

Professional Growth Cycle for Teachers PowerPoint Webinar Transcript

Tēnā koutou katoa. Nau mai, haere mai, and welcome to this webinar on the Professional Growth Cycle for teachers. Ko Chris Thornley taku ingoa. Ko Prisca MacDonald taku ingoa. Together we will present the information that's based on the Zoom webinars that we've presented recently. The recording is a shortened version of those Zooms but it's supplemented with some brief reading materials that give insight into what teachers, and professional leaders in early childhood settings or principals, joining those sessions have been discussing, and it also provides some in-depth content about the endorsement decision-making process and the Quality Practice Template.

The Big Ideas: What's Changed?

So I want to begin with talking about what's changed. Over the last couple of years, the Council had become aware that in many settings, aspects of appraisal were compliance-based or had become a workload issue. So when, as part of the collective bargaining between the government and NZEI, and the government and PPTA, an accord was developed and signalled the removal of performance appraisal as an accountability measure, we saw this as an opportunity to rethink this whole space.

Also, because we recognise the early childhood education sector as being part of the wider whole of our profession, we wanted to ensure that, if we were to bring together a working group to discuss the changes, we would have representation from this sector as well. The working group comprised about 20 different groups, and you can read about who was actually on that in some of the materials that sit with this webinar. It met around five times with the Council to actually talk about the key ideas that really mattered, and in collaboration with the Council, designed a set of Elements.

The Elements reflect the sort of balance between professional trust and accountability. They reflect the idea that the Standards, or ngā Paerewa, are forward-thinking, they think about what's going to happen if we teach in this way and why we are doing that, as opposed to thinking about the Standards as something we prove we meet, in a kind of backwards-looking way. As part of that, the reduction of compliance activities, things that were unproductive for learning, was really emphasised.

In thinking about what could become the Professional Growth Cycle, or what those Elements could look like in each setting, we were emphasising that you need to think about the things that you already do and value that support teachers' learning. So in the past people have said, "There's a number of things that we do that work really well in our place, and then we also have to do appraisal. But if we had more time, we could do these other things more fully, and reap greater benefits from them." So the intention is that with the removal of appraisal, as the accountability measure, now the focus can go on the Professional Growth Cycle to support teachers to actually grow and learn in a way that's most productive for the teachers, but also for the children, the young people, and the students with whom they work.

And I guess the other thing that changed through this time is the talk about how teachers learn and work collaboratively and how important that is. And the idea that they are working in dynamic and responsive contexts has come through really strongly this year. I don't think anyone, in thinking about teacher's professional learning at the end of 2019, could have foreseen that teachers would learn how to actually teach and keep kids safe amidst a pandemic. And probably no one would have thought to have that included in their goals in 2019. And yet, collectively, the teaching profession led the way in being able to do this because of the way they could learn and be responsive within their practice.



The Big Ideas: What's Stayed the Same?

The Professional Growth Cycle – what's stayed the same. Although the focus and the purpose has changed from appraisal to the Professional Growth Cycle, existing responsibilities for leading professional conversations, or providing feedback to a professional leader or principal for their endorsement decision, can remain the same. The point there really calls out the authority of professional leaders and principals to make the final decisions about the Professional Growth Cycle. But it does not intend to imply that they also undertake all of the roles.

Developing leadership in all of our teachers is central to our Leadership Strategy that states, “Every teacher, regardless of their role or setting, should have the opportunity to develop their own leadership capability”. So arrangements that foster and recognise leadership development in teachers, and in learners, should continue. The Leadership Strategy, Focus Area Three, Personalised Professional Learning, supports the Professional Growth Cycle. And you can read more about that in the Leadership Strategy on Page 15.

Finally, I want to point out that you are not expected to access formal or costly professional learning. That professional learning from formal, and informal experiences, with learners, colleagues and others that enhance the teacher's understanding and knowledge, is valued and recognised in the Professional Growth Cycle.

From Appraisal to Professional Growth – Getting the Shift

I'm sure you have heard that the Council has placed a moratorium on gathering evidence for appraisal processes from now until the 1st of February in 2021. We did this because we wanted to be able to provide some time for teachers, principals, professional leaders, to be able to pause on the evidence gathering and to actually focus on what the Professional Growth Cycle could look like in their place. People have told us that this means that in the past, when they've had a summary report and they've asked teachers to provide evidence to prove that they meet all of those Standards, they no longer do that to put with the report. Instead they know the teachers have met the Standards and so that has not been necessary. There are a number of things that people have talked about and we will pick that up in the next slide.

One of the early recommendations that came from the working group was to have the audit that was undertaken by ERO for the Council and required through the Education Act to be removed. The group said it was no longer fit for purpose and supportive of the ways in which teachers could learn and grow. So that recommendation from our Council was taken as a request to the Ministry who included it in the Education and Training Bill so that it then became part of the Act and passed on the 31st of July, meaning that we no longer have to undertake that audit or have anyone do that on our behalf. Which again, allows us to remove this idea of gathering evidence but rather to be focusing on evidence as naturally occurring. In the early childhood education sector, you will be aware, under GMA 7 the licensing criteria, that it does require appraisal. However, the Ministry is reviewing the guidance that they have for teachers and centres and professional leaders, owners, around that. So that for those teachers who are holding practising certificates, a Professional Growth Cycle will equate to their appraisal. You will be able to see that update occur on the Ministry website.

A question that we're often asked is, “What does this mean for provisionally certificated teachers? Do they stop collecting evidence?” Well no, we want them to remain, of course, in the induction and mentoring programme. And often the mentor will be wanting the provisionally certificated teacher, on the Tōmua practising certificate, to gather aspects of their evidence to bring to those meetings and



discuss. So the way that that happens is over to you and your mentors and professional leader in your setting to determine what that looks like. But we're certainly not saying that those induction and mentoring programmes would stop. The changes at this point do not apply to principals, tumuaki, and ECE professional leaders. The work to review appraisal in that space and to look at how it could be replaced is being undertaken by a parallel working party now. And there should be some information coming out for consultation in the not-too-distant future.

Break out space conversation

At this point in the Zoom webinar, we have a break out space conversation. It's the opportunity for those participants to be able to talk about what they may have already stopped in the way of evidence gathering, or what they might be going to stop in the way of evidence gathering, if it's just for Council purposes. And of course we've said that people may wish to continue observations, conversations, or other things that are valued for teachers learning and practice. So there's the discussion question. And we ask people to come back and report in the chat. What we've done is actually collate some of that chat and put that into a Word document that sits alongside this webinar so that you can read what others have been saying and discussing in the break out space. So if you're on your own, you may want to go straight to that document, titled Break Out One – Stopping Gathering Evidence for the Council. Or if you're with a group, you may wish to have that discussion together and then look at what others have been talking about.

Who we are – What we do – We belong to the Teaching Profession

Of course, as members of the teaching profession, you will recognise both our Code, ngā Tikanga Matatika, and our Standards, ngā Paerewa. These are two essential pieces that remind us who we are and what we do. They are here to guide us, inform us, enable and equip us.

Code of Professional Responsibility, Ngā Tikanga Matatika mō te Haepapa Ngaiotanga

It's worthwhile reminding ourselves, that within Our Code, Ngā Tikanga Matatika, the values, ngā uara, and our commitment to Te Tiriti are called out and are essential to how we bring our Code and our Standards to life.

Elements of Professional Growth Cycle – Preamble

So while the next few slides will explore the role of the Standards and the Professional Growth Cycle, it's important to consider the place of the Code. The Code is woven in because it's who we are and it's how we behave and act as teachers. It's a useful frame for thinking about how we do things here in this place that reflects the Code and lives the values of the teaching profession. The Code and Standards come as a package deal. For example, learning how I manage my beliefs and assumptions, which is the place of the Code, influences the way in which I am going to maintain my professional relationships.

Element: a

Over the next few slides, we're going to be looking at the six elements which make up the Professional Growth Cycle. The Standards, Ngā Paerewa, apply to a full range of kura, schools, services, and settings



right throughout New Zealand. Element a is requiring principals and professional leaders to facilitate a common understanding of what the Standards look like in their context, and what meeting and using them in daily practice will look like. This is not something that needs to be done annually, but once it's in place, it's a worthwhile tool for schools to revisit from time to time and to help with inducting new teachers into your setting. You may have already done some work using a Quality Practice Template or some other shared document, that reflects for your place, what the Standards look like. This webinar is accompanied by a downloadable guide that will support you should you want to use the Quality Practice Template to do this.

Element: b

Element b is focused on the design of an annual cycle of professional growth. Principals and professional leaders will be working with their teachers to design how this might look like in their setting. This professional growth cycle will use the Standards, Ngā Paerewa, and will work to support teachers to engage in it so that an environment of inclusive collaborate teaching can occur. It's really important to not replace what was sometimes an unwieldy appraisal system, with a large and unwieldy professional growth cycle. So this really is about you, and your teachers, what do you know has helped in you in your place. This is about lifting up the things that you value in terms of professional learning and the things that made a difference to learners.

Elements: c and d

Element c is when every teacher engages in professional learning which uses the Standards to advance their understanding of the relationship between their professional practice and the outcomes for learners. Just look again at those three things. This is about the implication the Standards have in our practice and the outcomes for learners that result. And this is the place where we can generate new thinking, innovations, and solutions to some of the challenges that we can face as teachers. Element d is around the opportunities that teachers will be given to discuss and receive feedback on their practice. And this includes observation. Clearly, this is an important part of the learning for those that hold Tōmua or provisional certification. You will notice that the amount and types of observations have not been prescribed. And this is to allow school and learning centres to select appropriate and flexible ways to meet the needs of professional learning in their place.

Elements: e and f

When there is a clear understanding of what the Standards or Ngā Paerewa look like in the setting, professional leaders and teachers generally know whether a teacher is demonstrating, or not currently demonstrating, the Standards. It will be apparent in their everyday teaching practice, and additionally, it may be apparent in their participation in the Professional Growth Cycle. Elements e and f summarise what takes place annually to confirm this. Element e, principals and professional leaders will confirm annually that each teacher has participated in the annual cycle, and they will also provide a statement to the teacher about whether they meet (Tūturu: Full Practising Certificate) or are likely to meet (Pūmau: Subject to Confirmation) the Standards or Paerewa (but with no requirement to create evidential documents). You will notice that there is no requirement to create evidential documents. Element f: if in the principal or professional leader's judgment the teacher does not currently meet the Standards or Paerewa, and then, there is more detail about that process and the processes that need to be followed if a teacher does not currently meet the Standards, on the next slide.



Endorsement decision-making: element f

Endorsement decision making within a professional growth cycle

Endorsement decisions are based on a professional leader's knowledge of the teacher's practice in relation to using and meeting the Standards/Ngā Paerewa.

A professional leader can advise the Council in the endorsement decision-making process that:

- the teacher meets the Standards/ngā Paerewa as required for their practising certificate type
- the teacher does not meet the Standards/ngā Paerewa as required for their practising certificate type.

Professional leaders can also contact the Council at any time to discuss their endorsement decision.

Note that it is important to recognise that teachers on Tōmua/Provisional are working on developing and deepening their practice as a normal part of their teacher journey. Therefore if a Tōmua teacher is progressing as expected, it would not be appropriate to choose not to endorse because they have not yet completed satisfactory induction and mentoring.

When it comes to the attention of a professional leader that a teacher's practice needs to improve and this hasn't or can't be addressed through the normal process of reflection on practice, the specific concerns should be raised directly with the teacher.

Most commonly, this will be noticed when there is a clear and shared understanding of the Standards or Paerewa and what they look like in the setting, and then seeing that the teacher's practice does not reflect them. This realisation may come to light from everyday occurrences such as:

- informal observations of the teacher's practices or behaviours
- a concern raised by teaching colleagues, students, their whānau or family,
- attitudes, behaviour and learning of children or students.

As part of the process of addressing specific concerns, additional targeted support and development opportunities along with clear expectations and timeframes for what needs to be addressed should be provided.

The steps in element f (copied below) should guide the process to be followed.

Endorsement decision making: element f

The following should guide professional leader endorsement decisions when you are concerned that a teacher's practice does not currently meet the *Standards/ngā Paerewa*:

- the concerns should be clearly identified with specific examples and discussed with the teacher, with reference to the expectations (often recorded in a quality practice template) of what demonstrating the Standards/ngā Paerewa looks like in your setting,
- support for improvement should be provided and improvement expectations set,
- if the issues are resolved, this needs to be communicated to the teacher; likewise if satisfactory progress has not been made within agreed timeframes,
- if there is not sufficient improvement in the time period discussed, performance management processes outlined in employment agreements must be complied with,
- if no further improvement is made, the professional leader is likely to consider extending formal performance management,
- if employment is terminated or the teacher resigns while this process is underway, the professional leader is required to complete a mandatory report.



What if I can't say that the teacher meets the *Standards* or *Paerewa*?

The teacher's practising certificate renewal may coincide with any stage of a formal process to support improvements in professional practice.

While this process is underway, the professional leader may choose not to endorse the teacher's practising certificate application because in their professional judgement they do not currently meet the *Standards/ngā Paerewa*. The professional leader can also choose to endorse the teacher as meeting the *Standards/Ngā Paerewa* if they are satisfied the teacher is making good progress. At any time, the professional leader can discuss their concerns with the Council and seek further advice and guidance.

If the professional leader chooses not to endorse a teacher's application, the teacher must have been advised that there are specific concerns about their current professional practice before this decision is made, and have had the opportunity to be supported to address these within an agreed timeframe.

Where the professional leader decides not to endorse the teacher, they still need to complete the endorsement as part of the teacher's application. In this situation, the professional leader chooses the option that the teacher does not meet the *Standards/ngā Paerewa*, which then requires them to provide additional information. The Council will contact the professional leader and the teacher to discuss the concerns further.

So that a professional leader can continue to employ the teacher and work with them, the Council can use their discretion to renew the teacher's practising certificate with the concerns noted as an exception to policy. This ensures that the Council is adhering to principles of fairness and natural justice, and that we do not pre-empt the outcomes of any processes being undertaken to address concerns. The Council may follow up on these concerns with the professional leader during the period of the current certificate.

Accessing further information and advice from the Teaching Council

For professional leaders, there are often questions they would like to ask or advice they wish to seek to support their decision making when they are concerned that a teacher's practice does not currently meet the *Standards* or *Paerewa*. For that reason, the Council has created two ways to access this information:

- created a new phone menu option to fast track inquiries from principals and ECE professional leaders so that they can quickly access advice
- written an Endorser Guideline document that provides detailed explanation of the endorsement process for professional leaders, with examples and links to the *Requirements for Teacher Registration, Practising Certificates and Limited Authority to Teach*.

Break out space conversation

At this point in the presentation, we break out into groups to talk about Element b – the design of the Professional Growth Cycle. If you are watching this in a group, you may want to take this opportunity to pause and think about these questions:

- How will you design an annual cycle of professional growth with teachers in your setting?
- What do you see as important for a successful Professional Growth Cycle in your setting?

We have heard a range of ideas, including:

- starting the design with staff review and discussion into what the Professional Growth Cycle could look like,
- giving support for what teachers are already doing well,
- encouraging principals and ECE professional leaders in our area to combine to share our thinking and test ideas,

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- recognising that teachers are already doing a lot that is great,
 - building collaboration and flexibility,
 - adapting for individual centres and communities, and
 - making sure that we get buy-in from teachers so that they drive their own learning.

When it came to talking about what could be successful in that Professional Growth Cycle, people said, “Well, we’ve already stopped evidence gathering, and now we’re actually using naturally-occurring evidence. We’re also working more on the Standards and building in self-questioning into the Quality Practice Template”. Others said, “We can include initial, interim and final conversations based on information and data. We should focus on the quality of collaboration and observation and how we can sustain that quality, maybe even using video. That there be more analysis of information and data analysis around teaching and learning. We’d have regular touch points and dialogue within and beyond the teams and systems to support sharing our new learning. The feedback would occur in different ways, and importantly, we’d empower colleagues to give feedback. It’s likely that we’d keep observations with coaching and observations of things that we do within our practice. And of course, conversations are going to be really important.”

Creating a Professional Growth Cycle within everyday Teaching Practice

This brings us to the final slide in this webinar. We were asked quite early on if we could create a diagram which would show what the Professional Growth Cycle might look like. And we did. However, we’ve had feedback since that shows people are emerging their own ideas that help them to conceptualise what that cycle looks like. In fact, this doesn’t necessarily look like a cycle, but it does call out some of the important ideas, such as that the Professional Growth Cycle is about everyday teaching practice, and also that the aim of this is to encourage a highly reflective, trusted profession to benefit learners. Through the centre you can see those key elements showing up and the presence of professional conversations throughout that is strong. The importance of designing a cycle to foster collaborative learning comes through, and also the importance of understanding the Standards or Paerewa in your setting. So finally, we want to say thank you for listening to this. You may well have questions that are still not answered or feedback that you would like to give. So please, use our phone line through our contact centre on 04 471 0852 or use enquiry through our enquiries@teachingcouncil.nz email address, and we would love to hear from you. All the very best to you for designing a Professional Growth Cycle that supports teacher development and learning in your setting.