulness of the programme in relation to the planning and reporting process. We explored with them how they went about the process of planning and reporting and the importance they place on this aspect of their work.

We used two other sources of information as well as the phone interviews with principals. The first source was the planning and reporting documentation submitted by sample schools to the Ministry of Education. Our contract with the Ministry of Education required us to do this, and the University of Auckland project team indicated that this was a "core thrust" of the induction programme. At a meeting with NZCER and the Ministry of Education on June 15th 2004, the project team said it would expect the documentation to have a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in the chosen targets. It was agreed that the analysis would consider the quality of what was included in the documentation, and highlight relevant information about the approaches taken by schools.

The second source of information was the ERO reports of the seven schools where 2004 ERO reports were available. Because ERO does not use explicit ratings of leadership and management such as those used by Ofsted, we looked for comments reflecting ERO's views of the principals' school leadership and management. We have used these reports in conjunction with our own data to create vignettes illustrating principals' approaches to leadership and management in a range of school contexts.

It is important to acknowledge that this is a descriptive study that cannot identify causal relationships. Our evaluation is intended to provide insights about how this group of principals approaches their work, but cannot provide "evidence" of the effectiveness or otherwise of the induction programme. As Du Quesnay, CEO of the UK National College for School Leadership, points out "leadership is highly contextual and dependent on the circumstances in which one finds oneself" (p. 12, 2004). A number of factors, in addition to the induction programme, will impact on how well principals are able to foster environments that support teachers' ongoing learning and help them to target the learning needs of their students. As identified in the first section of the report, all principals faced significant challenges in their induction year. In addition to demonstrating that their school makes a difference to children's learning principals have responsibility for financial, property, staffing, appraisal, student discipline, and other administrative functions. Attention to these functions has the potential to deflect their efforts from engaging in the sorts of leadership practices advocated in the Ministry of Education's LEADSPACE site.[3] This is more likely to be the case for the group of first-time principals who did not bring previous professional and management skills to their positions, and/or those in small isolated schools or schools with previous poor ERO reports.

It is also likely that wider capability issues may inhibit first-time principals' use of evidence-based approaches to the improvement of student learning. New Zealand educational communities are not yet strong in their use of evidence to inform and judge the impact of practice. There is recent evidence that educators as a group do not have strengths in the appropriate interpretation and use of data. Timperley, Parr, and Higginson (2003), in their evaluation of the New Zealand Literacy Leadership Enhancement Programme, found that there was limited data on improved student learning despite perceptions that the programme had enhanced student achievement. In their view, reasons for the lack of evidence were "complex and should not be interpreted as a failure of the literacy leadership initiative" (p. 105). The authors suggested that a possible reason for the lack of evidence may have been that the facilitators lacked the prerequisite skills to enable them "to guide schools in the effective utilisation of evidence to inform and improve practice" (p. 107). They suggest that the literacy leadership programme may have overestimated the facilitators' capacity in this area, and point out that "the skills involved in data collection, analysis and interpretation are complex" (p. 26).

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[3] For example: the Learning and Teaching Tool, an online audit tool from NCREL (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory). Available on:
http://www.leadspace.govt.nz/leadership/leading_learning/

This view is supported by evidence that a considerable proportion of clusters of trained personnel providing short-term additional support to teachers of groups of children and young people with particular learning needs are unable to provide evidence of improved student outcomes. Recent ERO reviews (2004a, 2004b) report that 37.5 percent of geographically defined clusters of Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour and 25 percent of Resource Teacher: Literacy provide little or no evidence of improvements to student achievement. A further study by Parr, Aikman, Glasswell, and Irving (2004) showed that few schools systematically gathered information about the impact of new programmes or resources. These studies suggest the collection of such data is not straightforward, and that the appropriate use of data within educational contexts is not yet part of routine practice.

Timperley and Parr (2004) consider that using evidence for professional learning emphasises assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning (p. 13). Timperley and Parr suggest that the key question which is asked in the former approach emphasises the effectiveness of teaching on students' learning, while the latter asks "how well are my [our] students doing?" We would expect that documentation for reporting purposes would demonstrate answers to both questions.

Our evaluation will attempt to provide a picture of how this group of new principals has approached the planning and reporting task, as well as providing some indication of the quality of their documentation.

Methodology

Phone interviews of principals

The research team devised a draft set of interview questions on 6 August 2004 and these were sent to the Ministry of Education for comment. A meeting was held with the Programme Director and Associate Director of the FTP Induction Programme on 13 August to discuss the draft interview questions. The final draft was sent to the project team on 24 August, and at the request of the Associate Director, an additional question was added to the phone interview.

All principals were contacted by mail and asked to return a signed consent form if they were prepared to participate in a 15–20 minute follow-up phone interview at the end of August, and to send us copies of their school's planning and reporting documentation if available. Thirty-three principals indicated that they were prepared to participate. We then followed up with a phone call to find an interview time suitable for each principal. All principals were mailed copies of the interview questions at least a week before the scheduled phone interview.

Planning and reporting processes and analyses

Ministry of Education expectations

This evaluation focuses on the principals' roles in the planning and reporting process. However, it should be acknowledged that planning and reporting is the responsibility of the board of which the principal is a member.

The Ministry of Education website notes:

> New Zealand state schools are required to undertake a process of self review which involves setting goals and objectives for student outcomes and describing these for the school community in an annually updated charter. In its annual report the school communicates its progress against these objectives. From 2004, and each year after, copies of both documents will be sent to the Ministry of Education. In 2003 schools needed to consider the new requirements because the 2004 report should refer to 2003 objectives.[4]

According to the website the planning and reporting process is intended to enable schools to make a professional judgement about how to proceed with teaching on the basis of the information collected. This includes knowing what students are learning, and pinpointing individuals or groups that need additional resources, further teaching, and/or extension. It is expected that schools will analyse and use assessment information to improve future learning programmes. This allows schools to know how well its students are learning and achieving in relation to its own goals and benchmarks and national goals and benchmarks (where they are available). At the secondary school level assessment also serves a qualification purpose.

"Targets" are intended to provide firm measures against which progress can be evaluated. The Ministry of Education website notes that "schools that have taken a school-wide approach when setting targets have found they become the focus of regular professional discussion amongst staff, and a stimulus for sharing good practice".

Schools decide for themselves how many targets are reported. "It depends on issues like the complexity of the issues being addressed, the size of the school, and the capacity of the staff to deal with many issues. Many successful development plans have involved very few targets that the whole staff can contribute to" (MOE website). We have interpreted this to mean that the MOE expects targets to be meaningful, and if a limited number are chosen, they would be expected to involve data from more than one class group.

The targets do not have to be expressed as percentages. Schools can use any descriptors that usefully measure whether progress has been made. "In practice, many targets do involve trying to increase the number or proportion of students who reach or surpass a certain standard of performance or reduce the number of occurrences of incidents (such as bullying). Numbers or

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[4] Ministry of Education: *Planning and Reporting - Frequently asked questions*. Last updated July 2004. Available at: http://minedu.govt.nz

proportions have been found to be a useful way of describing targets and 'before and after outcomes'"(MOE website).

The website makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the principal and the professional staff to develop the annual plan, set targets, and report on progress toward those targets. However the development of the charter is a joint responsibility and charter development and target setting is expected to be done by school staff and the board. The new legislation now requires that this should be done with a specific focus on student achievement.

As part of the 2003 annual report all schools are required to include an "analysis of variance" in which the board describes for the community how the school has gone about addressing the school's priorities outlined in its charter, and shows how successful this approach has been.

There is no set format for the content of the analysis of variance. For most schools the format used for the analysis of variance will reflect the format of the charter and the nature of the targets set.

Robyn Baker also met with Tim Wake, Strategic Projects, Network and Schools Performance, National Operations, Ministry of Education. We were informed that this is the first year for there to be any requirement for schools to provide documentation of performance against specific targets although they were expected to set targets in 2003. Schools should, therefore, have analysed their progress towards last year's targets as part of their 2004 annual reports. While this documentation was not due to the Ministry of Education until 31 May 2004, schools were advised to forward copies of their updated 2004 charters as early in the year as possible to enable them to take advantage of feedback or advice that Ministry of Education personnel may be able to provide.

The Ministry undertook to send us copies of whatever documentation the sample schools had submitted by the end of August 2004.

Information from the First-Time Principals Induction Programme

Information about the induction programme's planning and reporting component was provided by the First-Time Principals Programme team. We were given copies of the keynote PowerPoint presentation[5] and facilitators' workshop notes on Curriculum Leadership, Planning and Reporting in Residential Two.

The keynote address presented the rationale for the new planning and reporting requirements (intention to raise achievement and reduce disparity), and the expectation that schools will: gather comprehensive information about student achievement; identify specific areas for improvement; implement programmes to lift performance; and report on progress each year. Examples of appropriate targets were:

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[5]   Saunders, C., & Pearce, G. (2003). Planning and Reporting. Keynote address 14 July, 2003, First-Time Principals Induction Programme.

90 percent of students reading at or above chronological age;

50 percent Level 1 NCEA students to achieve 80 credits or more;

to reduce non-attendance levels by 2 percent; and

teaching programmes will reflect cultural norms of Māori students.

Effective planning and reporting was described as that which:

- directly reflects the school's annual plan;
- describes and reviews progress towards the achievement of each target;
- includes an "analysis of variance", defined as "did we meet, not meet, or exceed target(s)?"; and
- determines reasons for the achievement/non-achievement of targets and indicates "where to from here?"

In addition the presenters provided clear examples of the process as used in their own schools.

According to the evaluation conducted by the project team, principals (n=154 out of a total of 186 principals) evaluated this keynote quite highly (median of 5 with 7 being the highest possible rating).

The skills workshop linked to the keynote provided an opportunity for participants to work through a planning and reporting process in a supported context and to "utilise the personal practical knowledge existing in the groups" (FTP workshop material). Within a 1-hour timeframe, participants were required to work in groups of three to select a strategic goal, state the reason why it was appropriate, consider what evidence or data would be appropriate to inform this choice of goal, write an action plan related to one or more objectives, and write the first part of a report with expected outcomes/targets. The 125 principals who evaluated this session provided an overall median rating of 5, also indicating quite high satisfaction. There were further opportunities for enhancing principals' knowledge in relation to planning and reporting, such as the keynote "Collecting Quality Information".

Analysis of documentation process

On 5 August Robyn Baker and Marie Cameron met to design a draft framework for analysis of each school's documentation. On 6 August Robyn Baker, Marie Cameron, Susan Lovett, and Linda Sinclair (a member of the NZCER assessment team) met for 5 hours. At the time the Ministry of Education had sent us documentation from 28 schools.

We independently assessed five sets of documentation using the framework, and compared our analyses to develop a shared understanding of the analysis process. Each team member then made a preliminary assessment of the adequacy of four or five sets of the remaining schools' documentation. In developing our judgements we were mindful that this was a first attempt for these principals. The framework we used related to the documents that were made available to us. In many cases this was limited to the school's annual plan, so the framework focused on how

schools selected their targets, the reasons for their choice of targets, what evidence they intended to collect, the assessment tools they used, and how they analysed and interpreted the evidence collected. We also looked for information about what the schools planned to do next, based on their interpretation of their evidence.

Judgements of documentation from the 28 schools were guided by the framework outlined in Table 7.

Table 7   NZCER framework for judgements of planning and reporting documentation

Evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting (Rated 3)	Some evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting (Rated 2)	Limited evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting (Rated 1)
Targets show justification for inclusion (i.e., links to strategic, or school plan).	There is some rationale for the targets provided.	No rationale for the targets included.
Meaningful and measurable targets and plans are identified.	Targets are identified, but they are likely to be very narrow and restricted to a small group of students. Plans for achievement of targets may be missing or unclear.	Targets are vague or not identified.
Assessment tools are identified and are appropriate for the measurement of target.	Assessment tools are identified.	No assessment tools are identified.
The analysis is cross-referenced to baseline data and/or national benchmark data.	The analysis compares pre-post results.	Anecdotal or uninterpretable data.
Analysis of variance discusses outcomes achieved in comparison with outcomes planned. Reasons for variance are plausible.	Analysis of variance describes outcomes achieved, but may not explore reasons for variance. Or, reasons for variance may refer to student characteristics (e.g. "ability") rather then to school variables.	Analysis of variance missing or not able to be interpreted.
Links between evidence and future school goals and/or teaching are clearly evident.	Links between evidence and future school goals and/or teaching are suggested.	No links made.

We were joined by Diane Leggett, principal of Karori Normal School, and interviewer for six participants, for the afternoon session. Diane confirmed our process, and participated in the design of the draft questions for the telephone interviews.

The Ministry of Education sent us the sample schools' 2003 planning and reporting material that had been submitted to its offices by the beginning of August. Some schools also sent us copies of their documentation. Table 8 below shows the material we received.

Table 8   Planning and reporting documentation

2004 Charter	Annual report for 2003 year	2003 targets	2004 targets	Schools without documentation
13	15	28	14	6

During September all of the documentation was fully analysed, and then reviewed alongside the interview data, to determine if any patterns could be discerned.

Results

Principal interviews

We conducted telephone interviews with 32 of the 34 principals in our sample. One of the kura principals declined to be interviewed, and a principal from another kura, despite her agreement, was unable to be contacted, although numerous phone calls were made.

At the time of our interviews one principal had just resigned, and another intended to resign. The first was for family and health reasons; the second because of unique circumstances in her school which left her carrying the full responsibility for the school. They both agreed to be interviewed although the information from both interviews is incomplete. Another principal had been employed in a new principal's position, and he was interviewed.

The interviews with principals who had prepared their responses prior to the interview tended to be short (within the 15–20-minute time period we had anticipated) while interviews stretched to 1-hour for those who were considering their answers for the first time. Some principals who had prepared their responses were eager to talk about their work in their schools, and their interviews were also longer than we had anticipated.

This section first reports some general information about this group of first-time principals. Then we report on how principals now judge the usefulness of the FTP Induction programme, and their views of their future learning needs.

Principals' views of their work now

All principals indicated that they were working long hours. Table 9 illustrates that most principals estimate they work between 55 and 70 hours a week. While they report that they try to prioritise their work there is still much that they have to do, particularly in rural schools: "The reality is the principal does clean the pool because of the budget, and reconfigures the computers because there is no-one else to do it."

Table 9   **Hours worked by principals each week (n=32)**

Hours worked a week	Responses
80–90	1
70–80	4
60–70	12
55–60	11
50	4

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Despite the long hours, the majority of principals appeared to be positive about their work. Three principals, quoted below, volunteered positive comments about their work when asked if they had any other general comments to make. While two of these principals had brought relevant prior experiences to their roles, the third had been appointed from a basic scale teaching position. All three demonstrated evidence of high-quality planning and reporting in their documentation and interview:

> After a year I am still as passionate as I was when I began. I am loving the job and its challenges. When you see on paper what you do it's huge. I try not to look at my job description too often! (Female, intermediate school)

> This job is still fun. I still enjoy every day. There is no end of variation in a decile one school. There are huge pressures and stresses, and some sleepless nights. When you take on huge issues you definitely pay for it. I can see why people duck them. I am looking forward to a bigger school with more structural support. (Male, primary)

> The induction programme was an excellent learning environment. Since then I realise that I am more informed than some of the principals who have been in the job for several years.... We may be new to the job but we are quite well informed. (Female, primary)

Two principals were somewhat less positive, although in both cases they appeared to be leading and managing their schools effectively. One principal judged that his second year as a principal has been " a lot harder". He compared this to the work of a beginning teacher:

> It's a bit like the first year of teaching. If you can keep your head above water you think you are doing OK. [Before I was a principal] I was all philosophical and idealistic. When you actually have to do it so much more comes into play. You are responsible for 20 people, all with their own problems. How hard do you push? It's very much about the people side of it (Male, primary).

The other, a secondary principal in a rural area, had found that staffing difficulties had made his work much more difficult. Two "great" beginning teachers had left for "more exciting lives once they had their full registration", and the school had "got no pay-off for supporting them". He said that it is "very draining to drag along the demotivated and spiritless bulk of the staff". This principal questioned the sustainability of his position.

Sources of support

Twenty-three of the principals identified local principals as a main source of support, and seven identified College of Education advisers. Four principals met regularly with other first-time principals. Three were still receiving ongoing support from their 2003 FTP mentors and three identified the Ministry of Education and staff within their schools as key supports. One school still had a Commissioner who had been appointed prior to the appointment of the principal and the Ministry of Education had appointed a limited statutory manager to another in 2004. Both principals were appreciative of the support provided by these individuals. Two principals identified the major source of support as their families.

Most beneficial aspects of the FTP Induction Programme

The principals were asked to identify the three most useful things they learnt from the FTP Programme. Only areas mentioned by more than one principal have been included in Table 10.

Table 10 **Principals' views of the three most useful things learnt from the FTP Induction Programme**

Category	Number of responses (n=32)
Networking with other principals	13
Knowledge about effective leadership	13
"Nuts and bolt" (budgeting, staffing, and/or Sue reports)	10
Professional communication skills	7
Learning conversations	7
Appraisal/performance management	6
Research knowledge	5
Planning and reporting	2
Ways to access information and support	3
Other	12

Principals' responses indicate that the key focus of the programme — leadership — was recalled as being most helpful to them in their roles as new principals. Thirteen principals also included networking in their responses to this question. The importance of networking suggests that the FTP Induction Programme contributed to the establishment of a professional community for this group of principals in which they shared ideas and provided support for each other. In some cases the networking links were reported to have grown and developed since the end of the programme.

Additional information, knowledge or skill development principals thought should have been included in the programme

The principals were asked to identify any additional information, knowledge, or skill development they now thought should have been included in the FTP programme. Only areas mentioned by more than one principal have been included in Table 11.

Table 11 **Additional information, knowledge, or skill development suggested by principals**

Category	Number of responses (n = 32)
None	13
Finance and property	8
Legal issues	3
Other	8

It is clear that almost half of the principals considered that the induction programme contained all the content they believed was important to them in their roles as new principals. The only areas identified by a sizeable proportion of the principals were finance and property, both complex areas where they were unlikely to have had significant prior experience, and which cannot be

fully addressed in an induction programme. For example, one school was given $10 million in additional property funding, the management of which took significant amounts of principal time. The legal issues identified by principals also appeared to be complex and to require specific specialist advice rather than general input.

Other individual responses related to principals' particular personal needs or to their specific school contexts. For example, an inexperienced principal who did not appear to have resolved issues identified in the first interview, thought that there should have been more information on all of the sources of support available to novice principals. Another principal, who, because of the unique circumstances in her school was left to deal with a crisis completely on her own, thought that the induction programme should have included more on crisis management. Another considered that the programme should have made a personnel management electronic package available to participants, even though he was aware that no such package is currently available.

How helpful was the existing school planning and reporting documentation?

Table 12 **Helpfulness of existing school documentation (n=30)**

Not helpful/didn't exist	Helpful	Very helpful
23	5	2

Twenty-three principals found little existing documentation in their schools to assist them in relation to planning and reporting. The apparent lack of existing evidence on student achievement in the majority of sample schools suggests that previous capability in relation to using evidence was not well developed. Several principals who had been appointed during 2003 had to work with targets that had been identified prior to their appointment, and one told us that as she had no input in writing them she did not have any ownership, nor did she consider that they were appropriate targets. Some of the principals who thought that existing data was helpful or very helpful had been appointed from within the school, so they may have had more direct involvement with previous planning and reporting processes.

Principals' views on the extent that the FTP Induction Programme assisted them with the planning and reporting process

Table 13 **Principals' views on the extent that the FTP Induction Programme assisted them with the planning and reporting process**

Category	Responses (n=32)
Very helpful	8
Helpful/somewhat helpful	10
Not very helpful	12
Not answered	2

Over half of the respondents acknowledged that the FTP induction programme had helped them with the planning and reporting process. Two principals did not provide answers to this question. One, from an independent school, said that there was no requirement for independent schools to submit planning and reporting material to the Ministry of Education, and the other principal had an abbreviated interview that did not include this question. Most principals interpreted this question as referring to the residential programme as only two principals commented on the contribution of NPO or mentoring. This finding aligns with the high levels of satisfaction reported by those who attended the planning and reporting sessions during the induction programme.

Principals' views of the helpfulness of the FTP programme in relation to planning and reporting do not necessarily constitute a valid measure of the quality of this aspect of the programme. For example, although 12 principals did not consider that the induction programme had been helpful to them in terms of planning and reporting only four were critical about aspects of the quality of the planning and reporting sessions. Nine principals indicated that they had not attended some or all sessions on planning and reporting, six thought they knew how to do this already, some couldn't remember where they had learnt these skills, and a number felt "planning and reported out" or overwhelmed and confused by the different information they had received from different sources of external "help".

We explored this issue further by analysing principals' comments in the light of our assessments of their understanding of planning and reporting. (*See* Table 7, p. 75 for details of the criteria used.) Our intention was to ascertain if there were any patterns discernable in the comments or quality of documentation in the three groups of principals: those who rated the FTP input as very helpful (Table 14); those who rated it as helpful or fairly helpful (Table 15); and those who did not think that the FTP programme had assisted them with planning and reporting (Table 16).

Table 14 **Comments from principals who rated FTP input on planning and reporting as very helpful**

Principals' comment about contribution of FTP Induction Programme in relation to planning and reporting requirements	NZCER rating of school documentation
Timely and informative.	3
Useful in the emphasis given to systematically collecting the data/evidence, reviewing it, responding to it in next annual goals.	3
Helped a lot. The Parnell Primary model was really excellent. I changed my model entirely after seeing this, found it fantastic.	3
Very helpful. Gave examples of targets. Worked on my own targets in the workshops.	3
Very good. It's a new process and helpful to have examples of how other principals work. How they started with their staff on the journey, ownership by staff and input to drive the process.	3
Really good. Gave me a greater understanding of the requirements.	2
Gave an overview of the principal's role. Showed how the jigsaw parts fit in place. The mentor helped me on-site.	2
Considerable help. The two guys came across as straight shooters. "This is what you do and how you do it." Matter of fact workshops to follow really gelled understanding well.	1

Most principals who rated the planning and reporting input as very helpful were able to demonstrate their understanding of their school's priorities, the evidence or issues that led to these priorities, and measure and analyse their progress towards their 2003 targets. They had all reported their schools' progress towards the achievement of their 2003 targets to the Ministry of Education. The comments of the those with acceptable data suggested that they had grasped that planning and reporting was to be useful to *them* in their own schools, rather than looking for a recipe for meeting external requirements. All of these principals reported that they attended all of the sessions relevant to planning and reporting. This strongly suggests that the induction programme has assisted this group of new principals to incorporate thoughtful data collection and analysis in their approaches to their work, and to use the feedback provided to pinpoint areas in need of improvement.

Table 15 **Comments from principals who judged the contribution of the FTP Induction Programme to their planning and reporting to be helpful or fairly helpful**

Principals' comment about contribution of FTP Induction Programme in relation to planning and reporting requirements	NZCER rating of school documentation
Confirmed things a bit more. I had been through the process with my school. There are still issues about how we report this stuff to the board.	3
Targets were mentioned often. Provision was there if people needed the information. (Did not attend Planning and reporting sessions.)	2
A little bit, but mostly have learned on the job. Have had help from the MoE, Multiserve and my principal cluster group.	2
Gave me a bit more awareness.	2
I already knew about the process but it supported my prior knowledge.	2
Of some help. Not a lot. Did not recognise some of the elements at the time.	1
Started me on the way. My cluster group gave more support. The MOE Roadshow gave more support. (Did not attend all sessions.)	1
Somewhat helpful. Already had had previous experience.	Documentation not sent to MoE. Has done it but does not intend to send in until the end of 2004.
Unclear about whether it helped. I found it difficult to reflect about how to implement it on my return to school. (Went to the keynote, but not sure about the options.)	Documentation not sent to MoE.
Helpful, but on the course I felt I was lacking in confidence about doing it. In May this year I got a mentor from the MOE to help me. All I needed was someone to reaffirm me in my own school with my own documentation that I was on the right track.	Documentation not sent to MoE.

Only one of the principals in this group showed evidence of acceptable planning and reporting documentation. This principal and three others who demonstrated some understanding of the process shared the view that the induction programme supported their prior knowledge. Three appeared to have lacked confidence in their ability to undertake the planning and reporting process, with one not able to demonstrate this understanding and three who have yet to send their reports to the Ministry of Education. Most of this group reported that they attended sessions relevant to planning and reporting.

Table 16 Principals who did not think that the FTP Induction Programme assisted them with their planning and reporting process

Comment	NZCER rating of school documentation
It didn't because I was well into it. I gave advice to others.	3
Not useful. I can remember one keynote but was disappointed with it. People talked about targets and goals but I already had mine sorted out. The session was academic rather than practical. The why of having planning and reporting rather than how to do it. (Attended the keynote only.)	3
Very little. At the time there was an overdose of information on planning and reporting. We were planning and reported out. (Did not attend all sessions.)	3
Not largely with planning and reporting. They have given us indicators. Could possibly have been more comprehensive. I worked with data sent by someone else. Would have been good if there had been a session by the MOE with "This is the minimum criteria you need to meet to ensure that your material is acceptable. "I think it would be better to have the MOE people as well as principals as presenters as it is the MOE who have to look at them.	3
It didn't. The one session on it was ineffective. It was too late and I already set it in motion. The presenters, two of them, did not give details, not specific enough. I only remember one keynote. I didn't attend any others. I had already attended the MOE Roadshow on planning and reporting. It was the same presenter used for FTP. (Did not attend all sessions.)	2
They should have explained more about variances. (Did not attend all sessions.)	2
Not really useful. Over that period the message kept changing. Three different people offered to help but all gave different messages.	2
Don't remember that we did a whole lot on planning and reporting. I don't think it's a wonderful tool for improving student learning. Other things would have more impact. (Can't remember if attended these sessions.)	2
Not al all useful. I felt overwhelmed at the induction course. I felt it was too hard, but I now realise it isn't . I have discovered that bigger schools are doing less than us as a small school. Have had useful talks with local principals who have had feedback from the MoE.	2
None. Already doing it in my previous role as DP. I was well underway.	2
Only touched the surface. Would have like another session in my second year [of principalship]. (Can't remember if attended all sessions.)	1
Limited value. Main benefit was getting above the swamp type of thing and the insistence on data/action.	1

All of the principals in this group had submitted their planning and reporting documentation to the Ministry of Education. Only two principals, one who could not recall if she attended any sessions on planning and reporting, appeared to have limited understanding of the requirements of planning and reporting. Three of the four principals who were able to demonstrate an acceptable

understanding of planning and reporting requirements appeared not to rate the FTP input highly because they judged that they already had those skills, as did two others who demonstrated some understanding. Half of the principals in this group had not attended some/all of the sessions on planning and reporting, so little weight can be placed on their views of this component of the programme.

Principals' views of their future learning needs

Principals were asked about their future learning needs to identify areas for future development. Their responses are shown in Table 17.

Table 17 **Principals' views of their future learning needs**

Category	Responses
Personal management skills	12
Complete/gain qualifications	11
Leadership/management skills	7
Curriculum development	4
Systems in general	3
Improving student achievement	3
Improving teaching/pedagogy	3
Progression to larger school	2
Governance	2
Accounting and finances	2

The major area of continuing need identified by 12 principals related to personal management skills such as managing their workload, identifying priorities, being more assertive, and using a better decision-making process. There was an awareness of the need to develop a life-work balance or the job would become unsustainable. Three principals pointed out that their families had been adversely affected by the long hours required to keep on top of work demands. They also wanted to be able to devote more time to the aspects of their work that were important though not urgent, such as professional reading, rather than allowing their time to be consumed by the urgent tasks.

Eleven of the principals felt that finishing their qualifications would both enhance their future career prospects and develop knowledge that would assist them in their work.

Seven identified a need to extend their leadership and management skills, such as strategic planning, developing others, reporting to the board, and developing community links. Those whom we judged to be coping less well, had targets such as developing a filing system or "getting more familiar with Ministry requirements" or "knowing myself as a leader".

Four principals identified the need to have a better understanding of curriculum and of ways in which curriculum content can be taught effectively. Three of these principals were from secondary or area schools. Three principals intended to look at curriculum more broadly in the light of knowledge of Australian initiatives and the New Zealand Curriculum stocktake.

It was a little surprising that only three principals recognised a need to know more about raising student achievement or how to improve teaching, since these processes are at the heart of school improvement. It may be that awareness of the complexity of these challenges develops at a later stage of their development. One principal said that it would be 'business as usual" until he got on top of all the administrative tasks he had to catch up on. "Once that's done, I will focus on pedagogy and metacognition".

Three principals felt that it would assist them in their roles if they had an outside person, rather like their mentor to talk through the hard issues. One principal referred to this as "professional supervision" rather like that available in other professions. He said

> You end up with your head in a muddle when there is so much going on. Talking to someone helps with clarification and prioritising. (Male, primary)

Summary

We gained a strong impression from the interviews that the majority of this group of principals felt more confident in their leadership abilities and were building on their previous knowledge and skills. Most of those who began their principalship with little prior experience and learning now appeared to be developing the knowledge, values, and behaviours required in their schools. All of the younger principals who had been appointed with little in the way of management experience appeared to have taken advantage of opportunities available to them and to be on a trajectory of incremental professional learning.

Four male principals, in addition to the two women who had resigned or intended to resign, did not appear to have got on top of the demands they were facing.

Only a handful of principals appeared to have lifted their eyes beyond the pressing and immediate at this stage in their development. This group of principals was passionate about their own learning and that of their students. They talked about moving beyond collecting data just as a technical exercise and towards a deeper understanding of "how to effect really significant change at the classroom level". They were able to articulate a strong sense of educational vision that underpinned their leadership and management practices.

Analysis of schools' planning and reporting documentation

As noted in Table 8, p. 75, we received nine complete sets of planning and reporting documentation that included charters, strategic plans, targets, assessment and analysis. We therefore decided to focus on data from the 28 schools that had set achievement targets for 2003, although we were not always able to track them backwards to see the reasons for their selection. Where we had access to 2004 achievement targets we examined these to see if there had been any development of understanding since 2003.

In evaluating the quality of the documentation we used the criteria identified in Table 7, p. 75 and made an overall rating based on our professional judgement.

Table 18 shows our ratings of the planning and reporting of 2003 targets for the different sector groups.

Table 18 **NZCER ratings of 2003 school planning and reporting of targets by sector groups**

Sector	NZCER ratings			No data reported
	3	2	1	
Primary	7	8	3	2
Intermediate	1			1
Kura			2	2
Secondary	1	3	2	
Area/composite	1			1
Total	10	11	7	6

The following section identifies the areas that schools as a group decided to focus on, and makes some general observations about the targets that were chosen. This is followed by our analysis of the quality of the schools' documentation. It is presented in three groups: documentation showing evidence of an acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting; documentation with some evidence of an acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting, and documentation with limited evidence of an acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting. For each group we have examined:

- the focus of its achievement targets (e.g. problem solving in numeracy);
- the evidence used to inform its reporting targets (e.g. assessment information);
- the targets that were chosen;
- who was involved in setting of the targets;
- the target group;
- the resources/interventions that were used to support achievement of the targets;
- the nature of evidence used to measure progress towards achievement of targets;
- the outcomes; and
- the analysis and interpretation of the evidence.

In addition to each schools' documentation, we used principals' accounts of the planning and reporting process to get a sense of how the targets were chosen and set (who was involved), what they did to support the achievement of their targets (resources, teacher support, professional development), and how they used their data.

Focus of reporting targets

The following table illustrates the focus of reporting targets, and the number of schools that selected these targets. The majority of schools had one or two foci, although some had up to five.

Table 19 **Focus of schools' 2003 reporting targets**

Focus of reporting targets	Number of schools
Literacy (including reading)	21
Written language/spelling	2
Oral language	2
Numeracy achievement	9
NCEA passes	4
Māori achievement	3
Bursary results	1
Attendance	1
Christian attitudes	1
Bullying	1
Behaviour	1
Individual goals for each child	1

Following the submission of the first draft of this report, the Ministry of Education asked us if we were able to provide further information on the Māori and Pasifika dimensions in schools' Planning and Reporting material. We reviewed the documentation and make the following observations. We did not have full strategic plans for all schools, so more schools may have included these dimensions than is apparent from the material. About a third of the strategic plans referred to plans to consult with Māori, and to make their schools more inclusive of Māori aspirations for their children's education. These tended to be reflected in statements such as: "In xxx School we believe in accepting cultural differences, reflecting on the nature on multi-culturalism in class activities, and being involved in Te Reo and other languages." Such statements are difficult to translate into policies and practices that are likely to impact positively on the achievement of Māori and Pasifika students. As Table 19 shows, only three schools identified specific and measurable targets for Māori achievement.

The Ministry also asked us about the focus that the Induction Programme placed on Māori and Pasifika achievement. We consider that Māori achievement was addressed in the planning and reporting keynote. This had a focus on improving educational outcomes for Māori students, emphasising strategies such as working with the Māori community to plan, set targets for, and achieve better outcomes for Māori students; ensuring that classroom programmes reflected the cultural norms of Māori students; involving Māori families in their children's education; incorporating a bicultural perspective into school decision making, and creating an inclusive culture that recognises the language and culture of all students. Examples of these strategies were provided, as were possible targets such as "The percentage of Māori students gaining 80 credits in NCEA Level 1 (35 percent in 2002) increases to 50 percent," and "Absence levels of Māori students (currently 17 percent) fall to school wide level (currently 11 percent)."

We therefore conclude that the induction programme appears to have emphasised the achievement of Māori students, and other factors may have resulted in specific targets relating to Māori achievement not being selected by schools. We were told by several principals that it was their

understanding that they were required to report on one target only in 2003. While this was not the case, it appears to have been a common perception.

In general principals appeared to have looked for targets that were easy to measure and where they thought they would be able to demonstrate success. This was probably a realistic beginning, given that in most cases there was little existing data to build on. The choice of targets, and the way they were expressed, reflected the models they had been shown. In many cases schools began with the targets themselves, rather than deriving the targets from problems identified from an analysis of assessment evidence. It was probably too early for many principals to focus at this level of detail while they were settling into their new roles, and before they had begun the induction programme.

Two principals said that thought it was premature to set targets before the school and its community had devised its vision and strategic plan. One of these principals said that as there were no goals or specific targets in place, nor the data to establish any, 2003 became a year for review and development. As a result of this review a new charter was established for 2004 and beyond.

Analysis of assessment evidence

The ability to make meaningful connections between two data points depends on a comprehensive understanding of what is being measured, as well as appreciation of the strengths and limitations of the measures used. In most cases the data did not lend itself to deep analysis leading schools to merely comment on their collected evidence.

The next section describes the key features of planning and reporting documentation that was judged to be at an acceptable standard. It also includes three vignettes of schools in this category.

Evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting

There were ten schools that were able to demonstrate an acceptable understanding of the Ministry of Education requirements for planning and reporting. This group included seven primary schools, one intermediate, one secondary, and one area school. Schools from deciles one to seven were in this category, and the principals included those with previous relevant experience and those who had been appointed from scale A positions.

Targets

The majority of these schools focused on literacy and numeracy, and their targets typically had been identified from some information that indicated a need for improvement. The link between this information and the target was not always clear. Targets were chosen usually by the principal and the senior management team in large schools, and by all teachers when the target involved the whole school. These targets, while usually identified by the school staff, were frequently discussed with the BOT, and jointly agreed upon. In practice school tended to chose literacy and

numeracy targets reflecting government "press" and professional development in these areas. Examples of targets for this group are:

> 60 percent of Year Nine students will achieve a literacy level equal to or above their CA age.

> Raise comprehension and decoding skills of targeted students. Comprehension: By one stanine level or by at least 20 percent. Decoding: At least two guided or one-month incremental level(s) closer to the median score/level for their peers than before the initiative began.

> To raise spelling levels across the school.

Three schools had numeracy targets although these were more narrowly defined than the literacy targets:

> 75 percent of Year eight students will gain mastery (80 percent) of basic facts.

> By the end of Year 9 80 percent of students will be able to recall their times tables up to 12.

> Raise students' ability and understanding of basic facts and computation.

Both the secondary area schools had targets related to student achievement in NCEA:

> At least 50 percent of all students (including Māori) to achieve 80 credits or more at first attempt.

Two principals told us that they had deliberately chosen targets that were easy to measure as this was their first experience in working with achievement data and they did not want the exercise to become overwhelming. Schools also chose targets that could be achieved in a short-time frame, and where they would be likely to demonstrate improvement. Two principals indicated that they had additional more important areas on which they were focussing, but they were not yet willing to submit them to public scrutiny, so they did not become reporting targets. In one case the principal wanted the teachers involved to be able to experiment, without having to pin themselves down to goals they were not yet clear about. The other principal said that he was not prepared to choose a more ambitious target where the risk of failure was high.

Some schools chose targets that they were using for other initiatives e.g. for Enhanced Programme Funding.

Implementing the targets

Most schools in this group were participating in Ministry of Education or other professional development initiatives that supported their knowledge of curriculum and/or assessment in relation to their chosen targets. Facilitators in some of these initiatives provided support to schools in how to use evidence to monitor the impact of changes in teaching on student learning.

Some of the principals indicated that wider school contexts influence the achievement of targets and that some targets cannot be achieved in one year. For example, NCEA Level One achievement in Year 11 could be influenced by factors such as the quality of teaching in Years 9

and 10, systems for encouraging student attendance and behaviour, pastoral care systems, and communication with families. They therefore put resources into projects that were intended to improve achievement targets further down the track.

Assessment of targets

In most cases schools reported the results using one assessment tool on a pre-post basis. However in some schools teachers had gathered on-going information about their progress and talked about this together. Some professional development projects had helped teachers to improve their assessment knowledge and skills.

Schools used a range of benchmarked assessments with the potential to provide information about how students were achieving compared with others of the same age or year level. Assessment tools used by this group of schools included the Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) for reading comprehension and vocabulary; the Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation of Comprehension (PROBE); and the Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading (STAR), and PM benchmarks. Only one school reported use of Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle), although it was used only to report student achievement in relation to comprehension level against a nationally representative sample. Schools that assessed basic mathematics facts used school-designed tests.

Analysis of variance

Schools generally limited their analysis to reporting the achievement or non-achievement of their targets and typically provided little analysis which would enable them to clearly understand what they needed to do next to improve student learning, although some schools reported that their targets may have been over-optimistic, or insufficiently aligned with new strategic directions. One analysis concluded: "It may be that following this review we actually change the target."

In most cases the evidence collected did not allow for in-depth examination of school-wide patterns and trends, and was not sufficiently robust to allow for testable explanations of the results. However most schools understood the process and considered variables such as the enrolling of new students (in two schools, new refugee families) whom they had included in the follow-up data. One analysis concluded that a factor which impacted negatively on their results was:

> the inability of one teacher, a long-term staff member, to implement the changes in her practice necessitated by the programme. This had implications for a group of students as well as staff morale and competency proceedings ensued. (Female, primary)

Use of data

Principals generally said that they would use the data to "improve teaching" but the quality of data analysis did not provide strong enough direction. It was evident that all principals would benefit from further in-depth guidance to improve their capability to gather, analyse, share, and learn from the information they gathered on student learning. All principals in this group planned

to target further professional development for teachers to build on improvements, so it is important that these initiatives include opportunities for teachers to build their skills in the analysis of data on student learning.

What they planned to do next year

Principals in this group were able to see how they could improve the process in future. Where we had access to 2004 targets they were generally clearer, and some were more ambitious, or involved more students. They tended to have better links with charter goals. Some principals reported that teachers were developing more ownership of the information and were beginning to use it to inform their teaching. One principal said

> It is getting better because teachers are seeing it as an opportunity to target things of real concern. It's becoming more individualised for children. It's making us think more deeply about teaching and learning and what to do on a daily basis. (Female, primary)

An intermediate principal wanted the targets to be "more alive", now that her " 'i's are dotted and 't's are crossed". She said that up till now her staff have been responding to target setting as a Ministry of Education driven requirement, and she is trying to encourage them to see that the process will benefit their own school.

Another principal aimed to collect more meaningful data that would be better able to support learning at the classroom level.

It is evident that this group of principals have moved quite a distance in terms of their use of data *for* the improvement of learning. Three vignettes follow which illustrate the progress of three principals in this group to provide a richer account of their experiences.

Vignettes of schools with evidence of acceptable approaches to planning and reporting

The following vignettes describe the approaches taken by three principals in 2003 and 2004. The second and third vignettes include relevant information from their ERO reports.

Vignette One

Fifty-seven percent of all (87) students in a small Northland rural decile one school were reading below their chronological age at the beginning of 2003. Teachers collected this data using PM benchmarks and realised that many students did not have adequate understanding of their reading. Their 2003 planning and reporting target became: *All students will reduce the discrepancy between decoding skills and comprehension, and will achieve 90 percent accuracy in reading comprehension.* The teaching of more effective comprehension skills became a whole school focus.

Through their participation in the Ministry of Education R.A.P.U. (Reporting, Analysing, Planning and Using student achievement data) Project, the principal and teachers focused on gathering and using student assessment data to effectively inform student learning, professional development, and school planning. Informal measures of student progress were kept by classroom teachers, and when the students were retested at the end of 2003, 40 percent were reading below their chronological ages for comprehension. Their analysis indicated that "whilst gains have been made, two year groups (Y1 where 55 percent are reading below CA, and Y6 where 70 percent are reading below CA) need to make significant improvement, in order to improve whole school performance". The teachers concluded that the teaching of comprehension needed to be targeted across the school. Another reason for comprehension difficulties was thought to be a limited range of appropriate texts.

In 2004 the school decided to continue its focus on comprehension, as part of a push to improve the overall quality of teaching. The principal and teachers are also participating in numeracy professional development and in the AToL and R.A.P.U. projects. The school is learning to use a range of assessment tools including AsTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning) to compare student performance against norms for year, ethnicity, gender, language background, and school cluster; and PROBE (Prose, Reading, Observation, Behaviour, and Evaluation of Comprehension) to assess students' reading accuracy, reading behaviour, and reading comprehension.

In our recent interview the principal indicated that the percentage of children still reading below their chronological age had reduced to 32 percent, and that the pace of student learning has accelerated. The teachers and board are reworking the strategic plan, as the old one had not provided direction for the school. In fact as the longest-serving member of staff had been there only 2 years, "No-one knew the plan".

The big thrust for the school is the development of teacher competence.

> My first allegiance lies with the improvement of teaching practice and the achievement of my students. I can't separate the two. I don't see it as an end project. Are we doing the very best we can do for our students?

Teachers are currently involved in professional development where their teaching is observed and videoed by an external facilitator, and "rich and immediate feedback" is provided. A lead teacher will be released in term 4 to work with teachers on identifying teaching goals and plans, and will schedule video sessions in classes. Teachers and the lead teacher will watch the videos to reflect on teaching competencies. In 2005 the school plans to extend its focus to the enhancement of children's oral language and understanding of science.

The principal claims that the work the school has been doing this year is "mind-blowing in terms of the difference it has made for children" and that the staff are "enthused and energised".

In his view the FTP Induction Programme contributed greatly to his development as a principal. He continues to develop his understanding of effective leadership, by taking advantage of

professional development opportunities. He is supported by his principals' cluster, Ministry of Education professional development initiatives, and the district office of the Ministry of Education. He reads widely, spending at least an hour professional reading online each day, (Leadspace and R.A.P.U.), and identified new publications such as Using Evidence in Teaching Practice (Timperley and Parr, 2004) and *Unlocking Formative Assessment* (Clarke, Timperley, and Hattie, 2003) as contributing to his ongoing learning. He plans to begin a Masters degree, preferably by distance because of his rural location.

Vignette Two

School two is a decile 5 area school with 363 students and 26 teachers. It has a July 2004 ERO report. This follows on from a supplementary review early in 2003, and earlier reviews in 2000, and 2001 which identified long-standing issues in relation to the establishment of strategic planning and self-review processes.

The 2004 ERO report notes:

"The period from 2002 to 2003 was a time of significant change for [the school]. During this time the principal and new senior managers were appointed and there were a number of other staffing changes. Since his appointment, the principal has successfully built a cohesive management team and is now developing useful management systems with a strong focus on school improvement. He acknowledges that while he has made significant progress there is further work to be done. At the time of his appointment the school had a deficit budget. This has been remedied. However, the need to repay debt has constrained school development.

Strengthening school management. The principal has successfully built a cohesive management team and all staff are now working collaboratively with a clear focus on improvement. Where possible, staff strengths and interests are identified and used. The senior management team is developing and strengthening administration and management systems. Committees responsible for curriculum, human resources, and administration and finance are clarifying their roles and are developing effective policies and procedures.

Reporting to the board. The board receives an extensive range of reports, including financial reports, prior to each monthly meeting. The principal's reports are comprehensive and informative. Staff provide a range of reports relating to curriculum and student achievement.

Performance management of the principal. The principal is appraised against an annual performance agreement by an external consultant. The principal's appraiser consults extensively as part of the process. However, the current performance agreement does not include performance or developmental objectives linked to the school's strategic goals, or to recommendations from the previous appraisal. The board should ensure that such objectives are identified, together with performance indicators and the resources to achieve these. The principal's performance should

then be appraised against the objectives as well as the professional standards. The principal should self appraise as part of his performance management cycle.

Assessment. The principal and senior managers are aware that the quality of assessment practices across the school varies greatly between individual teachers and between curriculum areas. They are aware of the need for a more consistent approach to the collection and analysis of achievement information. To assist improvement in this area, senior managers should seek external advice to help them determine the data that they should gather, the tools that they should use and how the information can best support student achievement and inform self-review. Senior managers should also provide support to further develop staff understandings of effective assessment practices that facilitate responsive teaching and learning".

This principal identified three areas where the induction programme most assisted him in his role as a new principal. These were: time management; awareness that as a leader "you have to be yourself, but you can learn from others"; and "the recognition that principals from different types of schools are dealing with quite different things". This has assisted him to make connections with the other schools in his district.

He would like more information on finances to have been in the induction programme because he inherited a deficit budget.

When he took up his new role he found there was little information in the school to help him to target areas for improvement of student learning, although the 2000, 2001, and 2003 ERO reports indicated that a wide number of areas needed to be addressed. In consultation with a new senior management team it was decided to focus on lifting literacy levels across the school, numeracy knowledge of Years 0–8 students, and to improve on Level One NCEA results.

Their literacy goal was to "continue school wide focus on literacy across the curriculum, particularly reading. All teachers to identify and target at least three students with poor comprehension or decoding skills. At least one should be Māori unless there are no Māori students of low ability in the class". Targets were:

Comprehension: By one stanine level or by at least 20 percent.

Decoding: At least two guided or 1-month incremental level(s) closer to the median score/level for their peers than before the initiative began.

25 percent improvement in recognition of high frequency words or at least 6-month increase in BURT Reading age, or 25 percent increase in students' ability to read non-words.

In 2003 the school was involved in the Literacy Enhancement Programme and the teachers of Year 5 and Year 6 attended a reading course. Outcomes were comprehensively but not clearly reported for all levels.

The numeracy target was that "All year 0–8 students are assessed using Numeracy Development project assessment tools". This is not a teaching and learning target, and outcomes and analysis referred to the processes that the school engaged in rather than the outcomes. For example:

> Students in Years 1–8 were assessed using Numeracy Development Project assessment by the Teacher Aides who now know how to use it. Teachers of Years 1–7 were given a morning's internal PD on the NDP assessment. Information from numeracy assessments informed some planning and teaching. Groups of lower achieving students, two from Year 5 and one from Year 8, were withdrawn for NDP-related numeracy work with Teacher Aides. In 2004 Formal Numeracy project professional development will be delivered to staff teaching Years 1–8 through a Ministry contract.

The NCEA target was:

At least 50 percent of all students (including Māori) to achieve 80 credits or more at first attempt.

Sixty-one percent of all students and 50 percent of Māori achieved 80 credits at their first attempt.

We initially judged the 2003 documentation as a 2; that is with some evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting. When we examined the 2004 annual plan we found much stronger evidence of understanding of targeting outcomes and associated assessment so we included this school in our sample of schools able to demonstrate an acceptable understanding of planning and reporting. This was supported by the 2004 ERO report which noted: *"Annual planning.* The school has successfully met charter requirements. Student achievement targets, based on achievement information, provide a focus for improving teaching and learning. The annual plan for 2004 has a large number of goals organised under the National Administration Guidelines. An action plan has been prepared for each goal that identifies intended outcomes, responsibilities and milestones. This thorough planning system provides a useful framework for monitoring progress towards strategic goals and facilitates self-review processes".

The principal identified the need to develop an understanding of the different curriculum areas particularly in the primary school. He has set this as a key goal for his performance appraisal, and has timetabled regular classroom visits.

Vignette Three

School A is a rural, primary school with a decile rating of 4, a roll of 34, and three teachers. The school has been part of a network review and will merge with another school at the other school's site. The NZCER team gave this school a rating of 3 for its planning and reporting documentation. The ERO report was very positive.

The latest ERO review was conducted in September 2003. In the previous round of reviews, the school had had two discretionary audits. However, since that time, there had been significant changes of personnel at both board and staff level. This latest review commended the school on its well-informed board, support for teaching and learning programmes, and its clear targets for improving teaching practice. A high and consistent standard of teaching was noted.

Both ERO and the school's board agreed that the teaching of written language would be the focus for the 2003 review. The school had been using written language as their focus to develop consistent school-wide practices as part of the Assessment to Learn (AToL) professional development contract. A negotiated focus of the ERO review was the quality of planning, delivery, and the use of assessment information within literacy.

The ERO report endorsed the school's work in literacy noting the presence of whole-school planning outlining the National Achievement Objectives (NAOs) for expressive, poetic, and transactional writing. Specific learning outcomes (SLOs) were linked to the curriculum levels and clear links between plans and implementation were found.

ERO noted several key features in classroom teaching. These included the pacing of lessons, targeting of individuals with special learning needs, effective questioning, and purposeful oral feedback. In ERO's judgement teachers had identified valid and reliable tools for gathering achievement information in written language. The sharing of learning intentions was clarifying learning for the students as well as making the assessment manageable. Areas for improvement included more specific written feedback to children to recognise achievement and to identify next learning steps.

Four student achievement targets were reported on for the 2003 year. These included raising the spelling levels across the school, raising students' ability and understanding of basic facts and computation, encouraging children to use social and cooperative skills within the classroom and playground, and increasing their knowledge of word processing and publishing using ICT software including the digital camera.

The format used for the annual report showed the historical position and a justification for each target, the actions taken, resourcing issues, achievements, and a statement outlining the reasons behind any differences as well as an indication of future steps.

This principal attended the FTP induction course in her second year of her principalship. This meant that she had already set up the planning and reporting system, which was well underway. Her experience allowed her to assist less experienced principals.

Some evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting

There were eight primary and three secondary schools that were able to demonstrate some evidence that they understood the planning and reporting process. They tended to focus on literacy, numeracy, and improvements in NCEA results.

Targets

Targets for this group were similar to those that were rated as a 3. In general the targets were less clearly defined and a number of the schools did not identify targets that related to student outcomes. Outcomes of targets in this category are: "Ensure at Years 9 and 10 the seven essential

learning areas of the national curriculum are being taught" and "Maintain emphasis on high standards of student achievement."

Implementing the targets

Most of the schools did not identify what they were going to do differently to maximise the likelihood that their targets would be achieved.

Assessment of targets

Overall, schools tended to use fewer benchmarked assessment tools, omit details of assessment measures, or rely on school-designed ones that were not aligned with their targets. An example is the school that targeted children's Christian attitudes. This was self-assessed by students who rated the frequency that they "always wear their uniform with pride", "put hand up when I wish to speak", in addition to values such as "am caring of others" and "behaving appropriately in Church and prayer times".

Other examples of unclear assessment outcomes are: "Our students have continued to achieve very well academically" and "90 percent are achieving satisfactorily according to professional judgement of the teachers."

Analysis of variance

It was more difficult for schools to analyse and interpret their results when targets and assessment data were less clear. However one school concluded that their own tests were probably too difficult and that "In future we will look for pre-developed curriculum level assessments that focus on problem solving, to improve the reliability of our data". One school's data suggested a need for investigation of low-achievement data at two class levels but this was not discussed. Sometimes the figures reported in the outcomes did not match with those in the analysis. One secondary school attributed improved Bursary passes partly to the effectiveness of regular professional development time for teachers, and "greater numbers of students channelled into courses better suited to their needs, i.e., vocational programmes".

Use of data

Given the nature of the data, schools generally were unable to identify how they would use it. One secondary principal said that the data would "affirm what we are doing is OK. Give some of the slower ones a bit of extra tuition", while another said it would be used for the allocation of classes. A third secondary principal said that it would be used at the faculty level to analyse and draw conclusions about which strategies contributed to their results, although this would not be possible in practice, as the data would not permit this level of analysis.

Two schools did not appear to intend to use the data in any way other than to satisfy Ministry of Education reporting requirements. Another school used it strategically to apply and gain additional funding.

What they planned to do next year

Principals in this group were more satisfied with that they done this year, and less able to see what they would do differently than the group with acceptable planning and reporting. Some felt that they needed to revisit their charters, and therefore what they did would be dependent on the outcomes of their reviews. Another wanted to both streamline the process and have the teachers talk more about the data.

The following vignette describes the approach taken by one principal in 2003/2004. It includes information from the school's ERO report.

Vignette Four

This is an urban, contributing primary school with a decile 7 rating. It has a roll of 384 and 21 teachers. The school had a discretionary audit in 2000. The new principal has made a significant impact on the school in identifying strengths and weaknesses of management systems, programmes of work, and achievement records but this has been largely her own effort. The remaining staff found it challenging to adopt new ways of thinking and working but have responded.

The FTP induction course yielded an important insight that it gave some reassurance to the new principal's change management strategy. The discussion of Michael Fullan's "implementation pit" assisted the realisation that having taken the initiative for change, she needed to provide support so that the school could climb out the other side.

The ERO team also noted that while some initiatives were still in the early stages of implementation and required some consolidation, their initial success had increased the confidence staff had in their new principal. Valuable lessons had been learnt about managing the amount and pace of change and needing to build commitment from the staff. This principal was analysing achievement data to identify patterns throughout the school and now needed to involve others in this process for it to have an impact at the classroom level.

The NZCER team gave this school a rating of 2 for its planning and reporting documentation.

Two targets had been set for 2003 in reading and numeracy. One of the targets was to raise the percentage of Year 4–6 children reading at their chronological age from 77 percent to 80 percent. She reported that 85.1 percent of students achieved this target. Details were supplied to show how the school intended to develop these areas with additional resources and professional development. Probe running records and number benchmarks and AsTTle were listed as suitable for future data collection purposes. The analysis of variance was another indicator of progress and a way of establishing benchmarks for comparison.

Another point of interest for this case study school was how the new principal was accessing multiple networks of colleagues to support her initiatives. The FTP networks and programme content were supplemented by additional networks at the local level. These included regular meetings with a management adviser and one other principal, and previous principal mentors.

Limited evidence of acceptable knowledge of planning and reporting

There were only seven schools with documentation that revealed a limited knowledge of planning and reporting. There were three primary schools, two kura, and two secondary schools. These schools were unable to demonstrate logical links between their targets, assessments, and analyses.

In one secondary school the goal of raising Māori achievement was linked to cultural participation, not to achievement. The same school aimed to have 90 percent of students attending 90 percent of classes. Only 58 percent of students met this target and there was no analysis of reasons for this. The school's response to student reluctance to attend class had been to refer 14 students to external agencies and to prosecute a parent. While these may be appropriate responses there had been no exploration of the school's contribution to the non-achievement of the target.

Another school used the BURT Word Reading Test as the sole measure of reading age. The recognition of words in isolation is only one aspect of reading, and does not provide sufficient information for teachers.

Schools in this category also appeared to have a limited range of responses to children who appeared to be having difficulty reading. Problems were usually attributed to factors within the children rather than considering the programme, and too often it was planned to assist the children by providing help from teacher aides. The ability to plan and report meaningfully appears to go hand in hand with a knowledge of what is involved in learning different curriculum areas, and a working knowledge of basic assessment principles.

Principals in this category did not appear to have access to teachers in their schools with expertise and understanding in the use of data. The secondary schools did not appear to have developed the capability of heads of departments to contribute significantly to the achievement of school goals. One secondary principal planned to involve his HODs, syndicates and students once he had "found my feet". Most schools did not appear to have taken sufficient advantage of professional development initiatives to enhance their knowledge of how students in their schools were learning.

One principal she that she "would like to improve, but am not sure how".

The following vignette illustrates the experiences of a secondary principal who requires further assistance to use evidence to support teaching and learning in his school.

Vignette Six

School C is a decile 6, integrated secondary school in a small town with a roll of 136. There are 10 full-time teachers and eight part-time teachers, many of whom are in acting positions. In 2003 the board made appointments of principal and deputy principal and combined the secondary board of trustees with the primary school board of trustees. In adjusting to his new role in the school (although he had been teaching in the school for 27 years), the new principal also had classroom teaching responsibilities. He had reluctantly applied for the principalship after it had been advertised twice. Even though he had been at the school and acting in the role for a term, he considered himself unprepared for the challenges he faced. For example, the school had operated without both strategic and annual plans for the last eight years. The NZCER team had given the school a rating of 1 for its planning and reporting documentation.

This principal described going to the first residential course having survived a "term from hell". He admitted that it had been hard to sit in a lecture room and listen to theory. What he clearly wanted were people to listen to his challenges and respond with practical advice about how to manage budgets and understand the SUE reports. He did not have the headspace for the theory and his highest qualification was a Trained Teachers' Certificate. To some extent the workshops were able to meet his need for shared talk but he was frustrated when some facilitators kept to the set agendas and kept moving discussions on when participants wanted to dwell on particular issues. He has since welcomed any opportunity for networking with principals and regularly travels long distances to attend principals' meetings.

The most recent ERO review was conducted in term 2, 2004 and the school is awaiting the release of its final report. The previous reviews had adhered to a 3-yearly cycle of reviews with the last one occurring in 2001. Comments in the 2001 ERO report indicated a need for the board of trustees to develop an action plan showing how it would complete a self-review of the school and the implementation of a performance management system. These issues have received repeated mention in the school's ERO reports and the new principal is working his way through both issues.

ERO commented favourably on the school's curriculum delivery processes and student support in the 2001 report. Special mention was made of the school's efforts to maintain a broad subject base and accommodate students' option choices. However, discussion with the principal about the verbal feedback from the 2004 review revealed a wide variation in the quality of programme planning in the school with ERO commenting that they had observed both exemplary practice and the very opposite in quality. Poor behaviour of students in the junior classes was also noted as having the potential to disturb the learning of other students. In taking on the principalship, this principal acknowledged that there was a very real possibility of him being "crucified" by ERO because there were so many things left undone at the school. Thankfully, his efforts were being acknowledged by ERO who referred to his strong leadership and the beginnings of a clear direction emerging from the charter, strategic, and annual plan documents. They described the

school as being in a transition phase as plans were being implemented and developments were coming to fruition. This was heartening.

Others had also realised that the principal needed support to address longstanding issues at the school. The school was fortunate to have participated in two Ministry of Education cluster projects. One was a school improvement initiative that provided funding and professional development to improve practices in literacy and assessment and the achievement of Māori students. The other was in the ICT area with a similar emphasis on professional development and support. The board of trustees had also subsidised the provision of computer hardware and software. There were clear benefits to the school when the same ministry person worked with them in the school improvement project and was also responsible for approving the school's planning and reporting documentation. The principal therefore felt able to send his draft documentation for comment and the documentation was subsequently approved.

Preparation of the school's strategic plan has been a huge task for this new principal. The board of trustees has participated in training from the School Trustees Association to help understand their governance responsibilities. Their need for training will continue for some time yet but progress is being made. The FTP mentor had helped the principal develop consultation and document storage systems to support each of the school's goals and these were working well.

The planning and reporting sessions at the FTP induction course were much appreciated by this principal. He described the presenters as "straight shooters who told the group, this is what you do and this is how you do it". The workshops following the keynote were similarly appreciated for the ways in which they "gelled" understandings. Others were also acknowledged for their contribution to making sense of the planning and reporting requirements. Here mention was made of two school advisers who had provided positive feedback and also monthly meetings of the Principals' Association where burning issues had been discussed.

The seven targets set for the 2003 year were linked to the school's developmental work in ICT, literacy, NCEA consolidation, te mana korero strategies for raising student achievement, classroom management, and the use of formative assessment data. Baseline data had been collected from the MidYIS testing and percentages listed for the achievement of year groups as well as for Māori and non-Māori students.

This case study highlights workload issues for a new principal who has inherited unfinished business from previous regimes. Such a principal requires considerable external support to develop the knowledge and skill needed to complete the work, and to ensure that he does not become completely overwhelmed at what needs to be done. Individualised support is crucial for surviving this type of principalship.

No documentation

Two primary schools, one intermediate, two kura, and one composite school had not submitted information about their 2003 targets to the Ministry of Education. One of the primary principal

had completed her data and was able to speak about it confidently in her interview. She resented the requirement to send it to the Ministry of Education, and therefore did not intend to send it in until the deadline. The other primary principal had worked on his strategic plan in 2003, and had not identified any targets till 2004. A lot of his work in 2003 centred around writing the charter which led to discussions about

> ..what has to take place to effect learning. Then I moved into appraisal as a tool to establish whether the charter was being enacted, and building up a picture of our achievement against the country norms. Our strategic objectives are our targets, that is, creating a culture of learning. (Primary, male)

He said he would "write some statement, but it's not going to change anything. It's all a bit too much 'one size fits all'.

The intermediate school principal had not managed to send in his data to the Ministry of Education as he does not yet found out how to do an analysis of variance. He was looking for a template that he could just "tweak" each year. His 2003 target was "basic facts" in mathematics. Planning and reporting was his "greatest headache" and his 2004 ERO review noted "The school is at an early stage in collating and analysing student achievement information for all students, including Māori students". The principal found that ERO provided helpful direction for the school in this area. ERO is planning to return to this school in 12 months.

We have no information on why the two kura have not sent in any documentation to the Ministry of Education. The composite school has not done so because as an independent school it is not required to do so.

Summary

The information from the follow-up phase suggests that the majority of the sample of First-Time Principals:

- consider that they are leading and managing their schools effectively;
- are aware of the importance of their roles in contributing to environments where students are successful learners;
- are able to provide some evidence of understanding of planning and reporting against achievement targets;
- acknowledge the contribution of the FTP Induction Programme to the three areas identified above;
- would benefit from further opportunities to strengthen their personal knowledge of key assessment principles to assist them to provide informed leadership to others;
- are learning to work with others to build school cultures that support the learning of teachers and students; and

- are participating in professional development activities likely to enhance teacher and school effectiveness.

Future professional development may need to strengthen their ability to:

- work alongside others to develop shared skills and approaches to school development;
- move beyond a focus on narrow outcomes to the development of empowering and effective pedagogy; and
- see beyond their current horizons, so that they are able to initiate innovation as well as respond to external demands.

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Appendix One: Letter to principals

Date
Principal First Principal surname
School
etc
etc
Dear

Evaluation of First-Time Principal Induction Programme

This letter is to follow-up on our recent telephone conversation about your possible participation in research being carried out by NZCER for the Ministry of Education. This letter describes the aims of the evaluation in more detail, and what your participation would involve. We would appreciate it if you could share this letter as you see fit with your Board of Trustees.

You will have just completed your final residential programme at the Ministry of Education's First-Time Principal Induction Programme delivered by the University of Auckland. The Ministry of Education is keen to obtain external feedback on the current design and delivery of the programme, to inform the development of future programmes. The evaluation will attempt to determine the "value-added" effectiveness of the programme from the perspective of principals and their mentors.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research has been contracted to provide this evaluation. We are interviewing approximately 34 selected principals and their mentors in November, 2003 and again in the first half of 2004. We have selected our sample to represent a range of types of schools and kura in a range of geographical areas.

If you agree to participate, we would like to visit you once in November and once again next year. The interview will take between one to one and a half hours. If you have kept a portfolio during the year we would like to discuss this with you. If you do not have a portfolio we would like you to share some of the work that you have done this year (e.g. planning and reporting documentation, your performance agreement, [if you are willing to discuss this], and indicate how the induction programme and other sources have helped you in your work as a principal.
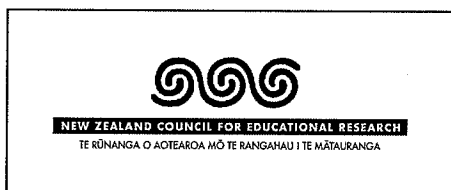
All material will be treated confidentially and no persons will be identified in any report. You will get a summary of the results of the evaluation at the conclusion of the study.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. I will ring you in a few days to follow-up.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Researcher

Appendix Two: Mentor information

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
EVALUATION OF FIRST-TIME PRINCIPALS INDUCTION PROGRAMME 2003

Information for Mentors

The Ministry of Education wishes to obtain external feedback on the current design and delivery of the **First-Time Principals Induction Programme**, to inform the development of future programmes. The evaluation will attempt to determine the "value-added" effectiveness of the programme from the perspective of principals and their mentors.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research has been contracted to provide this evaluation. We are interviewing approximately 34 selected principals and their mentors in November and December, 2003 and again in the first half of 2004. We have selected our sample to represent a range of types of schools and kura in a range of geographical areas. Principals have been asked for their views on the impact of the various components of the programme (the residentials, mentoring and on-line) on their knowledge and practice as school leaders.

We would also like to evaluate the impact of the **First-Time Principals Induction Programme** from the perspective of the mentors in the programme. We plan to interview 18 mentors of the principals in the induction programme. These interviews will, either be conducted by phone or by completion of the questions electronically, depending on the preference of individual mentors. We will ask mentors for their views on the mentoring process, how they were prepared for this role, and their work with particular principals.

All material will be treated confidentially, and no individuals will be identified. You will receive a summary of the findings at the conclusion of the research.

The NZCER team for this study is Marie Cameron, Robyn Baker, Susan Lovett, Diane Leggett, and Pauline Waiti. If you have any questions regarding the study please contact me by phone on 09 6385 108 or on mariec@xtra.co.nz

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Appendix Three: Principal interview

Evaluation of first-time principals programme

Interviews with principals November 2003

Name:

School:

Urban/rural:

Decile:

Teaching staff:

Roll number:

Using new planning and reporting documents?

ERO review this year?

Next ERO Review?

Background information

I am interested in exploring a little about you as a person, your professional background, and your decision to become a principal.

1. When and why did you decide to become a principal? Who and what influenced this?
2. How have your previous experiences helped you to develop the knowledge and skills you need to be an effective principal?
3. How did you prepare for your new position? (Did you feel prepared? What did you know about the school or your predecessor when you took over?)
4. What was your understanding of the key responsibilities of principals before you began the induction course?

Programme delivery: residential courses

5. To what extent were the residentials strongly related to the work you do as a principal? (e.g. workplace projects, discussions of on-the-job situations, follow-up activities)
6. To what extent were principals able to influence what was taught in the residentials?

7. What did you learn from the residential courses that has impacted on the way you do your job as a principal? (give an example).

8. What would you recommend as essential features for the 2004 residential courses? (Timetable, timing, balance, lecture versus activity based)

Programme delivery: mentoring

9. How would you describe your mentor's role?

10. What support was your mentor able to give you?
    - How many visits did you have from your mentor?
    - How often have you contacted your mentor in addition to the allocated visits?
    - How often has your mentor contacted you?
    - To what extent has you mentor helped you to focus on core activities which will help you to achieve your educational vision? (e.g. researching, monitoring, developing and reporting on programmes of teaching and learning?)
    - To what extent did your mentor help you with your professional portfolio?

11. Did your mentor challenge you about any aspect of your practice? (If yes, describe)

12. Can you suggest any improvements for the ways mentors work or are involved in the programme?

Programme delivery: online component

13. How often have you accessed the New Principals Online (confidential website)?
    - Have you initiated topics for discussion on NPO? (If so, describe)

14. What impact has NPO had on your practice as a principal?

Programme delivery: overall

As you know the induction programme had three main components, the residentials, the mentoring and the online component. Please can you make comment on the relative effectiveness and impact of the three components on your development as an effective school leader?

Impact of the induction programme on knowledge about school leadership and leadership skills

15. In what ways has the induction programme influenced your views of effective principal leadership?

16. What actual leadership skills do you think that the induction programme has helped you to develop?

17. What evidence are you gathering in your school in relation to the new planning and reporting requirements? How has the course helped you?

18. How does your current performance agreement reflect what you know to be important aspects of school leadership? (Note: if this was negotiated prior to the induction course, what changes will be negotiated for the 2004 performance agreement?)
19. The course also encouraged keeping a portfolio as evidence of your professional learning.
20. Were you able to do this? (If 'no' what were the reasons for not doing so?) If 'yes', can you please select an example (or two) which illustrates your learning in a critical leadership area? Why have you selected these examples and what do they illustrate about your learning as a principal?

Impact of the induction programme on leadership in policy and direction (school wide)

1. Can you give an example of the impact of the induction programme on the overall direction of the school this year?
2. What are the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for this school? How are these reflected in school approaches/practices?
3. How has the course helped you to prioritise important policy directions and /or resource allocation for the school?
4. (For those who had an ERO Review this year... How did you manage this experience? What did you learn about your leadership from this process?)

Impact of the induction programme on leadership of teaching and Learning

1. In what ways has the induction programme assisted you develop the knowledge and skills to assist teachers to enhance student learning?
2. Can you point to any evidence that your students are becoming more successful learners? *(Try to elicit principal's view of the attributes of a successful learner)*
3. In what ways has the course helped you to ensure that teachers get feedback about their teaching?
4. What have you learned about effective professional development of staff?
5. What initiatives have you begun in this area? What are your next steps?

Impact of the induction programme on working with others

1. In what ways has the course assisted you to work productively with others for the benefit of the students in your school?
2. The relationship with the Board of Trustees is important for the management of schools. Did the course provide you with knowledge or skills you have been able to use in strengthening this relationship? (In what ways?
3. Has the course helped you to deal with difficult interpersonal issues between yourself and staff or parents? (In what ways?)

Impact of the induction programme on self as a learning leader

1. What have been the biggest challenges for you as a principal this year?
2. What has helped you to resolve these challenges?
3. What are the three most important things you need to learn next?
4. Where and how are you going to learn these three things?

Appendix Four: Mentor questions

First-Time Principals Evaluation

Questions for mentors November 2003

Mentor's Name: _____

Introductory questions:

1. How would you describe the key aspects of the mentoring role in the FTP induction programme?
2. What are the key knowledge and skills you think mentors need to have to do this role well?
3. To what extent did the mentoring training program equip you for your role?
4. Could you tell me a little about the range of areas where you have assisted principals? (Are there any common areas of need? How well have these areas been addressed in the residentials?)
5. As a mentor you were required to discuss particular areas during each visit. Are the things the FTP programme asked you to discuss in your visits the things the principal wanted to discuss?
   - If there was a mismatch how did you deal with that?
6. Were you able to attend the induction residentials? (how many, how long?
7. Did this assist you in your mentoring role? (If yes, how?
8. Do you consider that the contract for FTP principals should be extended beyond the last residential? (Why/ why not?)

Questions about principals mentored

We are interested in your experiences of mentoring.................and ....We'd like your answers to give examples showing how you worked and what you worked on together.

Q1 How would you describe your mentoring role with ... ...?

Q2 How often were you able to visit ....? What other contacts did you have? (emails, phone calls etc?

Q3 What were the specific areas where you helped ....?

Q4 Were there any challenges in helping ... . develop in his/her chosen areas? (If yes, talk about these)

Q5 The course emphasised the preparation of a portfolio as a reflective tool.
How well did this work for .... ?

Q6 How do you think that principals could be encouraged to engage more fully in the portfolio process?

Q7 Did xxxx make use of the principals on line component of the induction programme? As far as you know, what aspects did s/he find helpful/less helpful?

Q8 What do you think the next learning steps should be for ....? (and how do you think he/she will be able to learn these things?

Q9 And finally, how essential do you think that the mentoring component of the programme has been for ....?

Final Question: Finally what advice do you have about future developments of the programme?

Appendix Five: First-Time Principals Programme Overview of Programme Changes 2004

Residential Courses

1. The three residential courses are now delivered over an eighteen month period (April, September & July), so as to reduce the pressure that the participants were experiencing and to provide improved opportunities for them to apply their new learning in their work situations.

2. The three residential courses are now held in three different locations (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch), to better reflect the national representation of the participants and to increase the national representation of the presenters at the courses.

3. At the residential courses, the mentors facilitate the sector group discussions and activities in the workshop sessions. The mentors are trained and prepared by the Project Team for this role. Each mentor has the opportunity to be a facilitator at one residential course, with the total mentors' team divided into three groups to make this possible. By the mentors being the facilitators as well, this provides a valuable opportunity for them to develop an improved understanding of the induction curriculum, the issues and the problems that the participants are currently experiencing in their work, and a further opportunity for them to provide advice and guidance to their mentees and other participants during the course.

Curriculum content and delivery

1. The Project Team carefully reviews and revises the curriculum content and delivery strategies annually. The need to make changes is based on the internal evaluation reports of the previous year and current national education goals and priorities.

2. As a result, the curriculum content changes this year include: increased content on Māori educational achievement; enhanced opportunities to engage in reflective practice both at the residential courses and in the mentoring programme; increased content on student achievement data inquiry and analysis; the inclusion of action research and action planning; the inclusion of collaborative practice and distributed leadership; the inclusion of Pasifika student achievement.

3. In the area of curriculum delivery, the teaching of the portfolio has been changed (see below); the number of keynote addresses has been reduced; the number of workshops and applied new

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learning sessions has been increased; some optional sessions at the residential courses have been identified as being of either a novice or proficient level, so that the participants can decide for those topics which session level would be most appropriate for them.

Mentoring

1. A new self evaluation questionnaire was developed by the Project Team and administered to the participants this year, to acquire a clearer understanding of their individual learning needs. The questions were based on the Ministry of Education's final draft Capabilities of Principals document.

2. During the mentor's first school-based visit, the responses of the principal to the self evaluation questionnaire were carefully discussed to clarify their most important responses. For example, where they rated themselves as being high or low. Following this discussion, each mentor discussed and developed with each principal a Personalised Induction Plan for the purpose of identifying and documenting the principal's main personal professional goals for the year, as well as how the goals would develop and the evidence-base for their progress. During the year the goals are revisited and discussed, with the mentor providing further assistance if required.

3. The mentoring programme has this year introduced the Professional Learning Group (PLG) and which is based on the theory and model of Professional Learning Communities (Stoll et al). This learning activity has replaced one of the school-based visits, where it is feasible for a participant to join a group for a half day. The concept behind this activity is for the participants to be provided with a further opportunity to learn with each other and from each other, with a trained facilitator (mentor) providing both support and challenge during the discussions and the designed activity. In addition, each PLG will be encouraged to be self sustaining for the next year so as to provide a forum for continued professional learning.

Portfolios

1. In the light of the difficulties that have been experienced during the past 2 years with introducing the Portfolio topic at a residential course, it was decided that this year the portfolio would be introduced and encouraged by the mentors. The rationale for this decision was to focus the purpose of the portfolio to tracking the evidence-base of the progress the principal would be making in implementing their Personalised Professional Plan goals, as well a their major school-wide teaching and learning improvement goal.

2. To support the mentors in this work they have received training, as well as a guiding document to discuss with and provide to each of their mentees. The mentors are asked by the Project Team to view the portfolio of each principal that they mentor in subsequent face-to-face meetings.

New Principals Online (NPO)

1. This year the Ministry of Education has responsibility for the technical and operational management of the site, while the Project Team has responsibility for the online curriculum delivery and pedagogy.

2. This new arrangement has meant that the Project Team has greater opportunities to design online activities and events which are related to each residential course. It is intended that this will increase the coherence of the induction curriculum for the participants, by having the residential course content aligned to the NPO activities.

3. Discrete communities have been created in NPO for each sector group, so that they can discuss online items of special interest to their group.

David Eddy, Project Director (July 2004)

Appendix Six: Follow-up phone interview with principals

Evaluation of First-Time Principals Induction Programme
Phase Two August 2004

Telephone Interview

Date:	
Time:	

School name:
School decile:
Current roll:
ERO report since completing induction programme?
Residentials attended:

It is now almost a year since you completed the First-Time Principals Induction Programme. We would like to ask you some questions about ways in which the programme is still continuing to influence your work as a principal.

There are three sections in the interview:

- The first section asks you to recall the aspects of the FTP Induction Programme that have had the most impact on the way you carry out your role as a principal now, as well as identifying if there is anything you now think should have been included in the programme.
- The second section will explore how you are going about the planning and reporting process that is now a Ministry of Education requirement. This has been included because it will provide some information about how the induction programme prepared you to improve the quality of learning and teaching in your school.
- The final section asks you to identify your learning needs at this point in your development as a principal.

We expect this interview to last between 15–20 minutes. You may find it helpful to read through and think about the questions before the interview.

First Section: Looking backwards

1. In retrospect, what three things have you learnt from the FTP Induction Programme that have been the most useful to you in your role as a new principal?	
2. In retrospect, was there any information, knowledge or skill development that should have been included in the programme that wasn't?	
3. If YES what was this?	

Second section: The Ministry of Education Planning and reporting requirements

4. When you took up your new role as principal of your school, how helpful was the existing school planning and reporting documentation?	
5. Which area/s of student outcomes was the focus of improvement efforts?	
6. What were the reasons for focussing on this area?	
7. Who was involved in making these decisions?	
8. What targets were set? (and why).	
9. What evidence is being gathered (or has been gathered) to see the progress towards meeting your targets?	
10. How has the evidence been used?	
11. Who has had overall responsibility for the planning and reporting process?	
12. To what extent did the FTP induction programme help you with the planning and reporting process?	

13. (Did you attend the sessions on planning and reporting?)	
14. What/who else contributed to the planning and reporting process?	
15. Do you plan to do anything differently next year in the planning and reporting process? (If yes, please describe)	

Third Section: Work and learning

16. How many hours a week on average do you spend on your work as a principal?	
4. What do you see as the priority(ies) for your learning now as a principal?	
5. How do you plan to learn these things?	
6. What is your main source of support as a principal now?	
7. Any other comments?	

Finally, an update on any additional qualifications you may be working on currently. Firstly a check on your quals when you became a principal:

Diploma of Teaching

Higher Diploma of Teaching

Teaching degree (e.g. B.Ed (Teaching), B.Teaching, B.Teaching and Learning)

Bachelors degree (BA/BSc etc)

Masters Degree in Arts or Science

Masters degree In Educational Administration

Business studies qualification (specify)

Are you currently engaged in further study leading to a qualification?

No

Yes (specify)

Do you plan to engage in further study leading to a qualification?

No

Yes (specify)

Are you currently engaged in any other professional learning activities this year?

No

Yes (specify)

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Your views are very important to us.