NZ Kindergartens Induction and Mentoring Pilot Final Research Report

Val Podmore with Clare Wells
Abstract

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) funded four pilot projects to trial models of support for provisionally registered teacher induction and mentor support, and the Council's Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (draft Guidelines). The pilot also worked with the NZTC Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (draft Criteria) as part of the induction programme. The New Zealand Kindergartens Incorporated (NZK’s) induction and mentoring pilot was one of the four pilot projects.

The NZK pilot was developed by practitioners for practitioners. The main component of this pilot was that provisionally registered teachers (PRTs) and mentor teachers from five regions across New Zealand took part in a series of regional workshops during 2009. An online resource was also developed, with the intention of offering the PRTs and mentors ongoing support. The workshops provided presentations and a forum for in-depth discussions on topics relevant to empowering and informing mentor teachers (drawing on the draft Guidelines) and supporting PRTs to full registration (with reference to the draft Guidelines and the draft Criteria).

The research and development part of the pilot project addressed the question: How does the induction and mentoring programme, implemented by New Zealand Kindergartens, make a difference to the mentors’ and provisionally registered teachers’ (PRTs’) learning and teaching?

Methods for data generation included focus group interviews with PRTs and with mentors and observations of the workshops. Feedback was also sought from participants and from members of the project’s national advisory group. Main findings support the value of the workshops and experiences in regard to the draft Guidelines and the draft Criteria. The pilot established a model of successful induction and mentor teacher development and has built a body of knowledge and resources to support the implementation of the draft guidelines.

Key words

Teacher induction, mentors, teacher registration, early childhood education, kindergartens, focus groups
Acknowledgements

We warmly acknowledge the participation of the mentors and PRTs in the pilot many of whom travelled considerable distances to attend the regional workshops, often after work or on the weekend. We also acknowledge the mentors and PRTs in the regional focus groups. They agreed to take part in focus group interviews on two separate occasions in February and in July. Furthermore, the focus groups were timed either early on the second morning of the workshops or after the workshop was over for the day. We appreciated their impressive commitment.

Members of the advisory group contributed substantially to this project and provided ongoing information and advice. Senior teacher advisory group members also collated feedback after each workshop to contribute to pilot milestone reports. The advisory group comprised:

Lee Blackie, senior teacher, Dunedin Kindergarten Association

Pam Melgren (at the project commencement), Pam Wilson and Michelle Clarke, senior teachers Southland Kindergarten Association

Helen Durbridge, senior teacher, Nelson District Free Kindergarten Association

Jenny Varney and Anne Masterton, senior teachers, Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association

Sally Roberts and Elizabeth Leong, senior teachers, Ruahine Kindergarten Association

Ruth Mansell, independent consultant

Barbara Allen, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa (at the project commencement)

Gillian Dodson, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa

Karen Skett, NZEI Te Riu Roa

Val Podmore, researcher

Clare Wells, NZK chief executive

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We acknowledge the contribution of kindergarten association senior teachers, other than those on the advisory group, as workshop participants and facilitators, and the support they gave to their advisory group colleagues.

The pilot project was funded on contract to the NZ Teachers Council. We also recognise the financial and administrative contribution of the Ruahine, Wellington, Nelson, Dunedin and Southland kindergarten associations to the project, and their generous support and encouragement to senior teachers, mentors and PRTs participating in the pilot.
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Executive Summary

Introduction

The New Zealand Kindergartens Inc (NZK) induction and mentoring pilot was one of four pilot projects funded by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) to trial models of support for provisionally registered teacher induction and mentor support, and the Council's Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009). The pilot worked with the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009) (draft Criteria) as part of the induction programme. It also aimed to establish models of successful induction and mentor teacher development, and to build a body a knowledge (research) and resources to support the implementation of the Guidelines.

The NZK pilot ran for one year. It was developed by practitioners for practitioners. Over 100 newly qualified teachers and mentor teachers from five kindergarten associations in three regional areas took part in the pilot: Ruahine-Wellington, Nelson, and Dunedin-Southland. For the most part, participants worked in kindergartens. Mentors employed by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA joined the Wellington-Ruahine mentor group, and in Nelson, teachers working in education and care centres were part of both the mentor and the provisionally registered teacher (PRT) groups. Kindergarten senior teachers had the leadership role in each of the regional areas, co-ordinating activities, facilitating workshops, supporting focus group interviews, and working alongside PRTs and mentors in their centres and networks. The central feature of the pilot was regional workshops for both PRTs and mentors providing a wider community of learning and support beyond their own centre.

A series of workshops was held during 2009 in February, May, July and October. The PRTs and mentors met together in the first regional workshop and mostly met in their own networks during the remainder of the time. For PRTs the pilot provided the opportunity to share their experiences and engage with others working in different settings and contexts, and to examine and give meaning to the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria. For the mentors, the workshops provided the opportunity to meet with other mentors, enhance their understanding and skills for effective mentoring of new teachers, and to develop an effective culture of collaborative, reflective practice for continual improvement.

Teacher education providers and teachers from the schools sector also participated in some of the regional workshops sharing perspectives and experiences positioning the registration process as part of the teacher education continuum, and identifying the common expectations of and by PRTs and mentors in both the early childhood education and schools sector. Between workshops, senior teachers worked with the PRTs and mentors in their own regions to build on the outcomes of the workshops and to identify the issues and emerging themes that may be included for discussion and debate in the following workshop.
The pilot was overseen by a national advisory group comprising senior teachers Jenny Varney and Anne Masterton (Wellington), Sally Roberts and Elizabeth Leong (Ruahine), Helen Durbridge (Nelson), Lee Blackie (Dunedin) and Pam Wilson and Michelle Clarke (Southland) taking a lead role in the pilot in each association, independent advisor Ruth Mansell, Barbara Allen and Gillian Dodson, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa, Karen Skett, NZEI Te Riu Roa, researcher Val Podmore, and Clare Wells, NZ Kindergartens.

The advisory group met a number of times during the pilot to monitor progress, receive feedback from each workshop, develop the framework for the next workshop, and discuss and explore the key issues and trends emerging from the research.

Research Question

The NZ Kindergarten (NZK) pilot research addressed the overarching, key research question:

How does the induction and mentoring programme, implemented by NZK, make a difference to the mentors’ and provisionally registered teachers’ (PRTs’) learning and teaching?

The NZ Teachers Council Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009) were an integral part of the induction and mentoring pilot programme and of the research.

Methods

Key data generation tools included: observations of workshops to record discussions and key themes and issues arising, and focus group interviews (Bloor, et al., 2001; Stewart, Shandasani, & Rook, 2006). In addition, all participants at the workshops were invited to provide feedback, and feedback was also sought from members of the project’s national advisory group.

In each of the three regions, 10 mentors and 10 PRTs participated in a focus group in February 2009, and 7-10 of the same participants took part in each of the follow-up focus groups in July 2009. Invited participants in the mentors’ groups were selected, by the local senior teachers, to include representation from each of the regional associations (and in Wellington-Ruahine, mentors from both of the two regions and also from Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA). Invited PRT participants were selected purposively by the senior teachers in their region, to ensure diversity was represented. The researcher facilitated all of the 12 focus group interviews, supported by the regional senior teachers who also took responsibility for recording the proceedings.
Key Findings and Implications

The main findings of the NZK pilot affirm the value of the series of workshops (including the value of networking), and provide informative insights on mentors’ and PRTs’ experiences with the draft Guidelines and Draft Registered Teacher Criteria. Key findings and implications are summarised below.

The results of the research strongly support the usefulness of the series of workshops developed for the mentors and PRTs. Both the mentors and the PRTs were enthusiastic about the workshops, and their expectations were clearly met. This was evident in the data from the focus groups and from the feedback that mentors and PRTs provided at the workshops.

Building relationships and making time to talk emerged as quintessential components of effective induction and mentoring programmes. Open and honest communication, respecting views, taking risks, and setting clear expectations are all key elements of a trusted relationship. Goal setting, “courageous conversations”, seeking and giving feedback, creativity and reaching our potential, understanding generational differences, and mentoring models, were among the topics explored and skills that were developed. For mentors in particular focusing on these aspects was important. While many mentors already felt they had these skills, as the pilot progressed it became evident that they needed to build confidence in these areas.

Findings emerged from the focus group discussions and the workshop observations on the mentors’ and PRTs’ experiences with the Draft guidelines for induction and mentoring programmes and mentor teacher development in Aotearoa (2008/2009) and the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009). Mentors commented that the draft Guidelines provide a useful focus when PRTs work with mentors. They also suggested some points of clarification in regard to the wording of the draft Guidelines. Mentors found the draft Criteria useful when working with PRTs towards full registration.

Members of the NZK pilot’s advisory group reflected on the research findings and worked collectively to identify a number of key points that are potentially success factors for induction and mentoring in early childhood education contexts. These factors included:

- Our pilot, developed in synchrony with early childhood values, was consistent with the principles of Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), and included socio-cultural approaches and team collaboration.
- The NZK induction and mentoring programme was developed “by practitioners for practitioners”, and this contributed to increasing confidence among the participants.
- The pilot was fully supported by kindergarten employers, and implemented across associations and geographical regions.
- A nationally designed approach to regional workshops overseen by a central advisory group contributed to a consistent and sustainable processes of induction and mentoring.
The process emphasised the value of networking and taking time to unpack the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009) and Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring programmes (2008/2009) and the importance of shared understandings.

The pilot programme included “exemplary” planned professional development for beginning teachers, “hooking teachers early in their careers”, and influencing wider teaching teams. It “tapped into an energy for more”.

Collaboration was a major strength of the formalised and focused professional development opportunities offered to mentors and PRTs.

There was consistency of quality of the programme as a whole and the workshops specifically, amidst regional diversity.

There was a focus among the participants on benefits for children, through enhanced teaching and learning.

Sustainability and transferability

The NZK pilot model relied on bringing people together to share ideas, debate and discuss issues, learn from and support each other, and more broadly to build a professional learning community both for teachers new to the profession and for mentors. The collaborative model is transferable and the content of the workshops are relevant to PRTs and mentors across the education sector. Our pilot shows the issues PRTs and mentors have around expectations of the process and of their roles, are the same across services. This is evident in the feedback from participants in focus groups who reflected on the questions from a teacher’s perspective and focused on teaching practice rather than from a service perspective. We suggest this would also be true for PRTs and mentors in schools.

Teachers participating in professional development within their centre or school and often within regional networks, is well established and reflected in the pilot model. The model requires a plan for professional development which focuses on supporting PRTs and mentors over a sustained period of time. This may require ECE services, and in particular education and care centres, to commit to professional development over time rather than to ‘one off’ opportunities which is likely to be the case at present. Feedback from the participants from kindergartens and centres strongly supports the importance of building trusted relationships and making the time to talk together to understand and give meaning to the draft Criteria and draft Guidelines. These features are relevant to all teachers regardless of the age of the children they teach.

The sustainability of the programme, particularly for teachers in education and care services, will rely on managers and committees being better informed about teacher registration, funding to support participation, and appropriate professional development programmes and opportunities. (See Emerging Issues and Trends) The removal of the target for 100% qualified and registered teachers in teacher-led services by 2012 and the cuts to the Ministry of Education professional development budget announced earlier this year, have the potential to undermine both effective induction and mentoring programmes. Centres may not be able to afford to support teachers to undertake a comprehensive professional development programme.
The sustainability of the programme for kindergarten teachers is assured. NZK associations are committed to employing 100% qualified and registered teachers and the will look for ways to realise that commitment. The research presents rich information for senior teachers to include in revised induction programmes and to reflect in professional development for kindergarten leaders and mentors. It highlights the key elements of successful induction and mentoring programmes, which can be built into associations’ programmes that both reflect local characteristics and are nationally consistent.

For early childhood education, the issues or potential difficulties in participating in the pilot were not in relation to differences in teaching and learning between services: the model was sufficiently robust to be relevant to teachers in any setting. These were issues such as the appropriate use of available funds to support participation in an induction programme. While these issues have an impact on programmes, they fell outside the brief of the pilot. We have identified the issues nonetheless as they will be critical to address if effective professional development for PRTs and mentors is to be a reality across the sector. (See Emerging Issues and Trends)

Emerging Issues and Trends

The advisory group identified a number of issues and trends emerging from the project relating to the induction and mentoring process, relationships, and access to resources and support. These issues emerging from the findings of the focus groups and the reflection and experiences of participants, have the potential to create barriers to effective induction and mentoring programmes in early childhood education settings. The advisory committee recommends these issues be considered by the Council and strategies developed to address them. (See Discussion and Implications)

Relationships

- Difficulties for PRTs particularly in education and care centres, asking employers for support when there is no programme in place.
- Mentors need to adapt their approaches in different situations: working with PRTs who are new graduates and have been working in the sector for a number of years; working with people who have worked in other services; working with those who are new to the sector.
- Addressing the particular difficulties for some mentors mentoring PRTs who are older and may have had considerable experience working in a centre prior to gaining their registration.
- Managing the tension between socio-cultural theory from teacher education programmes and working in settings based on development theory.
- Establishing and maintaining networks of PRTs/mentors is an important way to share ideas and resources, identify issues, and gain support.
Criteria

- Some PRTs have never seen the Teachers Council material and there are no resources in centres.
- Clarity around the transition from the old to the new criteria is needed.
- Clarity about the purpose of the (professional) dimensions/criteria, the (compliance) ERO review indicators, and the (industrial) professional standards, and the links between them, and with appraisal. The advisory group identified the need for senior teachers and others with oversight of the registration process, to have a shared understanding and view of the criteria.

Mentors

- Mentors managing the pressures of working with more than one PRT in a centre.
- Mentors do not always choose to be in that role: de/refining expectations of leadership.
- Consideration of whether there should be an optimum number of PRTs per mentor in each centre.
- Additional pressures on kindergartens and teachers such as kindergarten reorganisation resulting in larger more complex teams, increase demands on mentors and PRTs. In kindergartens and centres, the mentor is generally the head teacher or supervisor/person with registration taking on the induction programme as an extra responsibility. Finding ways to recognise and support mentors manage the additional responsibility and the expectations of the role should be part of the employer’s induction or registration policy.

Process

- Clarity around expectations of the mentor and PRT is central to the success of the programme.
- PRTs need to be aware that reaching full registration may take longer than two years, and that the mentor may not recommend it if they do not think the PRT has satisfactorily completed the induction programme.
- Mentors need to have the confidence to make a recommendation for full registration or not, and be supported in that decision.
- Finding time for PRTs and mentors to meet on a regular basis is a challenge in early childhood education settings. People may not have the same non-contact times, or work full-days, and the staff hour count policy affects a centre’s funding if registered teachers are absent from the centre for more than 40 hours.
- Priority should be given to spending time working through and giving meaning to the criteria and guidelines, and discussing what each looks like in practice.
**Teacher education**

- Variable and insufficient information given by teacher education providers to graduates, and in some cases, no information.
- Promoting registration as part of a continuing teacher education journey.
- Ensuring graduates know and understand what is expected of them to reach full registration.

**ICT**

- PRTs may not have access to the internet – at home or at work, or can spend the required time using ICT to source and review information, or have access to suitable printing equipment. There may only be one PC on site which is being used by a number of people in the centre for purposes such as administration.
- Using ICT will help build an ICT culture in kindergartens and centres.
- Clarity of purpose, time to participate and confidence in using technology are central to the effectiveness of the online facility.
- People need time and support to build their confidence using ICT as a teaching tool as well as a means for ongoing professional dialogue as part of their induction programme or mentoring professional development.
- Security and confidentiality of the online discussion is an important consideration for people signing up to an online learning community.
- Consideration of whether a web-based online facility be for professional discussion and debate, or a place to share resources including readings, or both.

**Funding**

- Accessing release time for PRTs and mentors is difficult when early childhood education funding to services is attached to the number of ratioed/registered teachers in the centre at all times (staff hour count policy).
- People are using their own time to participate in programmes because of funding pressures and/or a lack of relievers which limits the amount of time a person is granted by the employer to be involved.
- Accountability and guidance is needed for the use of the ministry funding to support PRTs. In some cases, centres have received the funding and no or limited support has been put in place, or the PRT has left and the centre has retained the funding and the next centre does not receive funding to start/complete the programme, or no more funding can be claimed (more than 2 years).
- Some education and care centres give the funding to the PRT to use at their discretion which may not be used appropriately eg: a trip to a conference in Australia; purchasing equipment
such as a camera or laptop which the centre keeps; regarding the funding as belonging to the centre, making it difficult for the PRT to access.

- Teachers ‘subject to confirmation’ do not attract funding support but in many cases, need a similar programme to the PRT. This situation is likely to become more prevalent as more teachers come back into the service as a result of the recession or teacher supply issues.

- There is concern about access to professional development to support induction and mentoring programmes in the future with the reduction in funding announced in the government’s 2009 budget.

- Concern was expressed towards the end of the project, when the Minister of Education announced the target for 100% qualified and registered teachers in teacher-led early childhood education services had been abandoned. The implications of this major policy shift for ongoing support for professional development and induction and mentoring programmes are significant for the sector.

Overcoming the barriers

Drawing on informal feedback from PRTs and mentors, and the research findings, the advisory group identified a number of issues that would need to be addressed in order to support effective induction and mentoring programme in the early childhood education sector in the future.

Resource development

- In workshop two or three, focusing on the draft Criteria or draft Guidelines and identifying teaching strategies against each.

- The New Zealand Teachers Council clearly setting out its expectations both content and process, particularly on the level of documentation.

- Clarifying the level and use of available funding to services to support the registration process.

- Clarifying the Registered Teacher Criteria in relation to the industrial professional standards, and teacher appraisal.

- Producing guidelines on entitlements and expectations: for beginning teachers and mentors, employers and other teaching staff.

- Developing a package for employers – to be received when a PRT applies for registration.

Information distribution

- Providing more information on induction and mentoring is via the internet.

- Making the resources (above) available to teachers to pass on and discuss with students in their final year of study.
• Arranging ‘Introduction to the profession’ days for graduates post-exam time.

• Identifying opportunities to present the NZK pilot research findings, to talk about the pilot and to initiate discussion on the key elements such as the kindergarten senior teacher hui in March 2010 and Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa conference in July 2010.

• Hosting an annual beginning teacher’s conference for teachers across the education sector nationally or regionally.

• Meeting with teacher education providers to present the findings, highlighting the connections pre/post graduation and expectations of beginning teachers.

*Policy areas*

• Funding: ensuring accountability for funding and monitoring of expenditure tagged to supporting PRTs to become fully registered; exploring excluding teachers undertaking registration related activities from the ‘staff hour count’ policy requirements.

• Professional development: providing opportunities for PRTs and mentors to undertake professional development.

• Mentors: exploring how people other than those employed as a registered teacher in a centre, can maintain registration and therefore be available to be a mentor.
Introduction

Background Overview

The New Zealand Kindergartens Inc (NZK) induction and mentoring pilot was one of four pilot projects funded by the New Zealand Teachers Council. The purpose of the pilot projects is to trial models of support for provisionally registered teacher induction and mentor support, and the Council’s Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009). The pilot worked with the NZTC Registered Teacher Criteria (2009) (draft Criteria) as part of the induction programme. It also aimed to establish models of successful induction and mentor teacher development, and to build a body of knowledge (research) and resources to support the implementation of the Guidelines.

The induction and mentoring pilots were developed to match the different circumstances of the sectors within education: early childhood (NZK), primary (Auckland UniService's Educatice Mentor Programme), secondary (Massey University's Professional Learning Community), and Māori medium (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi's Connected Approach) (NZ Teachers Council, Autumn 2009). An external evaluation of the effectiveness of the four induction and mentoring pilots is in progress by Martin Jenkins and Associates, on contract to the Council.

The NZTC’s draft Guidelines, which set out principles for effective induction practices and mentor teacher development, were developed with reference to the Council's Learning to Teach research (NZ Teachers Council, Autumn 2009). The Learning to Teach research (Aitken, Bruce Ferguson, McGrath, Piggot-Irvine, & Ritchie, 2008; Cameron, 2007; Cameron. Dingle, & Brooking, 2007) investigated induction practices that were currently in place in New Zealand.

The planned key feature of NZK’s early childhood pilot was that provisionally registered teachers (PRTs) and mentor teachers from five regions across New Zealand (Ruahine, Wellington, Nelson, Dunedin and Southland) would take part in a series of regional workshops during 2009. It was also intended that the PRTs and mentors would be supported by an online resource.

ECE Induction and Mentoring Pilot

Vision, Purpose, and Scope

Learning to be a teacher is a career-long continuous process. It builds on the teacher’s life experiences, is focused through initial teacher education, developed during the provisional registration period, and extended throughout their teaching life. Continuing professional development is influenced by reflection on experiences with learners, by collaborating with colleagues and with parents and others in the
community, by critical enquiry informed by research and other sources of new ideas and information. The best teaching brings about change in the learners as well as in the teachers themselves, welcomes challenges to accepted practice and is always seeking to progressively improve outcomes for learners. This is transformative teaching. (New Zealand Kindergartens Incorporated, August 2008).

The New Zealand Kindergartens (NZK) developed the above description of teachers’ learning to guide the development of this pilot project. NZK’s descriptive statement is consistent with the vision statements for induction and mentoring programmes for provisionally registered teachers (PRTs) and for an effective mentor, which are contained in the NZTC draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009) (draft Guidelines) and the draft Criteria.

This pilot project was designed to take account of the range of current knowledge and thinking in this country as well as internationally, about how best to support teachers’ continuing learning. The criteria for judging success in learning and teaching are responsive to changing expectations of the community and society as a whole. An example of this process is the Draft Registered Teachers Criteria which were developed with the benefit of wide consultation. These criteria for gaining and maintaining teacher registration represent the expectations and goals for Aotearoa New Zealand teaching and learning today and were the basis for assessing and supporting the progress and achievement of PRTs.

Teachers at all stages of their career - provisionally registered, fully registered, and those serving as mentors and professional leaders - are all learners as well as teachers. A purpose of this pilot was to encourage and support individual teachers to continue their own and others’ learning in relation to the changing expectations of society and new knowledge continually being gained across disciplines and sectors.

Early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand is in a transition phase, working towards the goal of every teacher of young children being well qualified and fully registered. While this has always been the requirement for kindergarten teachers, they are challenged, as are teachers in primary and secondary, to continue to question and enhance their practice. NZK’s regional associations, with their experience of systematic development and ongoing support for teachers at all stages of their careers, were well placed to support colleagues in other services where there has not been a long history of professional qualifications and registration.

A further purpose of this pilot was to draw effectively on the experience and expertise of the kindergarten associations, to utilise existing support structures within and across associations, and to offer opportunities for networks of teachers and mentors from different services through a supportive environment where they could learn from each other and from a range of sources of ideas and information.

The NZK pilot was developed by practitioners, for practitioners. A group of senior kindergarten practitioners across the regions, who have substantial experience in professional leadership roles with a wide range of teachers, were actively involved in developing the pilot proposal and
carrying out the pilot through to completion. The intention was that their leadership would be strengthened during the process of the pilot. NZK also established national advisory group to meet face-to-face and via teleconference to monitor the implementation of the pilot, feedback issues to the Council, share ideas and contribute to the planning of the agendas for both the PRT and the mentors' workshops.

The pilot built on current experiences in kindergarten. Kindergarten associations were already providing a well established and comprehensive structured support system with professional development and site-based mentoring from experienced registered teachers, usually the head teacher with oversight by senior teachers, within the framework of requirements for full registration by the NZTC. Their advice and guidance programmes had been developed over many years, changing over time as a result of ongoing review and changing curriculum guidelines. The expectation was that this robust structure of site-based mentoring would continue, and be further strengthened by the new elements of the pilot, regional collaborative workshops for both mentors and PRTs.

When this pilot commenced, several innovative developments already underway in kindergarten associations were encouraging and informing further professional development. For example, in the Nelson region, some teachers in early childhood education and care centres were part of a Teachers Registering Teachers contract with the kindergarten association which provides mentoring in their own centre, and these similarly continued and were enhanced by participation in the pilot. This was congruent with one of the models of external mentoring recommended in current research (Aitken, Ferguson, McGrath, Piggot-Irvine, & Ritchie, 2008).

The five kindergarten associations in the three regions in the pilot represented widely diverse communities of learners and teachers, both geographically and culturally, from the isolation of Fiordland to the urban ethnic mix of Porirua. The various associations operate a changing mixture of kindergarten models beyond the traditional sessional organisation, such as full day, school day, and centres for under-2-year-olds.

Prior to the pilot, these associations were already demonstrating a commitment to innovative and creative projects to explore fresh ways to provide quality early childhood education. Examples included a number of kindergartens involved in Ministry of Education Centre of Innovation projects, a centre in Invercargill involved in the Parent Support and Development Pilot Project, and Nelson, Dunedin and Southland associations involved in the Early Childhood ICT Professional Learning Project. Kindergarten associations’ exploration of new ways to achieve quality early childhood education is underpinned by participation in research, and directions from the wider education sector and across disciplines such as medicine and social work.

It was expected that kindergarten associations would offer information and understanding about ways in which early childhood centres could become more culturally adaptable and could build collaborative networks in communities, by listening to the experience of other centres, such as those in the Wellington region where some kindergartens have established links with the local marae and the kohanga reo and with a’oga amata, and where some have high proportions of Pasifika, Asian and Middle Eastern children. As well, PRTs could learn from the centres in Wellington which have a number of immigrant and refugee children and links with the refugee
and migrant service which supports children, families and teachers. This rich mixture of innovation and exploration potentially provided a fertile ground for the induction and mentoring pilot programme to flourish and benefit the learning of teachers and ultimately of children.

Specific planning for each aspect of the pilot programme was carried out with reference to the draft Guidelines and was informed by the principles, vision, and essential components described in the draft. Recent research on induction and mentoring (Cameron, Dingle, & Brooking 2007; Gless, 2007) also informed the design and content of the regional workshops. The workshops were planned to provide PRTs with opportunities to engage with others who were working in different contexts at the beginning of their careers, to hear fresh ideas from colleagues in other centres, and to stimulate teachers to reflect on their practice and how they could further develop professionally.

Teacher Induction and Mentor Teacher Development Plan and Rationale

Overview of the Programme for PRTs

The NZK plan was developed to provide structured induction experience for PRTs, both first-year and second-year teachers, in three regions: Dunedin-Southland, Nelson, and Wellington-Ruhaine.

The expectation was that the PRTs would be employed generally in kindergartens, but it was also intended that other early childhood education services would be involved wherever they had a contract with a kindergarten association for provision of mentoring in their own centre, for example Teachers Registering Teachers in the Nelson area. The central element of the plan was the establishment of regional collaborative network meetings for PRTs and mentors, to provide for a wider community of learning and support beyond their own centre.

Teachers participated in regional face-to-face workshops four times during the year. This process was aligned with the recommendations for external support groups for professional development for early childhood PRTs (Aitken et al., 2008).

Each PRT participated in the following PRT network workshops:

1. A regional workshop in February, over two days, including at least one day with mentors. Lecturers from the University of Otago College of Education actively involved in the May workshop. As planned, and described in detail in the research methods section of this report, in each region a group of 10 PRTs also participated in a focus group interview for the purpose of the qualitative research and development study.

2. A regional workshop in May for one day (on one of four days across the regions).

3. A regional workshop for one day in July (during the term break)

4. A regional workshop for one day in October.
These regional workshops provided PRTs with focused time to discuss with PRTs in other centres the range of professional practice and thinking at this stage of their careers, and to take account of this in relation to the context of their own centre. During the process of the workshops, PRTs had the opportunity in a regional forum to ask questions, share their thinking, learn what other PRTs were experiencing. An intention was that, as a result of the intensive workshops, PRTs would find ways to access information, advice and support from resource people in the wider community. The professional learning experienced during these network meeting days was followed through with enriched mentoring programmes within the teachers’ own centres, with the mentors similarly participating in regional workshops. Details of the participants, components, and implementation of the regional workshops for PRTs and mentors are provided later in the introduction to this report, and observations of the discussions that took place are described in the results section.

Collaboration amongst colleagues and increasing the “family of support” to extend beyond the mentor teacher and the mentor alone have been emphasised as exemplary practices for teacher induction (Aitken, Ferguson, McGrath, Piggot-Irvine, & Ritchie, 2008). It was anticipated that, in this pilot, the series of regional workshops would provide peer support in a wider learning community which would enable teachers to explore new ideas and learn from others across their region, and to focus in more depth on their professional learning.

Tertiary institution lecturers were included in the second workshop for PRTs in Southland-Dunedin, in order to support cohesive and seamless continuity between the PRTs’ initial teacher education and the process towards full registration. It was anticipated that understanding the links between theories of pedagogy, and practice in their current roles, would enhance teachers’ continuing learning during employment as qualified teachers (Anthony, Kane, et al., 2008).

It was envisaged that PRTs’ visits to other centres, a current requirement of the registration process, would better informed and more likely to be useful when PRTs were already engaging with some of these teachers, and could select and focus their visits to make the best use of the opportunity. Professional learning opportunities from a range of sources in the community, and from a diverse range of centres, which can be focused on the everyday teaching practice in their own centres, potentially would be enhanced by PRTs learning what teachers in other centres had found to be helpful.

The workshops were planned with the intention of enhancing quality across the regions, providing PRTs with the opportunity to engage in a professional context with other PRTs, and enabling them to be better equipped to take initiatives in and take responsibility for their own continued learning. Both PRTs and mentors were involved in the regional workshops, in order that both groups might benefit from having a common framework for thinking about their professional learning. PRTs had the opportunity, along with mentors, to consider ways that evidence can be gathered for formative and summative assessment of the extent to which they are meeting their goals and making progress towards full registration. It was proposed that they would, in this way, develop a greater understanding of the process of assessment for full registration and of ways to make the best use of it for further learning.
The workshops were also planned to provide an opportunity for PRTs to become familiar with the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria to understand the requirements in the context of the teachers’ own everyday practice in the context of their own centre, their experience with children with the learners they teach, with their own learning programmes, with teaching colleagues, support staff and other professionals, whanau/families, other agencies and people in the community.

A further intention was that there would be opportunities for PRTs to participate in online dialogue with other teachers, to receive and raise questions as they occur and receive feedback promptly. This facility was through the NZK website, where it was planned that there would be separate areas for PRTs and mentors involved in the project.

Overview of the Plan and Processes for Mentors

The plan was to provide high quality collaborative learning and professional development for mentor teachers in five kindergarten associations across three regions, Dunedin-Southland, Nelson, and Wellington-Ruahine. Most of these mentors were head teachers in kindergartens, a number were senior teachers, and some in Nelson were contracted by the association specifically to mentor teachers in other early childhood centres.

For the purposes of this pilot project, the term mentor teachers refers to those who are responsible for mentoring provisionally registered teachers and assessing and recommending them for full registration. Sometimes they are referred to as tutor teachers or supervising teachers.

It was intended that regional mentor networks established in this pilot would ensure a realistic catchment area for people to access, as well as promoting ongoing professional engagement across the services and with schools, to create self supporting learning communities of teachers. Provision of regional professional development and external support groups, particularly for mentors in early childhood education sector, has been recommended in current research (Aitken et al., 2008).

Each mentor participated in the following regional workshops:

1. Regional workshop in February, over two days, including at least one day with PRTs.
2. Regional workshop in May for one day (on one of four days cross the regions), with school based mentors attending.
3. National workshop in July for two days (during the term break).
4. Regional workshop for one day in October.

This plan allowed for mentors to come together once in the year at the national level to engage more broadly and to access resources that might otherwise be too costly, such as contracting academics to participate in sessions.
The pilot provided release time for mentors to meet with other mentors, to enhance their understanding and skills for effective mentoring of new teachers, and to ensure an effective culture of collaborative, reflective practice for continual improvement of practice in their team. The aim was to ensure mentors had the ongoing opportunity as professional leaders to learn to challenge and advance their own teaching practice, to better support PRTs, to contribute fully to the profession, and to enhance the learning outcomes for children. The detailed planning for each workshop made reference to the NZTC draft guidelines, and the implementation clearly reflects the vision and principles of those guidelines.

It was expected that the pilot would provide a mechanism for mentors across regions to moderate the way they use evidence and make judgements about the progress of teachers towards meeting the draft Criteria thus increasing their ability to achieve consistency of standards for full registration.

The pilot built on NZK experience. NZK has been active in its commitment to the full implementation of Pathways to the future: Nga Huarahi Arataki – the early childhood education strategic plan (Ministry of Education 2002), which aimed to have all regulated staff in teacher-led services registered by 2012. During the process of the pilot, the kindergarten service continued to have a professional leadership role in working towards this aim.

Kindergarten associations recognise the key role mentors have as professional leaders and this responsibility is recognised in the employment conditions for head teachers. Kindergarten associations have strong experience in developing the leadership roles of head teachers and senior teachers and in communicating a cohesive set of expectations for these roles. Mentor support and development is now due for attention. These expectations are closely aligned with those in the draft Guidelines which underpinned the NZK pilot.

The regional workshops were structured to ensure that collaborative processes were learned and used, and that this learning was transferred to the everyday work of the mentors in their own kindergartens and centres. Mentors employed by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA participated in the Wellington-Ruahine workshops. We recognised that support for mentors needs to be flexible and responsive to the varying settings in which they work (Aitken et al., 2008). The pilot networks recognised and disseminated a range of different models of mentoring, such as the Teachers Registering Teachers programme in place in Nelson Kindergarten Association. The varying experience of associations such as Nelson in providing mentors for teachers in other services were considered for enhancing practice in other areas.

The workshops were also structured to develop specific skills for mentors. There is evidence that mentors do not automatically have the skills needed to effectively support beginning teachers (National Centre for Research on Teacher Learning, 1995). The workshops were planned to provide opportunities for mentors to experience a “culture of mentoring” where mentors learn new skills and work with other mentors to improve their teaching and practices (National Centre for Research on Teacher Learning, 1995).
The selection from a wide range of mentoring skills and issues to be addressed during the workshops were initially established during the planning for the first workshop, and then were reviewed in consultation with the mentors. Skills included those listed below.

Assessment of PRTs was a planned focus of the workshops. Problem analysis knowledge and skills, including how to collect data and use it to inform teaching (Achinstein and Villar, 2004) are among the skills that will be incorporated into the mentor workshops.

Developing mentoring and coaching skills, as well as techniques for the pedagogy of mentoring, such as giving critical and constructive feedback, setting expectations and goals, and other interpersonal skills were key elements of the workshop programmes and were followed up by mentors working with senior teachers.

Extending mentors as reflective practitioners, matching the enquiry processes expected of PRTs with their own professional practice and learning, always with the goal of achieving the best teaching and outcomes for children.

Sharing of approaches to establishing professional conversations (Timperley, 2001), providing constructive critical feedback, and effective methods of documentation were issues addressed in the workshops.

Reciprocal relationships that encourage the PRT to take increasing responsibility for identifying the next steps in their own professional learning were encouraged.

Enriching and enhancing the quality of the mentoring processes, in providing formal reports and written feedback to provisionally registered teachers, using professional judgements to ensure more consistent assessment of the progress of provisionally registered teachers towards the meeting the criteria for full registration.

It was proposed that the pilot would facilitate greater consistency of induction programmes and assessment for registration for PRT across different regional associations, while retaining adaptability to meet the needs of different sectors and individual teachers.

Working with teacher mentors from primary schools was also part of the plan for mentors, to enhance collaboration across sectors. Mentors from primary schools in the pilot regions would be invited to participate at least once in the year to share curriculum knowledge and teaching practice across early childhood and primary education. The new NZ curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) sets out ways in which it follows on from Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education 1996). It was anticipated that, as schools work toward the full implementation of the new NZ curriculum in 2010, they would benefit from shared professional development with early childhood teachers. Early childhood teachers could also support the learning of the children they teach when they understand what will be expected of them in the school sector. Mentors in the early childhood sector would have an opportunity to influence this cross-sectoral sharing for the ultimate benefit of learning outcomes for children. Teacher mentors were involved in the Dunedin-Southland area, primarily to present a school’s context in the support of induction and mentoring rather than to participate alongside participants in the pilot.
Besides supporting the development of mentoring skills, the pilot also was planned to give mentor teachers the opportunity to focus on the draft Criteria, and discuss how these would form a useful framework for their work with PRTs as well as with other teachers in their kindergartens and centres. It was intended that feedback would be provided to the NZTC on the draft criteria and on the draft Guidelines. A further aspect was to consider the best ways to use the kindergarten teachers professional standards in their employment agreement, along with the Registered Teacher Criteria, as tools for achieving greater consistency of quality teaching.

It was envisaged that the establishment of a central on-line mentor teacher network through the NZK would support mentors to: extend the scope of their collaborative networks, learn from others experience, share problems, and get feedback promptly. Mentors would also benefit from acquiring skills in online learning and the use of technology to as a source of information and a means of enhancing their professional development.

Kindergarten senior teachers recognised that their processes for supporting continuing professional development for mentor teachers needed to be carefully planned and systematically enhanced. Sixteen senior teachers in these associations were involved in the pilot. The senior teachers agreed to contribute to planning, organising, and facilitating the workshops, and to actively supporting the research and development component of the pilot.

An intention of the pilot was that leadership would be distributed in this way, helping to ensure that professional leaders in different roles followed through in their everyday practice the learning gained. It is expected that senior teachers and mentor teachers would, as a result of these workshops and continuing feedback, be working with those they support in different and more effective ways.

Mentors employed by Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA participated in the Wellington-Ruahine workshops and it was proposed that the mentor network could in time, with further funding, be extended to include those from other services in each region such as Barnardos or Nga Kohanga Reo and PRTs and mentors in other kindergarten associations.

Recent research demonstrated that support for mentors needs to flexible and responsive to the varying settings in which they work (Aitken et al., 2008). Accordingly, the pilot networks aimed to recognise and disseminate a range of different models of mentoring, such as the Teachers Registering Teachers plan in place in Nelson Kindergarten Association.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Research by Cameron (2007) was considered when reflecting on appropriate theoretical underpinnings. A major consideration for this sector was to draw on relevant theoretical perspectives that have resonance with early childhood teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. The design of the research, and of the workshops themselves, drew on socio-cultural theoretical constructs relevant to making changes as a community of learners and inquirers (ECE teachers) (Rogoff, 1998; Wells, 2001, 2002).
Socio-cultural theories are embedded in Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996), in current early childhood teacher education programmes, and underpin aspects of the knowledge requirements for graduates (e.g., as documented in tertiary education course providers’ graduate profiles). Accordingly, the key theoretical constructs underpinning this pilot programme and the interwoven research are the socio-cultural notions of “communities of learners” (Rogoff, 1998), and “communities of inquiry” (Wells, 2001, 2002). Rogoff (1998, 2003) focuses on participation in a community of learners. Wells (2002, pp. 200-201, 209), who emphasises inquiry as an approach to learning and making changes, uses two metaphors as tools for thinking: “the improvable object” and the “spiral of knowing”.

Objects can include a master plan (or, in this context, aspects of an induction and mentoring programme); a “spiral of knowing” is a tool for thinking and inquiry that integrates experience, information, knowledge building, and understanding, leading to action.

Participants in “communities of inquiry”, who may be students, teachers, (or mentors and PRTs), and researchers, all reflect on data and jointly inquire about meanings, actions, and changes (Wells, 2002, p. 209). Gordon Wells’s work is fundamental to activity theory.

Planning the workshop programme

The NZK pilot programme started at the end of 2008 with the first of the four workshop series starting in February 2009. There were 16 workshops in total. The first workshops held in February were attended by both PRTs and mentors together for a period of time. For the remaining workshops, PRTs and mentors met separately. The national hui for mentors provided the first and only opportunity for mentors to meet together as a national group. It was an important opportunity for mentors to network, and they appreciated being together for an extended period over two days to exchange ideas, explore the issues and share resources and most importantly, to focus on their role as mentor.

The main focus of the workshops was on acquiring skills and practical knowledge, building confidence and understanding of expectations, and building and understanding of the relationship – for PRTs, mentors, teaching teams and for those supporting teachers in their roles.

The design of the mentor workshop programmes reflect the key areas of knowledge, skills and dispositions and the suggested content for development programmes set out in the draft Guidelines. As the NZK pilot was for one year, it was not possible to examine and explore all aspects of the draft Guidelines in that timeframe.

As well as drawing on the draft Guidelines, the model reflected the issues emerging from workshop discussions and feedback from participants, the preliminary findings from the research and the knowledge of senior teachers and others in a professional role, about the needs of the PRTs and the mentors with whom they work. The advisory group brought together this knowledge along with their own understandings about mentoring, which informed the next stage of the pilot. While the advisory group identified the content for workshops, it was up to the advisory group members and their senior teacher colleagues in the regions, to plan their workshop in a way that best suited the participants and met their particular needs. Drawing on
each of these elements gave the advisory group confidence that what was being provided to PRTs and mentors, is appropriate, relevant and timely.

The results of the topline survey undertaken by MartinJenkins in 2009, showed the mentors participating in the NZK pilot acknowledged and endorsed the importance of the skills, knowledge and dispositions identified in the draft Guidelines. Particular skills such as goal setting, having difficult conversations, questioning, and providing critical feedback were some of the areas mentors sought further professional development around.

A central factor present in each workshop discussion was the importance of building and maintaining a high trust relationship between the PRT and the mentor. Providing opportunities for mentors and PRTs to discuss and understand what a high trust relationship looks like, and developing skills and knowledge to assist in building those relationships, has been a key element of the programme.

The induction and mentoring expectations of PRTs involved in the programme include that they are a valued and respected member of the teaching team; will have a trusted relationship with their mentor; can expect help and support from mentors and other teachers; are clear about the expectations of the induction programme: content and timeframe; will work with the mentor and other members of the teaching team; and will have the time and resources to be able to confidently participate in the programme, indicated to the advisory group, the particular issues or skill development to be included in the workshop programmes.

The workshops covered a wide number of topics including:

- in February, an introduction to the pilot and to the draft Criteria and draft Guidelines, clarification of expectations, opportunities to establish and build networks, discussion on teaching practice, and ways to set goals and provide constructive feedback. The mentor workshop also focused on the skills and attributes of mentors and their roles, responsibilities and expectations.

- in May, building on the February workshop for PRTs, asking for and giving feedback, goal setting, discussion on the draft Criteria, online learning communities, and resource sharing including evidence. For mentors, content included initiating conversations on professional practice, expectations of teachers, effective mentoring including observations, written reports, giving feedback, and online discussion.

- in July, continuing on from the previous workshops, for PRTs content focused on indepth discussion on the draft criteria: unpacking the criteria, understanding meaning, exploring how the criteria would look in practice, goal setting: linking goal setting to the criteria, courageous or difficult conversations, sharing resources and ideas: documentation and evidence, reflective practice: what does that look like and the online facility: is it working for PRTs. For mentors, the national hui focused on developing mentor’s understanding of their role as well as providing practical skills and resources including managing difficult conversations, giving meaning to the draft Guidelines, theory and practice of the role of mentor, and understanding generational differences. Three newly registered teachers talked
about their experiences and expectations of mentoring, highlighting the importance of good relationships, effective communication, good planning, and feedback.

- the final workshop in October, focused on the draft Criteria and draft Guidelines in practice, what evidence looks like, New Zealand Teachers Council expectations for induction and mentoring, and reflecting on practice. The workshops recapped on the pilot to date and concluded with inspirational speakers.

Building on participant’s feedback from the previous workshops, having whole-day workshops as part of a comprehensive development programme over a period of time, and having sufficient time between workshops, were crucial to the success of the pilot. This allowed the advisory group to ensure the identified needs of each regional group of PRTs and mentors were met in a relevant and timely way at each workshop. It also allowed teachers to practice newly acquired skills for example, before coming together for discussion at the next workshop. The advisory group determined the length of time between workshops to ensure momentum was maintained while at the same time participants had time to reflect on new information and understandings, and adapt their practice.

Implementation and Process of the Pilot

*February workshops, 2009*

The first round of workshops took place during February 2009. Originally, it was planned that the workshops would be held over a three-day timeframe, with the PRTs together for two days and the mentors together on two days with one day overlapping. The advisory group decided to hold the workshops over two consecutive days, except in Wellington and Ruahine where the PRTs attended one day meetings earlier in the year and were present only for the second day of the February workshop. The dates of the workshops and numbers attending were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin-Southland</td>
<td>23 – 24 February</td>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>14 PRTs 14 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>20 – 21 February</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>27 PRTs 17 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington-Ruahine</td>
<td>27 – 28 February</td>
<td>Paraparaumu</td>
<td>19 PRTs 20 mentors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The workshops were also attended by senior teachers other than those on the advisory group. As reported in detail in the methods and results section of this report, the researcher (Val Podmore) attended each workshop, identified the key themes and issues emerging from the discussion, and held the first of the focus groups for the research. Ruth Mansell, Gillian Dodson and Clare Wells attended the Wellington-Ruahine workshop with the mentors on the first day, and Clare Wells presented information on the pilot to the group as part of the introduction to the programme.

The programmes covered a number of topics, informed by the draft criteria and guidelines, and including a focus on the dispositions and skills of mentors and PRTs, goal setting, and documentation. While each programme covered common topics identified by the advisory group,
all were presented differently, reflecting the local culture of the association, the style of the professional leaders, and the needs of participants.

The programmes were facilitated by advisory group members and senior teachers. Senior teachers shared responsibility for preparing resources, presenting sections of the programme, and recording discussions. Building trusted relationships was a key theme running through the workshops with opportunities for people to spend time together sharing and debating issues and ideas. The PRTs and mentors spent some time together and also spent time in their own groups.

Keynote speakers and facilitators participated in each workshop. Kirsty Prince, *Learning and Professional Development* facilitated day two of the Dunedin/Southland workshop covering learning styles, perspective based thinking, having conversations, giving feedback, reflective questioning, effecting change, communication challenges, and conflict resolution. In Nelson, Liz Depree and Karen Hayward, *Interlead Consultants*, titled their session ‘Creating a community of learners’. They explored the differences between andragogy and pedagogy, and discussed establishing new practice, effecting change, mentoring and feedback. Kate Thornton, *Victoria University*, was the keynote speaker at the Wellington/Ruahine mentor’s workshop. Kate Thornton covered the understandings of mentoring, mentoring experiences, the rewards and challenges of mentoring, models and skills. These workshop sessions stimulated useful, focused discussions, which are summarised in the workshop observation notes in the results section of this report.

**May workshops, 2009**

A total 52 PRTs and 54 mentors participated in the six workshops during May, including two of the four Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa mentors who are part of the Wellington/Ruahine group. The one-day workshops were held between 2nd and 8th May - both groups meeting separately.

The dates of the workshops and numbers attending were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin-Southland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Invercargill</td>
<td>14 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Invercargill</td>
<td>13 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>21 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>18 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington-Ruahine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paraparaumu</td>
<td>17 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Paraparaumu</td>
<td>23 mentors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, as for the February workshops, senior teachers other than those on the advisory group also attended. In addition to the attendee numbers above, three beginning teachers and two mentors
new to the registration process, were funded by the Southland Kindergarten Association to attend
the Dunedin-Southland workshop.

The workshop programmes were developed by the advisory group members and senior teachers
in each area, drawing on the overall objectives of the pilot and the feedback from PRTs and
mentors on their first workshop. They covered the topics identified by the advisory group as
being appropriate and timely for this second workshop including a focus on the Draft Registered
Teacher Criteria and on the draft Guidelines, as well as issues identified by PRTs and mentors in
the first workshop or in the lead up to the second. Participants were asked to prepare for the
workshop and bring copies of reference materials such as the draft criteria and guidelines, Te
Whariki and Quality in action, and association induction or mentoring kits as well as examples of
their portfolios.

PRTs

Advisory group members and senior teachers in each region took a lead role in presenting and
facilitating workshops. External presenters also participated in workshop sessions including at the
Wellington/Ruahine workshop, Lyn James Asking for feedback, communicating about areas of
practice, and reflections on practice and the Southland-Dunedin workshop, Helen Kennedy,
deputy principal Waverley School, Invercargill, and Lynn Foote, Fiona Ellis (Dunedin campus)
and Meredith Kelly and Jan Cowan (Southland campus) University of Otago College of
Education.

The common programme elements across each of the workshops for PRTs were:

- goal setting
- asking for and giving feedback
- discussion on the draft criteria
- online learning community
- resource sharing including evidence

Other topics covered in one or more of the workshops included:

- expectations of the induction and mentoring programme
- reflective practice and making professional judgments

The participation of primary colleagues in the Southland-Dunedin workshop, gave PRTs the
opportunity to hear how the induction process is implemented in primary schools and the support
available to PRTs to undertake their advice and guidance programmes. The session focused on
the practical aspects of an induction programme in schools rather than on the links between the school and early childhood education curricula and teaching and learning in each setting.

The Southland-Dunedin group has as its unique feature, a link with teacher education providers. Lecturers from the University of Otago Dunedin and Southland campus’s facilitated discussion on the transition from final year student to first year teacher: the issues, trends, barriers and enablers.

**Mentors**

Advisory group members also took a key role in the mentor’s workshops alongside external presenters including at the Wellington-Ruahine workshop Lyn James - *Initiating conversations on professional practice* and in Southland-Dunedin, Kerry Hawkins principal Waverley School.

The common programme elements across the mentor’s workshops were:

- role of the mentor
- professional discussion: expectations of teachers
- effective mentoring including observations, written reports, giving feedback
- online discussion

Other topics covered in one or more of the workshops included:

- personality styles and body language
- sharing resources

The mentors spent time in the workshop ‘unpacking’ and discussing the *Draft guidelines for induction and mentoring programmes and for mentor teacher development in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2008/2009). In particular, mentors discussed what would be evident in practice when the guidelines are being met.

Detailed feedback on the guidelines discussed at the May workshops was collated and forwarded to NZTC in a milestone report. Some examples are set out below.

**6.2 Essential components of quality mentoring - the role of the mentor teacher**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support to the newly qualified teacher in their role as a new teacher</th>
<th>Registration is built into the culture of the team and the centre.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate what sort or level of support the PRT would like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assisting PRTs find a starting point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities to network with other PRTs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing and providing feedback against specific criteria facilitating the teacher’s ability to reflect on the feedback</td>
<td>Setting expectations as a team about receiving authentic and relevant feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help PRTs find/develop strategies for accepting critical feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding teacher towards professional leadership practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributed leadership – sharing the workload – delegate with appropriate support. PRT taking responsibility, using initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics in place that allow for shared leadership. Agendas that are owned by the team. Role modelling, taking part/facilitating discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1 Key areas of knowledge, skills and dispositions – draft interim list

| Mentors know about teachers, teaching and teacher learning | Knowledge of current philosophies and practices. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Support needed to carry this out | Have conversations with PRT. Find out how they learn most effectively. |
| | Allowing the team to catch the vision and run with it. |
| | Pedagogical understanding of the mentor role – developing self-learners and [problem] solvers. |
| | Leadership, mentoring training |
| Support needed to carry this out | Senior teacher/PSM support and feedback |
| | Knowledge of who you can talk to and choice available when support is needed |

| Mentors know about learners and learning | PRTs and mentors are working with same group of children and building relationships with family/whanau, getting to know their cultural backgrounds and connecting to the community |
|----------------------------------------|
| Support needed to carry this out | Research into learning: pedagogical content – demonstrate knowledge |
| | Collection and interpretation of evidence of learning |
Ongoing professional development for mentors

Good quality contact time and interactions with family

The advisory group provided reflective feedback on the workshop experiences and on PRTs and on mentors’ learning. This is summarised in the discussion section of this report. Mentors also identified issues for further development, including for mentors:

- professional dialogue: moving from the general to the specific
- exploring how the criteria might look in teaching practice
- what to do when a PRT is causing concern
- managing the power relationship/dynamic: head teacher and mentor role
- use of the PRT grant
- who leads the induction process: what is the balance
- practical ideas about managing the role
- managing conflict respectfully
- safety giving/receiving feedback: managing reactions
- communication and coaching
- ‘nuts and bolts’ of mentoring
- models of questioning to support reflective practice
- how do we know if we are an effective mentor
- using ICT
- bridging the gap: understanding generation x and y and finding ways of working
- leadership and team building
- what does the evidence look like.

The advisory group identified these topics for PRTs:
evaluating progress on goals
how to extend areas of teaching
reflective practice: what does that mean and what does it look/feel like
strategies: how to make the most of your relationships with your mentor
understanding the association/employer
the process when being recommended full registration
learning more about other kindergartens
time management.

July workshops, 2009

A total of 51 PRTs and 52 mentors participated in the July workshops. The PRTs attended a one day workshop in their own region and the mentors travelled to Wellington to attend a two day workshop on 16 and 17 July. The researcher (Val Podmore) attended each of the workshops recording the central themes and issues emerging from the presentations and discussion; and met with all of the PRT and mentor regional focus groups for the second and final time (see the results section of this report).

The dates of the workshops and numbers of PRTs attending were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin-Southland</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>14 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>20 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington-Ruahine</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Otaki</td>
<td>17 PRTs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The workshops were also attended by senior teachers other than those on the advisory group and in Wellington-Ruahine by advisory group member Ruth Mansell. Advisory group members attended the national two day mentor workshop including Ruth Mansell, Gillian Dodson Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA, and Clare Wells, NZK. Suz Foster NZK national administrator attended for the ICT session.

The programmes for the regional PRT workshops were designed by the advisory group members from each region based on the feedback from PRTs attending the previous workshops and the senior teachers’ knowledge of the teaching teams in their regions. The national mentors workshop programme covered a range of topics focusing on the areas identified by the advisory group and by mentors at the previous two regional workshops as being those requiring further
development. The programme reflected the quality mentoring, skills, knowledge and dispositions, and the programme content outlined in the draft guidelines.

**PRTs**

A mix of external and senior teacher presenters was a feature of the July PRT workshops. Australian educational consultant Tony Ryan facilitated the Dunedin/Southland workshop *Your fantastic future* covering planning your own professional learning, the registered teacher criteria, coaching and time management. Tony Ryan explored with the group: how children learn best, what quality teaching looks, feels and sounds like, “the best teaching you’ve ever seen”, and how people learn new practices, and professional dialogue and difficult conversations.

In Nelson, the focus was on reflective practice with Dharan Longley, Insight Education facilitating the key session *Intentional teaching: harnessing the power of reflective practice*. Dharan Longley explored the draft criteria, teaching as inquiry, critical pedagogy, courageous conversations, and planning strategies. Participants discussed documentation on reflections on teaching practice that PRTS had bought to the workshop.

Common elements covered by the PRTs’ workshops included:

in-depth discussion on the draft criteria: unpacking the criteria, understanding meaning, exploring how the criteria would look in practice

goal setting: linking goal setting to the criteria

courageous or difficult conversations

sharing resources and ideas: documentation and evidence

reflective practice: what does that look like

online facility: is it working for PRTs.

**Mentors**

The programme was a mix of presentations and facilitated discussions focusing on developing mentors’ understanding of their role as well as providing practical skills and resources.

Dr Janis Carroll-Lind, Principal Advisor (Education), Office of the Children’s Commissioner, Manaakitia a Tatou Tamariki presented the first session *Reflections on mentoring*. The presentation focused on the experiences and reflections of mentors undertaking the Massey University programme *Role of the associate and tutor teacher* which examines the theory and practice of the role of mentor with particular focus on validation and modification of beliefs and practice. Janis Carroll-Lind shared insights and ideas on mentoring from programme participants, discussed the process of validation, and talked about the need for mentors to assist PRTs to
develop their practical knowledge of “the four Ss” - students, situation, subject/content matter, strategies. She also covered questioning and the teacher as a change agent, and presented a series of questions for the group to discuss.

Giving meaning to the guidelines focused participants on the draft Guidelines for Induction and mentoring programmes and for mentor teacher development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009). Presented and facilitated by advisory group members Lee Blackie and Pam Wilson, this session affirmed the approach that mentors need to work with PRTs, rather than establish a hierarchical relationship.

Presented by Lee Blackie, *Celebrating and respecting the generations* focused on understanding the differences between generations. Workshop participants reflected on how these differences might impact personal and professional relationships, values, expectations of PRTs of their mentors and mentors of PRTs, and the ways teaching teams communicate and work together.

Impact Education advisor Chris Rowan, facilitated a session on *Relationships and the difficult conversation*. The session acknowledged there are times when mentors will need to have conversations that may be difficult, and building on the earlier discussion on generational differences, recognised people have different experiences, skills and approaches which impacts how a conversation is received. Chris Rowan talked about what people bring to conversations – “trollies”: values, beliefs, experiences, and how these influence the way we approach conversations. She covered role clarity, the “four conspirators in communication”, problem ownership, the DENO framework (description of behaviour; effects of behaviour; needs or preference you have; others perspective/input) and pushback.

The programme also included reviewing and discussing the video of Sir Ken Robinson talking about *Creativity: reaching potential* which was part of the 2008 TED lecture series, and issues around gaining full teacher registration presented by NZTC advisor Deborah Wansborough.

The group was privileged to meet three newly registered teachers who joined a panel to talk about their experiences and expectations of mentoring and their reflections on the journey towards full registration. Further details of the discussion are included in the results section (observations of workshops) of this report. In summary, comments from the panel included, for example:

I think the most important thing for registration is the relationship with the mentor.

I had a superb mentor. We would have daily discussions rather than leaving it until the [next meeting].

She would let me know how I could help her too. It depends how much you [and your mentor] are prepared to show and share.

(Wellington teacher panel members)
Online facility

The online facility for mentors was planned as a key part of the pilot. The aim of the facility was to provide mentors with the opportunity to “... extend the scope of their collaborative networks, learn from others experience, share problems, and get feedback promptly.” (Induction and mentoring pilot programmes proposal, NZK, August 2008, p.9)

Establishing the online learning community was part of the re-development of the NZK website. However, as the work experienced delays, NZK established separate and temporary online facilities to ensure this part of the pilot proceeded. A facility for PRTs and one for mentors were established.

This process involved setting up a data base of mentor and PRT email addresses and inviting people to sign up to the appropriate site. Each person was sent information on how to access the site and how to access support from the NZK national office. An advisory group member, Ruth Mansell was signed up to both groups, to monitor the issues being raised, offer advice and pose questions, and to answer or redirect queries. The idea of the facility was for PRTs and mentors to communicate and debate ideas with each other rather than to have one person leading the conversation.

By July 2009, a number of issues were evident. NZK’s efforts were focused on the mentors. Encouraging mentors to sign up to the facility and to engage with their peers was difficult although the number of mentors on the site was growing.

Feedback from PRTs and mentors about the online facility provides an insight into why it took some time for people to engage.

**Purpose:** PRTs and mentors were unclear about the purpose of the facility and how it fits with the pilot

**Access:** people found it difficult to access the site. In some cases this was because usernames and passwords were unclear or people were not confident about finding their way around the site

**Functions:** PRTs and mentors questioned the potential of the site and how the technology could support the induction and mentoring programme

**Confidence:** some people did not feel they have the skills to participate

**Time:** people found going onto the site took time, adding pressure to an already busy schedule.

Drawing on feedback from the PRTs and mentors, the advisory group decided to include specific sessions within the July workshops to provide further information and to build participants’ confidence.
At each of the regional workshops, the PRTs took some time to talk about the facility and its potential to support the induction programme and teaching practice, and to identify the issues associated with using it. The mentors had the opportunity to meet Suz Foster, the NZK support person for the facility, and to participate in a session presented by her on how to access and use the site. Ruth Mansell also talked about her role and asked mentors for feedback.

Key issues that emerged from the mentors’ discussion were: the confidentiality of discussions, and whether the purpose of the site is the discussion of professional issues or a place to share ideas and resources to support the role of mentor, or both. It seemed, from the feedback, that having specific questions on the site for mentors to respond to would be a more effective way to engage mentors online.

The feedback from participants, after discussion at the July workshops, showed encouraging signs that more people and particularly mentors, intend to engage online. After the July mentors’ workshop, there was dialogue online, with a number of mentors reflecting on the workshop sessions and how their learning could apply not only to their role as mentor but also to their leadership role within the teaching team. Ruth Mansell also injected conversation starters, picking up on conversation streams and extending the inquiry and linking discussion directly to teaching practice.

**October Workshops, 2009**

The final series of workshops took place between 10 and 28 October 2009. In Dunedin-Southland and Nelson, the workshops were held on different days for PRTs and mentors, and on the same day for both groups in Wellington-Ruahine. The numbers attending varied from previous workshops with PRTs and mentors new to the process joining the group. The dates of the workshops and numbers attending were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>10 October</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>27 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>18 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington-Ruahine</td>
<td>17 October</td>
<td>Paraparaumu</td>
<td>17 PRTs 24 mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin-Southland</td>
<td>20 October</td>
<td>Invercargill</td>
<td>15 PRTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 October</td>
<td>Invercargill</td>
<td>13 mentors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senior teachers other than those on the advisory committee continued to support the regional workshops. The programme outline was developed by the advisory committee, reflecting on the feedback from previous workshops and from the preliminary research findings, and the planning undertaken at the regional level. The committee was aware this was the final workshop and that it would focus on three aspects: feedback – on the draft Criteria and draft Guidelines, and identifying ‘what the evidence looks like; evaluation – exploring how participation in the pilot
has shifted practice; and *inspiration* – ‘keeping up the momentum’ and ending the pilot of a ‘high note’ as well as pick up on specific issues identified by PRTs or mentors in each region. The committee also agreed participants should be presented with certificates which were signed by NZK chief executive Clare Wells and NZTC Director Dr Peter Lind.

Senior teachers facilitated the workshops. In Wellington-Ruahine David Savage, Elevate Coaching and Team Drive presented a session on goal setting, and in Southland-Dunedin, Tony Laker, from Laker House of Travel inspired the mentors and Dave Robinson, recipient of the National Excellence in Teaching Award met with the PRTs.

Deborah Wansbrough, NZTC Early Childhood Education Advisor attended each of PRT workshops, to discuss the Council’s induction documentation requirements. This had been a significant issue throughout the pilot with PRTS asking questions such as ‘how much (documentation) is enough?’

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form on the workshop and also on their views of the NZK pilot. Mentors described ways in which being a participant in the NZK programme had changed their mentoring practice, and PRTs described how being a participant had changed their teaching practice in kindergartens or centres. Mentors were asked what advice they would offer to first-time mentors, and PRTs were asked what advice they would give a first-year PRT about undertaking the induction and mentoring programme.

**Mentors**

Across the regions, most mentors responded that the workshop met their expectations. Although the precise content of each regional workshop varied, the comments across the regions showed that mentors and PRTs valued the networking and the focused discussions that took place at the final workshops. Useful aspects for mentors included:

“recapping and tying up loose ends”

clarifying mentors’ roles and responsibilities

the speaker’s presentations

meeting and networking with other mentors

discussions with other mentors (centred on the draft *Registered Teacher Criteria* and the draft Guidelines).

Mentors found the most useful and successful aspects of the pilot were:

mutual support and networking with other mentors

giving and receiving feedback, and listening skills
the two-day national workshop with mentors

the importance of relationships

mentoring skills, understanding the mentor role

“unpacking” the draft Guidelines and Registered Teacher criteria.

The least useful aspects for mentors were: the distances travelled, timing of the workshops and “early starts”, “one late meeting”, “sometimes a double-up of information”, no “feedback and lack of participation on Wordpress” (the interim online facility).

When mentors were asked for other general comments about the NZK programme, their responses affirmed the importance of: networking, relationships, insight into the draft Guidelines and Draft Registered Teacher Criteria.

When the responses were collated across the three regions, it was apparent that that mentors believed they were more confident in their role, their relationships with PRTs had become centrally important, they were giving PRTs more written feedback, and they had developed more skills as educative mentors. Mentors commented on how they were applying their newly developed skills to their practice for example:

I have become more reflective, hopefully have refined and enhanced my communication skills, I believe I have challenged some of my prior beliefs and thoughts as a mentor/leader.

I would use a more planned approach to mentoring, with more emphasis on a critical culture and developing the relationship as a foundation. The importance of a 'crucial culture' and the ability to have reflective and at times courageous conversation.

More reflective of my own teaching, strategies for feedback, challenging/questioning PRTs, more of a priority, focused.

Increasingly, through participating in the induction and mentoring programme, mentors reported they had built learning relationships with the PRTs.

Mentors were asked to what advice they would give to a first-time mentor. The responses emphasised relationships and understanding the role of an educative mentor, and the importance of networking and professional development.

PRTs

Almost all PRTs from all regions found that the final workshop met their expectations. PRTs’ comments across the regions showed that they considered these aspects of the workshop were most useful:
having Teachers Council expectations for registration explained;

receiving practical advice about gathering evidence related to specific Draft Registered Teacher Criteria;

networking with other PRTs from their own and other regions.

In response to a question about what they experienced as less useful, several PRTs commented that they would have preferred having a session from the NZTC about expectations for registration right at the beginning of the pilot. It was also mentioned that the online facility was “not working” for PRTs.

For the PRTs, the most useful and successful aspects of the pilot were:

the support networks that have evolved

meeting other colleagues for discussion and feedback

“unpacking” the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria

gaining an understanding of the registration process

support for mentors and enhanced relationships with mentors:

Less successful aspects were that some PRTs found the days very long, with the additional travelling time. Two PRTs also identified the online facility as a less successful aspect.

Other general comments from the PRTs about the NZK programme included the value of having mentors and including them in the same programme, the usefulness of discussing registration, and the importance of networking.

Many teachers felt that being a participant in the NZK programme changed their teaching practice by making them more reflective, confident, objective, and open-minded. Overall, PRTs stated that the induction and mentoring programme had contributed to enhanced relationships with their mentors, which in turn has a positive influence on their teaching.

PRTs were also asked what advice they would give to a first-year PRT about undertaking the induction programme. They said that it is worth undertaking the programme, that it is important to be open-minded, to see registration as part of their day-to-day teaching practice and not get inundated with the work, and to do small amounts of evidence gathering on a regular basis. PRTs’ suggestions offer reassurance and enthusiasm.
Aims and Research Question

The aim of the NZK pilot research was to generate data for reflection and, drawing on the experiences of participants, to document, assess, and enhance the process and impact of the workshops and the programme. The research was designed to address the following overarching, key research question:

How does the induction and mentoring programme, implemented by New Zealand Kindergartens, make a difference to the mentors’ and provisionally registered teachers’ (PRTs’) learning and teaching?

The Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand (2008/2009) were an integral part of the induction and mentoring pilot programme and of the research.

Methods

Ethical considerations

Two areas of consideration were: teaching ethics, and research ethics. The registered teachers/mentors were guided by their professional code of ethics (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2003/2006), with its overriding principles of justice, responsible care, and truth. Professional obligations particularly applicable to this research and development project included: commitment to learners (i.e., the PRTs), and also commitment to family/whānau, society, and the profession.

The research was developed and carried out following the ethical guidelines of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (1998). There was an emphasis on consent, confidentiality, and cultural appropriateness. Before the data generation with participants started, an ethics application was prepared, with drafts of the proposed data collection instruments, letters of approach for participation, information sheets, and consent forms attached to it. Given that invited participants from the Nelson region included PRTs from education and care centres, and
that mentors from Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA were to be included in the Wellington-Ruahine regional mentors’ workshops, the ethics application was submitted to, and approved after revision, by the Research and Ethics Committee of Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa.

Copies of the information sheets and letters and consent forms, in their final form, are provided in Appendix A.

Participants

Workshops

A total 60 PRTs and 51 mentors, including the four Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa mentors, participated in the first of the series of workshops held in February. Fewer people attended than anticipated, for a range of reasons including there being fewer first-year PRTs than predicted, some people choosing not to be part of the pilot, sickness, and difficulties experienced in finding relieving teachers.

A profile of the mentors, and data on their perceptions of skills, was provided as part of the results of the Martin Jenkins evaluation questionnaire. This showed that around 70 percent of mentors had mentored PRTs previously with around half having been a mentor for between six months and two years. Most of the mentors (90 percent) had no mentoring experience outside the education sector. Most people became mentors because of “school” policy. An analysis by Martin Jenkins of NZK mentors’ skills in relation to the draft Guidelines indicates that, in general, there were positive patterns. For example, mentors most often used the skills that they rated as most important, and less often drew upon skills they perceived as less important. There was an overall tendency for mentors to rate their skills “more conservatively” in specific areas that they considered more important, namely, communication, relationships, and leadership skills. (Appendix B).

Participants at the February and July workshops were notified verbally that observations were taking place, and were provided with a written letter explaining the purpose and focus of the observations together with their right to request that the observer cease recording at point in the workshop proceedings (see Appendix A).

Focus groups

The number of participants to be invited to take part in the mentors’ and PRTs’ focus groups was guided by practical considerations and by current research literature. The intention was to include, wherever possible, the same invited participants in both the first and the second of two planned focus group interviews. This meant that it was necessary to have the maximum recommended number of participants included in the first (February) focus group, given that it was expected that some attrition might be inevitable by the second focus group interview (in July).
A number of contemporary writers suggest that 7 to 10 individuals is a suitable number for focus group interviews (e.g., McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004; Mutch, 2005), and several recommend 6-12 (e.g., Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). It is also acknowledged that smaller groups should be used in certain circumstances, for example, when the focus topic is highly sensitive, or the moderator is less experienced, or where focus groups are held in homes (Wilson, 1997). In the present study, the predetermined maximum number of participants per focus group was set at 10.

**First round of focus groups: February 2009**

In February, mentors and PRTs participated in separate focus groups in each of the three regions: Wellington-Ruahine, Dunedin-Southland, and Nelson. Invited participants in the mentors’ groups were selected, by the local senior teachers, to include representation from each of the regional associations (and in Wellington-Ruahine, mentors from both of the two regions and also from Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA). In each of the three regions, 10 mentors participated in a focus group.

Invited PRT participants were selected purposively by the senior teachers in their region, to ensure diversity was represented. As determined at the first meeting of the advisory group for this project, “diversity” in this context meant that the purpose was to represent, where possible, these examples of PRTs:

1. both first-year and second-year PRTs;
2. PRTs identifying as Maori;
3. PRTs from Pasifika groups;
4. PRTs from not only kindergartens but also from education and care centres (applicable only to the Nelson region);
5. PRTs in different geographical locations (rural and urban, and representation within the wider local region).

These decisions made by the advisory group were consistent with the position that people who take part in focus groups, as well as willingly agreeing to participate, must be representative of the wider group of potential participants (Stewart, Shandasani, & Rook, 2006).

**Follow-up focus groups, July 2009**

The original group size for each focus group in February (both for mentors and for PRTs, who were invariably in separate groups) was restricted to 10 participants. The same mentors and PRTs took part in both the February and the July focus groups. There was relatively little attrition. In July, from 7 to 10 of the same participants were present in the three focus groups for mentors, and from 8 to 10 participants were present at each of the three regional PRT groups. Illness was the reason given for the few instances of non-attendance, and one PRT had left the (Wellington) region and the pilot programme.
Research Tools and Processes

The largely qualitative research methodology, and the associated data generation tools, were deemed appropriate within early childhood teaching and learning contexts. Key data generation tools included observations of workshops, and focus group interviews (Bloor, et al., 2001; McLachlan, 2005; Stewart, Shandasani, & Rook, 2006).

Observations of workshops

Throughout the February regional workshops, and throughout the national and regional workshops held in July, the researcher observed and recorded notes about the discussions that took place. The process of observing to document learning and teaching has strong historical roots in this country, is embedded in early childhood practice (Podmore, 2006), and accordingly was appraised as appropriate with ECE practitioners in this research.

The observational notes provide a record of the overall themes and issues, and the participants’ experiences with the Draft guidelines for induction and mentoring programmes and mentor teacher development in Aotearoa (2008/2009) and the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009).

Focus groups

Focus group interviews were conducted with the selected, willing mentors and PRTs during their regional workshops. The first focus groups were held towards the end of the February 2009 regional workshops, and follow-up focus groups took place at the July 2009 workshops.

Focus group interview questions

A small set of open-ended questions was developed for mentors and for PRTs. The draft questions were attached to the ethics application approved by the research and ethics committee of Te Tari Puna Ora O Aotearoa/NZCA. Minor modifications to the questions were made prior to the regional workshops, in consultation with members of the advisory group. Several questions for mentors were linked to the NZTC draft Guidelines. For example, questions focused on mentors’ perceptions and their experiences of: what is meant by mentoring; their role/s as mentors; and their knowledge, skills, and learning as mentors. Focus group questions for the PRTs included an emphasis on their expectations and experiences of the NZK’s mentoring initiative in their region. A follow-up focus group held with mentors from each region addressed similar questions, with an emphasis on changes to their mentoring (and teaching) practices over time, and the effectiveness of the programme. As in the first round of focus groups, several questions for mentors were linked to the NZTC Guidelines. Follow-up focus group questions for the PRTs included an emphasis on how their expectations had been met, their experiences of the NZK’s mentoring initiative in their region, and their experiences with the draft Registered Teacher Criteria, and the changes made to their practice over time.
The final versions of the questions used for the mentors’ and the PRTs’ initial and follow-up focus groups are presented in Appendix C.

First round of focus groups (February)

The researcher facilitated each of the six focus group interviews: a mentor group, and a PRT group, in each of three regions. At each focus group interview, two or three senior teachers took notes: one used a flip chart and large pens so that participants could view, check, and amend the records; a second one recorded hand-written notes; and at the majority of the focus groups a third recorded the discussion directly on to a laptop computer.

Follow-up focus groups (July)

As in the first round of focus groups, the researcher (Val Podmore) facilitated all of the six focus groups. At these follow-up focus group interviews, senior teachers, sometimes together with a member of the advisory group (Ruth Mansell), took notes. All participants and note-takers had signed a confidentiality agreement. The discussions were recorded directly on to a laptop computer for all six of the groups. Participants were able to view, check, and amend the records, either by having the laptop notes projected simultaneously onto a screen, or by notes also being recorded on a flip chart using large pens. At the majority of the focus groups, a third senior teacher took additional handwritten notes for cross-checking.

Feedback Forms

Participants at the regional workshops were invited to complete feedback forms, prepared by the regional senior teachers. A standard form was used for mentors at the national workshop in July, and for all mentors and PRTs participating in the final regional workshops in October 2009.

Data Analysis Processes

Key themes and emerging issues for mentors and PRTs were identified and highlighted within the observational notes recorded at each of the February workshops. The themes and issues were then collated and synthesised across the notes from each of the regions. A similar process was used to identify key themes and issues at the PRTs’ July regional workshops. Ongoing or further key themes and issues for mentors were also identified from the observational records of their two-day national workshop in July 2009.

The focus group data were collated, drawing on the transcripts and written records, across the regional mentors’ groups under each of the focus group questions. The same process was used with the data from the PRTs’ regional focus groups, and for the mentors’ and PRTs’ follow-up focus groups in July.

Comments made on the feedback forms, and trends from information collated across the forms filled in by mentors and PRTs in October, are also included in the findings of this pilot.
Data were triangulated, drawing on these three sources of collated and synthesised data, together with the senior teachers’ and advisory committee members’ reflections. The reflections were on their direct experiences of the workshops and with the participating mentors and PRTs, and on the preliminary findings.

**Robustness**

The research plan included several data generation tools and triangulation of data. “Intra-triangulation”, or using several data generation techniques within a qualitative study, is an effective process for enhancing the robustness of research (McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004, p. 263-64). The research plan included documentation of changes to address the research question and to show how the piloted model makes a difference to mentors’ and PRTs’ learning and teaching.

The advisory group set up to monitor the pilot project made a major contribution to quality assurance throughout the project. The advisory group received updates from the regions and from the researcher, contributed to the development of milestone reports, and provided advice on the content of workshops as needed. The advisory group was guided by the requirements set out in the contract agreed with the NZTC to deliver the pilot.
Results

Workshop Observations: Themes and Issues arising

First series of workshops February 2009

Full notes were prepared on the themes, issues, and discussions at each of the February regional workshops. These were passed on to the regional senior teachers to assist with planning future workshops. In addition, a synthesis was prepared of overall themes and issues evident across the notes from all of the regions. This synthesis is summarised below. Also included is information, based on the observations as a whole, about potential enablers and/or barriers to effective induction and mentoring in these ECE contexts.

The observational notes, and this summary, make particular reference to discussions at the regional workshops concerning the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009) and the Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa (2008/2009)

Key themes and Issues

Draft Registered Teacher Criteria

At the first workshops, the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria were new to most participants. There was discussion at the workshops about the purpose of the Criteria (compliance, raising the status, and strengthening confidence in the profession). The question was also raised: “How relevant are the Registered Teacher Criteria to ECE newly graduating teachers?”

In all regions, there was some discussion about comparisons between the Satisfactory Dimensions for Teaching (STD) and the draft Registered Teacher Criteria. Feedback on the Criteria showed that there was some enthusiasm and favourable reaction to the clarity of the Criteria.

In Nelson, for example, 4 of around 45 participants had read the Criteria prior to the workshop – so the workshop offered an opportunity to read and reflect on the Criteria, and to discuss in small groups the relevance of the criteria. In Nelson, the draft Criteria were received favourably. During discussion and oral feedback, this suggestion from PRTs was noted: “Bicultural aspect of tikanga and te reo ‘demonstrate’ is insufficient. It is more appropriate to word this “being an active participant in”.

In Dunedin-Southland, the shift from Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions to draft Criteria was also discussed. The discussion at the workshops showed that the move towards using the draft Criteria
was regarded favourably overall. A main theme, recorded in the workshop notes, was that the draft Criteria are useful and clearly structured, and the NZK induction and mentoring programme offers an important opportunity to network and learn (about working towards meeting the draft Criteria) across services and regions. There was some discussion about goal setting and planning for change. PRTs were to keep professional development logs of events and meetings that have had an impact. The Nelson Kindergarten Association’s *Reflective Portfolio Toolkit* includes one model which may be used for reflective journaling, and is designed to encourage reflective practice as professional development. When the draft Criteria were discussed, second-year PRTs sought clarification, and were reassured, that there are clear links between two documents (the draft Criteria and the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions). The Nelson Association “Links” document was seen as useful, and the move to work under the draft Criteria was seen as a positive move. Comments were enthusiastic overall about experienced teachers. Mentors and PRTs commented that the draft Criteria are consistent with early childhood principles (*Te Whāriki*) because they start with relationships.

In Wellington-Ruahine, there was a discussion on the second day of the workshop, when both PRTs and mentors were present, about unpacking the draft Criteria, Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, Key Indicators and mentoring draft Guidelines. A senior teacher clarified that the draft Criteria are what we are working with now in this project. In small groups (mixed PRTs and mentors), there was discussion of the draft Criteria. Discussions in small groups focused on issues like collecting evidence to meet the draft Criteria (examples included: their Learning Stories, conversations with colleagues about their practice, reflective questioning, contact and planning procedures with their mentor).

Across all regions, the workshops offered an opportunity for clarification of the registration process, explanations about the draft Criteria and about the draft Guidelines. Overall there was strong support for the draft Criteria and appreciation of the clarity of the information provided and presented at the NZK February workshops.

However, second-year PRTs (most notably in one of the three sites) voiced concerns about the relationship between the kindergarten professional standards (in the teachers’ collective employment agreement), the NZTC’s Satisfactory Dimensions for Teaching (STD) and the draft Criteria. They saw this as a potential barrier to effective registration and were later assured that the NZK Induction and Mentoring project provides support in this time of transition. Second-year PRTs also sought further clarification about whether and how their documentation would count towards meeting the registration requirements at the end of this year. (This issue was also emphasised during a PRTs’ focus group).

*Draft Guidelines*

At the Wellington-Ruahine mentors’ workshop (day 1) there was a well received presentation and discussion on leadership, including *Understandings of mentoring*, led by Kate Thornton. Mentors agreed that the notion of support is important for mentors. Their collective emphasis on support was consistent with the draft Guidelines 6.2. In addition, mentors noted that the concepts of co-construction of learning, and collaborative learning, are missing from the Guidelines. A specific
suggestion here was that co-construction and/or collaborative learning should be added to 6.2 of
the Guidelines.

During the discussion, it was also pointed out that more coaching (questioning, being a role
model) is needed in mentoring PRTs to full registration. The facilitator presented a range of types
of questions that lead to deeper reflection (e.g., clarifying and analytical questions). Mentor
participants commented on their tendency to jump in with too many questions too quickly. It was
noted (by an advisory committee member) that important areas for questions will include:
reflecting on teaching practice, and encouraging thinking “about the children you are working
with”. This links to the vision statement for Guidelines 3.2 “Effective teachers for diverse
learning” and also to 6.1.

During whole-group feedback on characteristics of an effective mentoring relationship, there was
a further opportunity for reflection on the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of mentor teachers.
Characteristics identified by the mentor participants included:

- Open communication, respect and trust, mutual understanding of mentoring,
- commitment to the relationship, clarity of goals, honest feedback, willingness to
- listen, development of a responsive reciprocal relationship, new knowledge to be
taken (mutually) to next level.

These suggested characteristics appear relevant in the context of the draft interim list provided in
section 7.1(3) of the Guidelines.

In Dunedin, the venue had wireless facilities and participants brought laptops (2 lap tops among 3
participants), using them to view the Teachers Council website (including, for example, the Code
of Ethics, draft Criteria, Guidelines, research). Mentors read and discussed the Guidelines (and
completed the Martin Jenkins questionnaire).

Mentors noted that this was the first time they had seen the draft Guidelines. The initial
discussion suggested that the Guidelines could be useful. Mentor participants referred specifically
to Guideline 7.1 (3) “Mentors are able to: Skills and dispositions of mentors would include ability
to: (a) Facilitate constructive but challenging professional conversations with PRTs and maintain
their enthusiasm”. This was identified as a key function and a positive, continuing challenge for
mentors.

In Nelson, during a session for mentors and head teachers, there was in-depth reflection (using
workbooks) on qualities and attributes as mentors; what others who knew them would say their
qualities were and, when thinking about motivating others, about what aspects of early childhood
education they were passionate.

Mentors and the facilitators discussed the importance of having an approach that emphasises
strengths (versus weaknesses) when mentoring. They also discussed the importance, to effective
mentoring, of including challenges and support, and appraisal and assessment, in order to
anticipate and avoid performance issues (using an Appreciative Inquiry focus). These discussions and suggestions are relevant to Section 7.1(3) of the Guidelines.

In summary, across all of the regions, very few of the mentors were familiar with the draft Guidelines prior to the February workshops. The workshops offered an opportunity to read and reflect on the Guidelines, and to take part in related discussions. (The Martin Jenkins questionnaire, and the mentors’ focus groups, further extended this opportunity).

Mentors and other participants commented that co-construction and collaborative learning are sound theoretical concepts relevant to mentoring in ECE contexts. They recommended that the socio-cultural construct of co-construction be added to Guideline 6.2. They had some specific suggestions relevant to section 7.1 of the Guidelines.

The workshop programmes generally covered giving and receiving feedback. Facilitators emphasised that the mentors’ responsibilities include informal and formal feedback to mentees over the two-year programme.

**NZK’s On-line Facility**

There were discussions on what is needed to support the PRTs and mentors’ use of the NZK on-line website.

Questions from workshop participants included:

How do you get on? Can more than one person respond (yes)? [Point of clarification: PRTs and mentors are separate and secure].

[Comment] Discussions are useful historical documents recording change over time.

[Clarification and discussion]: If any discussion is used as evidence of change – comments could be included in a reflective journal (with other people’s names kept confidential).

It was emphasised by participants (and notably in the focus groups) that it would be helpful to have a knowledgeable advisor linked into the NZK on-line facility to provide Teachers Council related advice about induction and registration. It was at this point the advisory group decided to appoint someone to the role of online facilitator. Advisory group Ruth Mansell took up the role injecting conversation starters, picking up on conversation streams and extending the inquiry and linking discussion directly to teaching practice.

**Synchrony with Teacher Education Programmes**

A theme that was evident in the discussions concerned the importance of enhancing the synchrony and consistency between (a) induction and mentoring programmes leading to teacher registration, and (b) (initial) teacher education programmes.
In Dunedin-Southland, links with teacher education providers were discussed. Planning for the May workshop will bring in primary teaching perspective and links with primary. There is an emphasis in that region on making connections with teacher education (University of Otago), with education and care centres, and with primary schools. A senior teacher reported on contact made to date with the University of Otago’s Faculty/College of Education, and signaled that staff (per Lyn Foote, ECE Director) will be present at the May workshops.

The PRTs discussed how to maintain journals and data to meet the kindergarten teacher professional standards/draft Criteria. Advice from second-year PRTs included: “collaborating with experienced others to see how they have maintained records to assess their own practice; time management and keeping it (relatively) simple and manageable, respectful use of professional time”. New PRTs who were recent graduates could see continuity with their teacher education programmes, because it was through their teacher education programmes that they had become well practiced in writing their philosophies and recording their practices. It was agreed that they could link the events of the day, on a daily basis with reference to the draft Criteria, to show evidence of meeting the draft Criteria. A related strategy was having a box to collect examples of documentation including (with permission) colleagues’ observations of PRTs’ practice, and video camera footage. This practice of keeping information and documentation is familiar to new graduates. It was recommended that having a personal set of Te Whāriki and Kei Tua o Te Pae, and Self Review Guidelines, was important, so they could be used actively as a reference guide.

There appeared to be consensus at this regional workshop that synchrony and co-ordination with teacher education providers is a likely “enabler” of effective induction and mentoring. Further findings on this theme will be recorded during the pilot.

**Collaboration across (ECE) Services**

There was some preliminary evidence, from the records of workshop discussions in Nelson, that participants value the inclusion of both kindergarten PRTs and early childhood centre participants in the Induction and Mentoring programme in this region. Representatives from both groups (kindergartens and early childhood education centres) participated in the Nelson PRTs’ focus group.

This theme was also evident in Wellington/Ruahine, where mentors from education and care centres (Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA) were included. Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA’s mentors were also represented in the Wellington/Ruahine mentors’ focus group.

**Further Actions**

A draft of the document, summarising overall themes and issues from the workshop observations, was tabled and discussed at the advisory committee meeting on 19 March 2009. There was a discussion about implications for the structure and delivery of the programme. It was confirmed that the researcher would also observe and take notes at the regional and national workshops planned for July.
Follow-up Observations: Third round of Workshops, July 2009

*Mentors’ National Workshop, 16-17 July 2009*

Key themes and issues identified from the observational records of the two-day national workshop for mentors are set out below.

**Issues for mentors**

During small-group discussion held on the first morning of the workshop, mentors identified issues and any current concerns. Issues included:

Mentors’ roles and tasks:
- Definitions of “mentor”: shared understanding needed of definitions and roles.
- How much of the process do we (mentors) initiate?
- How much documentation is expected of us?
- How much time should I spend in my mentor role?
- How do mentors manage when external factors impact on your role?
- More discussion is needed on the national guidelines.

Factors impacting on the role of mentors:
- Diversification and part-time work among PRT
- Time management in keeping routines and keeping in contact.

Mentoring PRTs to suit a range of experiences:
- Extending competent teachers “some PRTs are experienced and competent”.
- Dealing with different levels of competence among PRTs.
- Dealing with a range of training backgrounds; dealing with issues around quality of training.
- Understanding at the beginning of the process that the teacher has finished training but may not be completely competent (e.g., one-year speed course).
- Working with people who are struggling with technology (e.g. mature Pasifika PRTs).
- Managing part-time particularly with registering teachers in part-time positions

On-line facility:
- How to make people anonymous so that PRTs are not “labelled”.
- Confidentiality issues.

Issues for kindergarten mentors:
- Defining head teacher role and mentor role.
Issues for mentors working with PRTs in ECE centres:

- In centres (not kindergartens) support needed to develop professional learning but not be in conflict with the centre philosophy and practices.

*Educative mentoring, co-construction, and relationships*

**Communication and trust**

Following a presentation by Janis Carroll-Lind, mentor participants discussed several questions in small groups. Firstly, they reflected on what is important for mentors. Shared key points were:

- Communication and empathy; trust, being collaborative, reflective and honest. Let the PRTs have the freedom to make mistakes and then change their practice.

- PRTs and mentors are co-thinkers and co-inquirers.

When mentors considered the question, “How could differences in age, gender and culture etc impact on the mentoring relationship?” their agreed emphasis was on building relationships:

- Relationships, how important it is to acknowledge the relationship – time to build this, to interact and make the difference. Important for mentor to find out about PRTs’ different values and beliefs. Acknowledging mature teachers.

They also discussed how they, as mentors, would plan an evaluation session with a beginning teacher, based on their observations of watching them teach an activity. Key points from the mentors included:

- Be prepared and ready to pose a challenge for the next level of practice. Offer prompt feedback. Seek the PRT’s perspective about how they feel about the observation.

Mentors’ interpretation of the difference between being a coach and a mentor included: “Coaching is more up-skilling and teaching new skills, celebrating, directing people on new path”, whereas “mentoring is concerned with helping PRTs choose their own path.” They discussed what “educative mentoring” means in practice, noting that educative mentoring involves:

- Valuing people’s contributions and challenging them to move forward, with self reflection. Involving whole team in educative experiences.

- Respectful cultural relationships, acknowledging cultural differences.

Rather than mentors using a “sink or swim approach” they emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach and co-construction:
Supportive collaborative work together, taking risks – talking about mistakes in a positive light. Sharing with PRTs that mentors are learning too.

Accepting differences. Encouraging them to co-construct. Don’t take over, but don’t set up failure. Don’t rescue them too early, but don’t intervene too early – allow a “dog paddling” phase. Role modelling but not “cloning”. Know and understand the resilience of the PRT to help prevent sinking.

Inter-generational communication: Generations X, Y, and Z

On the second day of the nation workshop for mentors, there was a session on “Generation X and Y: Celebrating and respecting the generations”, led by Lee Blackie. Several mentors had requested that this topic be covered at the workshop. Related discussions emphasised that different generations will have specifically different priorities and approaches to their work and careers. Discussions also highlighted that reciprocal relationships and understanding “where people in our teams are coming from” are important for mentors and PRTs.

Power relationships

A session led by Chris Rowan, on “Power Relationships and Difficult Conversations”, generated considerable discussion. Mentors engaged in individual reflections, and then a collective “storm and sort” exercise. They identified “factors that make speaking up hard” as: “lack of skills”, “integrating the response”, “how to initiate the conversation”, concerns about the “ongoing relationship”, and “wanting the whole story first”.

When considering the question, “What stops the other person from hearing us?” mentors reflected on the mentoring role in relation to power. Then they focused on role boundaries and mentors’ role clarity. There was a discussion about “drivers” for PRTs in their daily work. A key summary point from mentors’ discussions and feedback was that it is important “to build and maintain a quality partnership through ongoing reciprocal relationships”. Another topic discussed was how to prepare to have a difficult conversation with a PRT,

Key points raised by mentors about what they learnt from this session included:

Being prepared before initiating difficult conversations;

Self-awareness “you choose your attitude but it is also important to be aware of your strategies (verbal and non-verbal)”;

Role clarity and understanding boundaries as mentors;

Having reference points as mentors (the Guidelines and Registered Teacher Criteria);

Laughing, knowing yourself.
Draft Guidelines

The importance of relationships was reiterated during a session on “Giving Meaning to the Guidelines”, facilitated by senior teachers Pam Wilson and Lee Blackie. Drawing on research by Aitken et al (2008) the facilitators emphasised that quality mentoring influences retention. There was agreement that a role of the mentor is to build leadership capacity by working with the PRT, and the facilitators also pointed to the importance, for example, of sustaining good relationships, problem solving, and building a community of support with the PRT.

There was a facilitated discussion of the draft Guidelines, commencing with the vision statement: “An effective mentor is a practitioner focused on inquiry into their own and other’s professional practice and learning…”. This was followed by a discussion in pairs of the vision statement, thinking about “what does this mean to you as a mentor?”

Mentors made suggestions about the use of the word “outstanding”. They questioned whether “outstanding” should be modified, and whether it would put too much pressure on colleagues in the future. Suggestions to replace “outstanding” were: “effective”, “good” (“with a passion to move forward”). After a whole-group discussion, the agreed request was to have this phrase deleted: “based on a clear understanding of outstanding teaching.” (Their rationale for this was to support the concept of ako and continued learning).

There was also a discussion the statement in the Guidelines: “An effective mentor acts as a change agent and educational leader…” In this discussion, mentors focused on the question, “What knowledge, skills and dispositions do you have that enable you to do this?” Mentors questioned the expression “change agent”, which they considered to be in conflict with the concept of “doing things with the PRT”. The agreed suggestion by the whole group was to suggest the words “change agent” be deleted. (Their reason for this was to be “less pretentious” and “recognise co-construction”, or a “mentors working with the PRT” approach).

Other questions discussed are set out below, with summary excerpts from the mentors’ comments and feedback to the whole group.

“As a mentor how are you establishing a culture of collaborative professional enquiry? “

Responses from groups included:

Look for resources: We help teachers, when setting goals, to have the resources available: e.g., Quality in Action, Kei Tua o Te Pae…

Having a beginning teacher in the centre helps collaborative enquiry.

Wiki appraisal (or Google docs) – with multiple voices to contribute to appraisal.

The process of self review is about collaborative inquiry.

Modelling professional conversations.
“Do you consistently demonstrate (for the PRT) effective teaching for diverse learners?”

Responses from the mentors were:

By being aware of our own practice.

Consistency: are we consistently modelling outstanding practice? Is this realistic?

Some mentors considered the possibility of modifying “consistently”. (Their rationale was that “consistently” doesn’t align with all circumstances and services). However, this suggestion was not fully supported by the group as a whole.

How do you establish and maintain respectful relationships and effective mentoring relationships?

Key points and comments from the mentors’ discussion were:

By developing an initial mentor-PRT contract.

At the beginning, socialising or team bonding– establishing a relationship.
Scheduling with absolute priority by entering specific meeting times in a diary.
Touching base informally between meeting times.

Clarifying expectations at the start, and consistently address the PRTs’ goals.

NZK’s online facility

With regard to the pilot’s proposed online facility, progress and confidentiality were clearly issues for mentors. During a workshop session entitled “Continuing professional development: the On-Line Facility”, Clare Wells, Suz Foster, and Ruth Mansell outlined the progress to date with developing this facility. A temporary facility had been set up, using Wordpress. The intention was to develop continued professional dialogue, using that facility. After explaining that Wordpress was confidential and included only invited members, Suz Foster demonstrated the login procedure for mentors. A discussion of issues focused mainly on confidentiality and how to avoid identifying oneself or the PRT. A suggested solution was that if mentor has a tricky issue, and does not want it identified, the mentor should email it to Suz Foster, who would administer it anonymously.

Gaining full registration

A session on this topic led by Deborah Wansborough (Policy advisor ECE, NZTC), provided mentors with an informative connection with the Teachers Council. During and after the workshop, mentors commented that clarification was helpful on issues that included:

Pathway to teacher registration: Clarification that 0.5FTE teaching time = 12.5 hours per week.
Teachers Council expectations:

- a planned induction and mentoring programme for the 2 years that includes: meetings with mentor; teaching observation data to analyse, practice, and act upon; continuing professional development opportunities that contribute to teacher’s growth.

- PRTs’ ability to articulate how they are able to meet the STDs

Work should be “not on top of, but fall out of” day to day teaching

Some issues arising for mentors were:

*Where a mentor finds a PRT is not ready to be recommended for full registration:* Deborah Wansborough clarified that it is important to recognise that it is a minimum of 2 years. Funding for continued mentoring was raised as an issue. The PRTs’ professional development funding and time has been used in the past.

*When there is a change of mentor, what does the new mentor do?* This point was clarified for mentors. The most recent/new mentor will be responsible for signing off and is responsible for collecting and keeping the documentation of the first mentor.

*Insights from Newly Registered Teachers*

A panel of newly registered teachers spoke about their experiences of working, with a mentor, towards full registration. Insightful comments from the newly registered teachers included:

I think the most important thing for registration is the relationship with the mentor. Role modelling was important. As a registered teacher we were always told it was our responsibility, but it was useful working with the mentor to break down the goals – I had so many goals.

I had a superb mentor we would have day discussions rather than leaving it until the [next meeting]. I collected so much data but I needed [support from the mentor] to collate and make sense of the data. I probably needed to put goals I place to reach registration at a quicker pace.

It was an awesome process for me, with support from my tutor teacher. I set goals. The contract is really important. A key thing is to look back on your evidence, a month later or so, you may have ne insights. My mentor was great she gave me reports each term on how I was meeting my goals. She would let me know how I could help her too It depends how much you [and you your mentor] are prepared to show and share.

You grow professionally [looking back over evidence folder/learning stories].
The relationship is important. You grow in confidence with support from mentor.

It helps to have feedback knowing you are not going to be attacked.

The mentor also grows: the mentor/s said they grew professionally through the process.

I did a survey [of families] to see how I could meet one of my goals [with support from mentor].

Subsequent informal discussions with mentors showed that, as part of an induction and mentoring programme, they valued hearing from newly registered teachers.

*Follow-up Observations: PRTs’ Regional Workshops, July 2009*

A number of issues for PRTs became evident during the observations of the workshop discussions, and in the detailed notes compiled then and synthesised across the regions. Key themes and issues included: relationships and communication within teams, time management, transition from the pilot to continued professional learning, shifts in practice, the NZTC draft Registered Teacher Criteria, enablers and barriers, and the NZK online facility.

*Relationships and Communication within Teams*

Across the groups, PRTs’ discussions emphasised the central importance of relationships with their mentors and in their teams. PRTs from Dunedin-Southland, for example, identified the core principles of effective teams as:

- being equals/equitable, respecting diversity, growth, friendly relationships, fun, trust, empathy, affirmation for who you are, having goals/purpose, spiritual strength, emotional connections.

They recommended “professional development with your whole team included”.

*Shifts in Practice*

During the discussions there were numerous comments about the positive changes that PRTs were making to their teaching in the kindergartens and centres. PRTs mentioned that they were moving towards increasingly reflective practice, and they linked these changes to the Registered Teacher Criteria. Comments from Nelson PRTs included, for example:

- Reflecting better and looking more at what I am doing all the time with children.

- Practice improved: scanning, conversations with children, ideas to extend children’s interest – improved confidence.
PRTs also noted that they were responding to their mentors’ feedback and changing their documentation procedures and focus:

- Practice feels more integrated. Feedback too feels more linked between all parties.
- Changed folder set up. More confident about what I am putting in it.
- I have since looked through my folder regularly and started revisiting reflective entries again.

PRTs’ changes in practice also encompassed increasing professionalism:

- In a learning way, [becoming] more professionally aware through philosophically and ethically led discussion and practice.

*Transition from the Pilot to continuing professional learning*

One issue that arose was how PRTs would manage their professional learning at the conclusion of the pilot. At the Dunedin workshop, for example, the PRTs practiced coaching one another, using a set of core questions provided by the facilitator. They concluded after this process that, “in coaching, you rarely tell one another what to do”. This approach, of choosing one area of professional work, and coaching each other using core questions, was seen as one way PRTs might move from being provided with a mentor to initiating some ongoing coaching among themselves after the pilot.

*Time Management*

During their discussions, Nelson PRTs identified time constraints as a barrier to reflective practice and documentation. Time management was also a topic for discussion at the Dunedin-Southland PRTs’ workshop. Tony Ryan, the facilitator, emphasised the importance of “looking after ourselves” and monitoring the level of stress experienced. PRTs engaged in an exercise where they named three to five roles in their lives, clarified the actions involved for each role, and attributed priority to each of the roles in their daily timetable.

*Draft Registered Teacher Criteria*

This was a theme across the workshops, and discussing specific criteria was a major topic at some workshops. At the Wellington-Ruahine PRTs’ workshop, there was considerable discussion of specific criteria and how to apply these criteria to practice. The Wellington-Ruahine PRTs discussed in detail and reflected on Criteria 5 (“Show leadership that contributes to effective teaching and learning” - barriers and enablers) and 10 (“Work effectively within the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand” - goal setting and leadership). The workshop offered an opportunity for PRTs to reflect on, and plan, bicultural teaching practices.
Enablers and Barriers

PRTS in Nelson discussed in groups what was working in the induction programme and what was not working. Aspects of the programme they considered were working well emphasised the importance of:

- relationships and educative conversations with their mentors;
- greater clarity about expectations, goals, and documentation;
- clearer criteria (the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria, 2009).

The PRTs’ comments about enabling factors they were experiencing with their mentors included:

- Support from head teacher/mentor (because they also understand what’s expected).
- Meetings with mentors on a regular basis.
- Fantastic support from head teacher and colleagues. Reflective feedback to add quality to practice.
- Meeting up with my mentor very two weeks – a great opportunity to discuss my teaching practice. It also motivates me to keep on track.
- Mentors being energised after hui and being part of the pilot.

PRTs’ experiences of clearer expectations, goals, and documentation included:

- Understanding what is expected better.
- Reflections, gathering evidence. Using the release time for folder work.
- Getting others’ feedback on practice.
- Trying to be more aware of teaching practice, make conscious choices.
- Discussions around goals in teams. Goals up, visible, professional language.
- Having clearer guidelines [criteria] to follow.

In addition, some PRTs found that they had been able to “use [their] registration days to visit other centres with their mentors”.

Several PRTs had found that, through participating in the induction and mentoring pilot, they were becoming more confident and able to lead professional conversations in their centres:
Leading policy development through professional discussions on topics like transition, ethics, rights of the child (Centre-based PRT/s).

There were considerably fewer comments about “what was not working so well”. The main issues and barriers PRTs identified were “finding time”, “understanding where evidence fits under the criteria”, and for some PRTs in centres, not having regular or sufficiently frequent meetings with their mentors.

An issue for some PRTs working in early childhood centres was how to apply specific Registered Teacher Criteria to teaching infants:

I find with working in the under-twos it is difficult to relate what I do to the specific criteria.

There appears scope to consider this topic further in future induction and mentoring programmes that include participants from early childhood education centres.

**NZK Online Facility**

At the time of the July workshops very few PRTs had accessed the online facility. For PRTs who had no access to computers except at their kindergartens or centres, accessing the necessary technology was clearly a barrier.

As outlined in the introduction to this report, the Wellington-Ruahine PRTs’ regional workshop, a session led by Ruth Mansell focused on the online facility. At the time of the July workshop, no Wellington-Ruahine PRTs had tried to get into the site, and most attributed this to lack of time. Ruth Mansell demonstrated how to log into the discussion forum, and what happens on screen. It was recommended that a topic for discussion needed to be introduced to the site quite quickly to generate a more dynamic and interactive experience on the site. When the group discussed the purpose of the facility, it was proposed that PRTs’ online discussions could focus, for example, on specific Teacher Registration Criteria.

**Findings from the Focus Groups**

First round of focus groups

*Mentors’ Focus Groups, February 2009*

At each of the three regions, focus groups comprising 10 mentors participated in discussions around seven questions. Participants were selected, by the local senior teachers, to include representation from each of the regional associations (and in Wellington/Ruahine, mentor participants from both regions and also from Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZCA). Aggregated data/findings are summarised below for each of the seven questions.
**Question One: What are you finding most useful at this regional workshop?**

**Clarification about the pilot, and about the Registered Teacher Criteria**

Clearly, clarification about the purposes of the pilot and the draft Registered Teacher Criteria was important to mentors:

> On day one: clarification of the pilot and [Registered Teacher] Criteria. On day two: The motivating presentation. The structure of where we are going – the [Registered Teacher] Criteria. “More cohesive direction for everyone from hearing the same information and knowing [our association] has the same Advice and Guidance programme as other PRTs.

**Clarifying the mentor role; reflecting on mentoring practice**

This first question generated considerable discussion about the role of mentors, and how the workshop was useful in clarifying the complexity of the role:

> Time to revisit what being a mentor means. Felt yesterday made me revisit the whole process. (This is the 2nd day of the 2-day workshop). Expectations are clearer now. The roles have never been really clear.

> Never sure what my role was and now I do.

> An opportunity to reflect on what we are doing. Reflection on our mentoring practice. Clarifying mentoring role. Often we’re so busy doing it that we don’t stop to reflect. Writing it down, useful using a reflective journal. I found it useful to have Kate’s (facilitator’s) information on theory to fit with the practice. I like the model where she separated 2 aspects of the facilitator role, facilitator and motivator but also a coach.

> Looking at coaching helps me with my working, with the facilitation of Pasifika teachers. If knowledge is not there it’s a struggle and it affects performance.

> Listening to Kate [facilitator] has reminded me to strengthen my facilitation skills, sometimes I am more into coaching and there are times when the student’s knowledge is not enough. This ties in with the academic skills, how to think critically. Is this the mentor’s role or are there other people who need to help the teacher? This raises the issue of mentors needing mentors. Having someone there to ensure that mentors are on the right track. There are multi skilled roles, facilitator, coach, mentor.

**Finding areas where professional development is needed**

Another useful aspect of the workshops was that mentors were able to identify gaps in their knowledge, skills, and dispositions as mentors:
[This workshop] has brought clarity to the process. A level playing field, so we know exactly what the expectations are. There are a couple of areas I’m not confident in so I need to get professional development in these areas”. “It’s made my goals clearer. Helped me to see where my gaps are. There were no guidelines when I had a new registering teacher, no process for me as a mentor, there was a process for her (the PRT) but not for me.

Networking

Across all of the regions, mentors also emphasised that the networking, dialoguing, and connections they were experiencing were beneficial:

It’s good to know who else is a mentor. That we can approach others for support. Putting faces to names for mentors. I found that exciting. Getting to know each other.

Networking, getting different ideas. Networking with people with different experience as mentors – new mentors and people who have been tutor teachers for a while.

Having collective support. [And an] opportunity for PRTs who have already done a year of registration having support and knowledge about the changes expected as part of being in pilot. Having year 1 and year 2 PRTs sharing information together.

Finding out more about each other and ourselves

Related to networking and to developing as effective mentors, was the perceived usefulness of finding out about themselves and others, including the PRTs:

Made me realise that I need to take more time out for my registering teacher (mentee). I need to talk to her about that.

Finding out more about each other and ourselves and how we operate during the discussion time with Kirsty [facilitator].

Question Two:  How do you expect these regional workshops to impact on your mentoring practice?

Mentors expected that the regional workshops would enhance their mentoring practice because: their role will be clearer and goal setting more effective, their use of resources and documentation will be better informed, they will be empowered and stimulated to engage in more professional discussion, and they will have more shared understanding with the PRTs in order to work
collaboratively with them. This was evident in the excerpts from the focus group transcripts across the three regions, as cited below.

Role clarification and goal setting

The whole process of what I learnt yesterday has clarified my role. How to set goals.

Strategies on how to set goals and how useful these are for PRTs and the whole team.

Knowledge of the mentor role: self-review format, strategies, clarity of roles, setting goals.

Knowing why you are doing things: goals and actions.

Use of documentation and resources

Using resource books/tools and link to practice, greater knowledge of documents that guide practice and how to use them to support teacher development and linking them together.

Empowerment and professional discussion

[Participation in the workshops] will promote more professional discussion in teams, supporting knowing the 'why we do what we do'. Feeling empowered to go on with the mentor role, more confident.

The collective idea that we must build mentoring teachers and feeling that we are not on our own.

A new process, [so it is] a framework for new mentors to know what they need to do. [I] feel more supported as a first time mentor.

Shared understanding and co-construction with PRTs/mentees

Strategies such as reflective questions to use when mentoring/with PRTs.

Setting up guidelines on how we are going to work together (mentors and mentees), timeframes, rules, framework, conflict resolution.

Learning together with PRTs – on the same page – sets the tone of co-construction [between mentor-PRT pairs].
Question Three: How useful do you expect the Draft Guidelines will be in leading PRTs to full registration?

Responding in detail to this question was difficult for the mentors because, in February 2009, the draft Guidelines were new to almost all of them:

It is difficult because we only got them yesterday, so it is difficult to comment. [We] didn’t know they existed prior [to the workshop].

However, mentors were able to provide some thoughtful preliminary information in relation to the question and probes. It was clear that it would be useful to follow up this question as part of the July focus groups and to document any change over time.

**Draft Guidelines provide useful structure and direction**

Mentor’s comments and discussion indicated that their initial response was favourable and they expected the Guidelines to be useful in providing direction for PRTs and mentors:

The underlying statements are interesting. Sums up the whole process and gives it a direction.

[The vision statement and the draft Guidelines in general] hint at some structure, where (previously) we have been led to believe that we just float along. In our Association there are no programmes for mentor teachers. There are meetings once a term for the teachers... We hope there will be workshops that are ongoing.

One national [set of] Guidelines could be useful and effective.

[The draft Guidelines] seem to be more succinct and will be easier to follow.

**Guidelines need to acknowledge that PRTs include experienced teachers**

Some groups of mentors discussed the relevance of the draft Guidelines to ECE services. They suggested that the Guidelines need to be appropriate for PRTs who are already experienced ECE teachers:

Is this just for recently qualified teachers as we have people coming back? The vision statement: in an early childhood context there are more than just recently qualified teachers who are registering. Maybe the Guidelines should say ‘people requiring registration’. The majority of my teachers [PRTs] have been teaching for some time. [The Guidelines] Need to cover everyone who is registering. If they are guidelines shouldn’t they be really usefully?
**Probe: In regard to professionally engaged teachers committed to ongoing inquiry?**

Mentors noted that the vision, purpose, and criteria of the programme are clear (NZTC, 2008: draft Guidelines, 5.1-5.5), and that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective mentoring are appropriately specific (NZTC, 2008: draft Guidelines 7.1-7.2):

- Makes it clear what the programme is about (point 5).
- Gives a clear list of what you need to do (point 7). Can match your skills up, and work on future development.

**Issues for education and care centres**

Mentors (mostly from kindergartens) raised several issues and concerns related to future effective induction and mentoring across the ECE sector. There was concern about how the draft Guidelines would be implemented in some “stand-alone” education and care centres:

- In stand-alone centres how do mentors and PRTs find out about the process? How will this be addressed in the guidelines? How will teachers be supported?
- There is nowhere to go if you are a mentor in a stand alone, private or community based centre and there are issues around this about what kind of support is available to them.
- How are ‘suitable’ mentors chosen within the stand alone centres and who monitors this. In private centres, who will ensure appropriate mentors are available?

**Question Four: How useful do you expect the Draft Guidelines will be for mentor development and quality mentoring?**

**Useful clarification of the mentors’ role**

Mentors commented favourably on the draft Guidelines’ useful clarification of their role:

- They give clear guidelines of mentor role”. “Give clear guidelines/expectations to management. Professional development plans can be designed easily.
- A good reflection tool for mentors. Tells us a lot about what we should be – lifts our game.
- A framework for giving feedback – quite specific. Will be a lot of support for Mentors – we haven’t had this in the past. A good document to refer to if not sure what to do as a new Mentor. A clear – checklist – what your role is as a Mentor.
More consistent, fair, more transparent, better quality mentoring for all PRTs. Better indicators / having indicators of mentoring roles for both PRTs and mentors so PRTs know what they can expect of their mentor and vice versa – shared understandings of roles.

[On page 5 and 6 of the draft Guidelines]: 5.6 looks good, high quality support for that role is lacking for us and lack of time.

**Need for Continued Support of Mentors**

Mentors emphasised the importance of continued support, to enhance their effectiveness:

Where will mentors (after pilot programme finishes) get training and support from?

Incoming mentors will need the training the pilot is providing. There is a need for a process for mentor support. (Ongoing check-ins).

**Issue: Selection of Mentors**

There was some concern about the present and future processes for selection of mentors in ECE, both in kindergartens and in education and care centres:

Selection seems to be by chance at the moment. [As a kindergarten head teacher] you are put in that position by having a new teacher. We don’t get a choice if we are a Head Teacher we just have to.

[The draft Guidelines] sounds good; mentors need to be carefully selected – high quality support.

My main support is for Pasifika students. Centres are not always licensed. How will the mentors be selected?

This statement [the draft Guidelines, 7.1-7.2] could make the [Kindergarten] Association more accountable and realise the importance of ongoing support.

This could influence the appointment process where you may not want to have a new Graduate (i.e., where the kindergarten head teacher is required to be a mentor of PRTs).

In the childcare sector people often say that they will do it (mentoring) and they don’t do it and the idea of developing our programme (TTPOA) is to have consistency.
Question Five: What do you as mentors expect of the NZK mentoring and induction pilot programme?

Probe: The on-line facility?

On the whole, mentors responded favourably to the programme’s proposed on-line facility for mentors and PRTs. They commented that they would need to take responsibility, and that using the on-line facility would build their confidence and develop their ICT skills:

We mentors will have to take responsibility to make it work. It cannot be the expectation that the Senior Teachers will take responsibility for that, we have to drive it ourselves.

[It will] build our confidence to use ICT, to not feel judged, building trust. With support from other mentors. A way to work smart with our time. It’s a good way to clarify something…. A good tool.

Mentors also noted some relevant cautions and constraints:

People need to be aware that the written word can be misinterpreted. You would have to think carefully about what you put on. We can interpret documents differently.

There needs to be a contract/code of conduct.

Mentors’ discussions about their expectations of this facility have been useful for future planning. They expect, for example, the site to be “up-and-running soon”, the facility to include having “someone to answer our questions” (“Teachers Council perspective wanted to add to on-line discussions”), having “emailed reminders to check out the site, a prompt to look into new information that has been posted”, and “password protection so only people in the pilot have access to the discussions”.

Probe: Contact between mentors and PRTs?

Mentors commented favourably on having combined workshops with the PRTs. They expected that this would lead to further shared understanding of the mentoring and induction processes:

Good to have workshops together so there’s time together to focus on the process. Good to go back to kindergarten – both looking forward to the process and having systems in place such as regular meetings and opportunities for feedback, setting aside time, setting goals, establishing those conversation starters that lead to meaningful dialogue.

I have a clearer idea of my role. I can put things in place for my PRT better than I could last year.
There were some comments about potential barriers to effective mentoring in ECE contexts. For example, mentors mentioned accountability issues, the need for specific training in observation skills, and issues related to the number of PRTs per mentor in kindergartens:

There needs to be accountability for mentor training and support just as there is for PRTs and their progress. The number of PRTs per mentor can be an issue (with more than one at a time). Primary teachers have a position on this and ECE does not”.

More release time is needed for mentors so that the demands and expectations of the role do not impact on other tasks.

It can be demanding meeting the requirements of being a mentor teacher within the demands of our Head Teacher role.

*Question Six: How do you expect the NZK mentoring and induction programme to impact on the PRTs’ teaching practice in centres/kindergartens?*

The mentors were very positive about the likely impact of the programme on PRTs’ teaching and self-review processes. Excerpts from their discussions include:

It can only enhance it. A clearer understanding of what’s expected of them. On the same page with appraisal. Seems to make sense now.

It’s much more valuable for me. Much more meaningful for the whole team.

They [PRTs] can ask: “how can I achieve this? Is what I am doing okay?

Sharing is really important. We [mentor and PRT] talked about sharing as a goal. It is really exciting.

Empowerment of PRTs and their knowledge. Self-review and appraisal link together.

Makes self-review understandable.

The PRTs will know the process. “We won’t be stuck in a process that we can’t change.

They commented that PRTs will be more informed about what to expect, and what mentoring and induction support they are entitled to, both in kindergartens and in private centres.
Question Seven: Is there anything you would like to see done differently at the next regional workshop for mentors (and head teachers, centre managers/supervisors)?

Mentors’ discussions provided useful, detailed feedback that the project teams have incorporated into their planning for the May regional workshops. Across all groups there were very positive comments about the February workshops:

It has been very good so far. The guest speaker was phenomenal. It has been well balanced and if we could have more of the same.

Most mentor participants found the structure appropriate. Providing a balance between time alone for mentors and time with PRTs was deemed important across all regions:

There needs to be time to separate for discussion. Need time together also for shared learning. It’s good to have a forum separate from PRTs. Needs to be a balance.

It was recommended that workshops include sessions on on-line discussion, and also in-depth sharing across the associations represented within each region.

Provisionally Registered Teachers’ (PRTs) Focus Groups, February 2009

Question One: What are you finding most useful at this regional workshop?

In general, the PRTs’ comments about the workshops were overwhelmingly positive:

If you ran a workshop like this regularly for new registering teachers it would be fantastic.

The specific aspects PRTs found useful were learning about: the pilot, the process of registration, the draft Registered Teacher Criteria, and relevant documentation and goal setting. Networking and spending time learning with their mentors was also important to PRTs from all regions.

Learning about the pilot programme

Like the mentors, the provisionally registered teachers from most regions appreciated the clarity of the information they received about the pilot programme:

Very clear picture of what’s happening, detailed research and the pilot programme – talking and powerpoint – clarity about the pilot project.

Learning about the process of registration

Learning about the process of registration and related expectations was an aspect that PRTs in all regions found useful. Related excerpts of their discussions include:
Learning about the process of registration, the process and the different criteria, the dimensions and how things fit together.

Today has been helpful to give an idea of what’s expected.

It has helped to motivate me into this process.

**Information about the draft Registered Teacher Criteria**

For all participants, finding out new information about the draft Registered Teacher Criteria (NZTC, December 2008) was important. Most were finding the workshop very useful for this purpose, and expressed positive reactions to the draft Registered Teacher Criteria:

I felt I was thrown into the other method and had to hit the ground running. Seeing it all today was really useful. (Including the draft Registered Teacher Criteria)

This process seems clearer and more useful compared to the old one.

Going through the [draft Registered Teacher Criteria] helps me to remember parts of my registration.

RTC (Teachers Council draft Registered Teacher Criteria) are a lot easier to follow than the professional standards – clearer – more aligned with ECE philosophy – lot more holistic.

In one region where the PRTs look part in the focus group relatively early on the day of their workshop, there was a need for more information about applying the draft Registered Teacher Criteria. Their comments included: “Difficult to know what documentation goes with which criterion”.

**Information about goal setting and documentation**

PRTs were interested in learning more about the practical processes involved in meeting the draft Registered Teacher Criteria and preparing for registration, including appropriate documentation. They identified these aspects of the workshops as very useful:

Goal setting. How to use the tools and resources to support the process.

It was helpful to get the information and toolkit and work with your mentor today. Now we are both on the same page.

Useful to look at content of others’ documentation: Seeing what other PRTs have in their folders.
Sharing ideas e.g., putting it onto a CD. Appreciating that everyone embarks on this process differently, everyone has their own style and you’re not wrong – affirming.

**Networking and opportunities for mentors and PRTs to share new information together**

PRTs appreciated the networking and finding out about support networks. They noted that the opportunity for mentors and PRTs to share (new) information together was particularly useful:

Knowing there are good support networks out there - meaning each others’ mentors, senior teachers – knowing there are many others in same boat as you and you’re not alone. Meeting mentees from different places and at different stages (first year and second year PRTs).

I was able to develop deeper relationship with my mentor. (offsite mentor)

Mentor and PRT together, finding out information together and starting to process the information together. All hearing the same messages at the same time.

Dialogue – was great for the transformation of the information.

Face-to-face dialogue.

The professional discussion about what we actually do as teachers in practice has been helpful.

Just getting together as a group with the mentors to get views from all the other professionals. They have different experiences to ours.

**Question Two: How do you expect these regional workshops to impact on your teaching practice in kindergartens/centres?**

**More reflection on practice and goal setting**

PRTs responded that they expected their teaching practice would include more reflection, and enhanced goal setting:

[The workshop] made me think about what I’m doing and connecting it to my registration – increased awareness. Makes connections between teaching and registration.

It will help me to really reflect and examine what I do, instead of just going with the flow. More guidance.
I like the way the systems have been made to fit into each other. They link together so there is not a lot of extra work.

By setting goals we will be focusing on different areas and it will help us see deficits.

Self reflection and excitement will continue and be maintained.

**Increased professionalism: accountability and documentation**

PRTs also considered that the workshops would increase their professionalism:

- Makes us accountable – not only children, teachers, community, we can justify it.
- Realising that you can document stuff that you have been doing – validating your role – a huge pat on the back. Shows the importance of documentation.

**Impact on mentor relationship**

PRTs from all regions discussed how the workshops would impact on their relationships with their mentors and their understanding of mentoring, which in turn would impact positively on their teaching practice.

- It raises awareness of the importance of the registering teacher and the mentor – collaborative thing, it is important – it requires support of all - “you’re not alone”.
- Raises the awareness of teacher registration. It needs the support of everyone to make [teacher registration] work.

We hear comments from mentors that it is up to the PRTs to do the work. This is helping to clarify the mentor’s role for PRTs.

Gaining joint understanding [with mentors] of what the Guidelines/Criteria are about. Joint understanding of the terminology will help. People can have different interpretations.

**Question Three: What do you as PRTs expect of the NZK Mentoring and Induction Pilot Model Programme overall?**

**Probe: The on-line facility?**

Like the mentors, the PRTs were strongly supportive of the likely benefits of an on-line facility.

A great tool. Need to get into the habit of using it.
It would be useful if you wanted to find a particular reading or research. Could go on-line and someone might know it and help you find it.

Online will support motivation – and be a trigger – a great tool for pooling for ideas e.g., sharing articles – really valuable for the rural kindergartens.

Online can sometimes be deeper than you would possibly have face to face with others – embraces multiple perspectives and draws everyone and is non-threatening and easier than you think.

Some PRTs were concerned about time constraints:

At the moment it would be a time issue for me. It is new. It will become part of my programme, but at the moment it feels like just an extra thing. I can see it will be a great tool. Need to find time to do it.

PRTs specified that the on-line facility would need to be user-friendly and password protected. They expected that on-line etiquette and respect for others would be important. PRTs requested that an experienced person be available on-line to provide accurate information on registration in response to their questions. These suggestions and requests were useful for future planning.

**Probe: Induction and mentoring programme in general**

The PRTs main expectation of the programme was that they would be fully prepared for registration:

It won’t be a shock when I get to the end of being signed off. I hope all the workshops will prepare me. [More specifically], I won’t have any gaps because those things will have been talked about along the way.

I expect to become a fully registered teacher – with support and motivation.

That people all over the country from 2010 will have good programmes.

**Probe: Mentor/PRT relationships**

Across the regions, PRTs expressed specific expectations with regard to the mentor/PRT relationship. These include:

I expect there to be some kind of commitment from both parties and if it isn’t working that we can seek help to improve.

The mentor can clarify things you are not sure of fairly promptly so you’re not floundering around.
You want them to be supportive but not take over your goal.

It’s a balance. You don’t want to get to the end and if your mentor hasn’t done their job you might have gaps.

Clarification of roles of PRTs and Mentors. [It would be] good to have a template for discussions with mentors.

An expectation of increased support if you are worried. About the model being one that will offer support in ways of guidance in how to interpret the [draft Registered Teacher Criteria] criteria document, support if there is a breakdown in the relationship. The programme should enable the discussion to take place.

It’s about knowing what your rights are. I had a mentor who did not want to have formal meetings but I did not know that I had a right to ask for meetings.

**Question Four**: How do you expect the NZK Mentoring and Induction Model/Programme to impact on your teaching practice as PRTs in centres/kindergartens?

**Probe**: Teaching practice in relation to your being: (Guidelines, vision statement, p. 4) effective teachers for diverse learners?

PRTs emphasised that their teaching should benefit children, in part by promoting a community of reflective learners and teachers:

Thinking more of the children: it comes down to how reflective you are – perhaps motivation towards your goals.

Opportunities to observe and take on different strategies.

Recognising that we’re all PRTs – recognising we’re a collective group but we’ll do things individually – celebrate diversity – were all in our own small community of learners.

Setting goals, reflection, opportunities to observe and take on different strategies. We are diverse learners, as are children. We are communities of learners.

**Probe**: Teaching practice in relation to your being: (Guidelines, vision statement, p. 4) professionally engaged teachers committed to ongoing inquiry?

Again, PRTs discussed the importance of reflective practice, and making changes to their practice with support from their mentors:
Work ethic, continuing being reflective and the importance of it – being part of this is really important for lifelong learners and for the children and to take it seriously.

It’s easy to get ho hum in your practice, hopefully being in this pilot you are re-engaging, and you’re not alone your mentor is also participating and growing too.

Having a mentor helps you motivate you – they also care about your progress – having them promote your professional growth and as a teacher and it’s reciprocal.

It’s easy to become isolated in your kindergarten – small teams big workload – ongoing inquiry to open up and keep going, you get excited and you articulate what you strongly believe in and network with others for those different points of views that are good for you.

They expected that having regular (non-threatening) feedback on their teaching practice would be useful:

It makes it safe for us. It is a safe way to reflect on our practice as see where I can go from here.

Getting regular feedback on my practice.

Getting a different perspective from outside the centre by using an outside mentor. There would be a bit of distance, non-judgemental, not directly involved, no emotion.

A better indicator for self-review. A better idea of how self-review works.

Exposure to different teaching strategies.

PRTs in some regions commented favourably on how the induction and mentoring pilot would offer continuing challenges and stimulation. They expected that using consistent Registered Teacher Criteria should enhance their teaching practice:

Ongoing enquiry. Using the documents helps focus on everyday practice.

Taking us out of our comfort zones. Making you stretch yourself to try things that aren’t your strength.

Continuing your learning journey. Just because you’re finished training you should continue to learn and seek new knowledge.

It’s great that we are bringing together the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria and the professional standards, it adds to our status as teachers as we are being judged by the same criteria.
Question Five: Is there anything you would like to see done differently at the next regional workshop for PRTs?

In general the PRTs were positive and they requested relatively few changes. PRTs wanted more time to work on goal setting, self-review, and evidence logs, with support from mentors, senior teachers, and other experienced participants.

Comments that were specific to each region were taken into consideration when planning the May regional workshops. Some suggestions within the regions included, for example: more partnership with tertiary and primary sectors, further clarification (regarding the draft Registered Teacher Criteria), changes to the physical lay-out of the venue, and more balance between whole-group and small-group discussion.

Question Six: Is there anything else you would like to say about:

The regional workshops?

Overall, PRTs expressed enthusiasm about the workshops and related processes:

It’s given me a clearer idea of the expectations of the programme.

I’m looking forward to more opportunities for networking and professional discussions.

This is my first look at teacher registration. Great to hear about this and it is helpful that it links together.

[The workshop has] given me the bigger picture of what I need to do. Instead of putting bits of paper aside and not doing it.

It was good to open my folder and go through it. That has been really helpful.

The paperwork can be overwhelming, but today helped”. Love the new [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria, it is easier to read.

Given me a clearer picture. The workshops have given me a starting point, a process to follow.

The workshop really explained where we’re going and what is expected.
Having the online hands-on experience, by going to NZTC website, was really useful. I’d never been there before.

Participants come away as being part of this and that we’re party to shaping the future for other teachers.

**NZ Kindergartens’ mentoring and induction programme overall?**

As PRTs discussed the programme, there were numerous highly supportive comments, for example:

We feel valued and lucky to part of this.

We’re proud to be part of an association that wants to be up there as the best. The Induction and Mentoring programme indicates that kindergartens want to continue to be leaders in the ECE field.

However, for second-year PRTs, there are some issues and concerns about continuity of documentation and requirements:

Much simpler. [But] what do I do with last year’s process? (Have been told to park it).

Why are the Professional Standards different from the (draft Registered Teacher Criteria) requirements of the Teachers Council? PRTs in the pilot will be following the Criteria for their registration. What does this mean for PRTs in their second year, do they change to the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria when they have been working to the STDs?

Simplify the registration process for both teachers and mentors. It could be that focus groups could contribute to making the future registration process more straightforward.

**Further Actions**

Members of the advisory group were alerted to the concerns about documentation requirements: the kindergarten professional standards, the STDs and the draft RTC, with the intention that they would be addressed during the subsequent (May) workshops. A diagram was prepared with the following explanation:

The STD and draft Criteria provide the framework for professional dialogue and practice. They are broad based and cover critical aspects of teaching and learning. The dimensions/criteria are used to guide and assess provisionally registered teachers towards full registration and registered teachers renewing their registration. They define the teaching profession and teaching practice. The same framework can be used for the appraisal process to reflect on teaching practice and
identify professional development opportunities. Satisfactorily meeting these professional requirements will mean the professional standards in employment agreements are met. These are a narrow set of standards and used as a mechanism for progression through the salary scale.

It was planned that follow-up focus groups would take place at all of the July 2009 workshops, including the regional workshops for PRTs and the national workshop for mentors. The follow-up focus group with mentors was arranged to ask questions that were similar to the February ones, with an emphasis on changes to their mentoring (and teaching) practices over time, and the effectiveness of the programme. It was expected that findings from the focus groups would be relevant to the NZTC’s proposed revision of the draft Guidelines. In the PRTs’ follow-up focus groups, questions were to address the changes made to their practice over time and the extent to which their expectations were being met by the induction and mentoring pilot programme.

Follow-up focus groups

Mentors’ Focus Groups, July 2009

Question One: What are you finding most useful at this workshop?

Networking, sustained discussions with other mentors

Networking and sharing experiences was of major importance to mentors. They experienced learning opportunities through listening to, and reflecting on, other people’s perspectives:

Great hearing other people’s thinking, it makes you reshape where you are at – people feeding back from other groups. Taking ideas on board. Chatting with others, in small groups or one-to-one, about practicalities, especially issues and how troubles are resolved. It brings the focus back, discussing issues in small groups.

Discussion times with other mentors were valuable. We have similar issues, and this gives us common ground to start with. Reflection time after each session was helpful on the first day. Bouncing ideas off each other rather than just sitting and listening. All the discussion through the workshop made the mentor role more human/real.

At this first national-level mentors’ workshop, they appreciated in particular being able to communicate with mentors who worked with different services and across widely spread regions:

Networking across and within region, and with Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa mentors.

Networking, everything, networking with the wider scope of associations. Nelson and the far south (Dunedin-Southland). Also networking with teachers within our own association.
It was useful to meet with Nelson teachers who are working with centres outside kindergarten associations. And networking with Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa mentors.

Connecting links to a kindergarten that does the same model as we do. (7.30am to 5.30pm hours).

Te Tari Puna Ora mentors meeting with the Nelson mentors who work alongside care and education PRTs.

Meeting other mentors. Sharing of ideas. Live-in immersion into the topic. Having discussions with other mentors outside of meeting times was very valuable.

**Clarification from NZ Teachers Council speaker**

There were favourable comments about “having the NZ Teachers Council [Deborah Wansbrough] here clarifying the registration process.” These comments included:

- The explanations from this presenter were really clear.
- The powerpoint show presented at the workshop by the NZTC would be useful if available on the NZTC website and circulated widely.

**Hearing from Newly Registered Teachers**

Hearing from a small group newly registered teachers, who presented a session on their experiences of mentoring, was deemed very useful:

- Listening to three newly registered teachers. There was useful information to take back to the whole team, as well as to the PRTs.
- Lots of very relevant and useful information and strategies. This was valuable personally and professionally as mentors.

**Awareness of mentoring role**

At the February workshops, mentors had found the “role clarification” helpful. By July (the third workshop and second focus group discussion), they were appreciative of having their awareness of the role heightened further [at Janis Caroll-Lind’s session]:

- It has made you more conscious of the role, e.g., actual set times etc…consequently time managing more staying with set times….for some of the mentors ironically they didn’t do registration so have nothing to refer back to in your own process.
It was useful for unpacking [issues] and making time for the role and realising the time for this is important (for PRT and mentors). A reminder about making time for PRTs by scheduling meetings and leaving the phone off during these meetings.

**Unpacking and understanding the Guidelines**

Mentors described how they found it valuable going back to the words in the draft Guidelines:

- It helps set the future; it really focused us on our role – that session really focused us for the future.

- Some of the unpacking of the words of the guidelines was useful. Actually looking at them. Words like “consistently” and “outstanding”.

- That word outstanding is a bit too much for me. [Group agreement on this point].

**Learning about the online discussion facility**

Mentors appreciated learning about how to use this facility:

- The potential for using the online community following the demonstration.

- There was a good mix between the practical (web information) and theoretical (what makes a good mentor), to go away and reflect on.

**Question Two: To what extent is attendance at the workshops changing your mentoring practice? In what ways?**

Mentors from all three groups found that attendance at the workshops had a considerable influence on their mentoring practice. This was happening in several ways, for example by providing role clarity and affirmation for mentors, and demonstrating strategies for responding to PRTs as diverse learners.

**Role clarity and affirmation for mentors**

The fact that the workshops provided clarification of the mentors’ role was considered useful for mentor/PRT relationships:

- It has helped us understand our mentor role better. The workshops helped the PRTs and mentors formalise that part of our relationship, and we now have a clearer idea of our roles, and clear expectations.
Coming to these groups has been useful as our role can be a lonely role. There can be other ways of doing things and saying things. It’s been good hearing other mentors, listening to others.

It’s made us as mentors more reflective.

It has given me direction now – that has benefited both us (PRT & mentor). Knowing about making sure the PRT is organised before the meeting. Before [the pilot project] we hoped we were doing the right thing, but now we have clear direction.

This clear direction is so much easier to follow.

Fantastic speakers, we’ve gone back inspired wanting to get on with it [the mentoring role].

I feel much more confident in the role as some of the speakers explained their systems and experience as mentors.

Ideas and support are available. “We feel more empowered by the support at this hui.

Responding to the PRTs as diverse learners

Mentors stated that the workshops helped them to relate and respond to PRTs more appropriately to facilitate their professional learning:

Responding to the diversity of the teachers I am mentoring. Listening not judging.

Getting PTRs to slow down and ensuring the PRT is not overloaded, that everything doesn’t have to be done at once, that registration is a 2-year process.

[With mature Pasifika PRTs] it involves lots and lots of respect.... I reflected and I tuned back to my Pasifika values and I applied positive role models. Guiding rather than directing. I urged them not to slow down but gently pushed them along (to bring their teaching and documenting up to the next level). I was impressed with their creating their portfolios. So this really helped.

When a PRT has been teaching for a long time and is now starting registration it can be scary putting your ‘thinking hat’ back on rather than your ‘doing hat’.

One good thing is listening to different situations and approaches.

The emphasis on the word ‘with’: mentoring with the PRTs not on the PRTs.

Giving instant feedback. The use of photos as part of the feedback to PRTs.
For one regional group of mentors, information about learning styles presented at the first workshop helped with their subsequent mentoring strategies:

Kirsty Prince’s system was a really good start, looking at perspectives and types of characteristics….fantastic getting to know your colleague.

Appreciated Kirsty’s workshop with different strategies of questioning and meetings. The association now uses some of this workshop stuff in their induction process and building new teams.

**Trying different strategies with PRTs, for different situations**

Mentors commented on different strategies they had introduced as a consequence of participating in the workshops. Strategies included: changing the kindergarten roster in order to spend more time with the PRT, being able to model practice, making time to give instant feedback and remind PRTs of the value of what they have done, encouraging PRTs to slow down, doing learning stories with/on the PRT (and tying these into the draft Registered Teacher Criteria).

**Workshop sessions on using the draft Registered Teacher Criteria**

Mentors found that learning more about applying the draft Registered Teacher Criteria made a useful contribution to their mentoring practice:

The new [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria are so much better to see where we are going, and what is observable and what you can take from practice and in the programme. The [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria have made good use of time, the observations are no longer airy-fairy, and they’re much more specific.

**Linking with primary education mentors**

For Dunedin-Southland mentors, having links with mentors from primary schools was a valuable contribution:

Having a primary teacher explaining her role (at the May workshop).

Participation of both mentors and PRTs in workshops

Mentors appreciated learning together and alongside PRTs at the regional workshops:

The PRTs going to workshops also. PRTs have been empowered with knowledge of expectations for registration, and this makes it easier to work together. It’s empowering to know that you are on the right path.

They also commented that the number and timing of the workshops was appropriate for learning and reflection:
It’s good to have had the three workshops [February, May, and July]. There’s time in
between workshops to follow up information from the workshops and to discuss
what we’ve been doing.

Question Three: To what extent are the regional workshops impacting on the PRTs (mentees’)
teaching practice in centres/kindergartens? How?

There was agreement within and across the groups of mentors that the workshops were
influencing PRTs’ teaching in kindergartens/centres. Mentors described the impact of the
workshops by mentioning PRTs’ increased professional discussions (linked to the draft
Registered Teacher Criteria), networking, reflection, empowerment, seeking feedback, and
documentation skills. Examples of excerpts from across the discussions of the groups of mentors
are set out below.

Professional discussions, linked to the draft Registered Teacher Criteria

It has opened up professional discussions on the whole of the draft [Registered
Teacher] Criteria. It has probably put the whole process on a more reciprocal
relationship, mentor and PRTs learn from each other.

The PRTs “have talked about networking and sharing with the team after the
workshops”. There is feedback from different pilot workshops attended.

Empowered and reassured, expectations about the registration process are clearer.

It helps them to stay focused and gives them more to work on. My PRT has enjoyed
sharing the information and bring it back to the kindergarten.

Clear expectations between the PRT and mentor

We have clear expectations and they thought that they needed to do lots and lots and
now we are working alongside each other.

Increased confidence

PRTs are more confident; they know their rights. They engage in more professional
dialogue and debate.

The regional workshops are very supportive of the PRTs, they come back with loads
of ideas – PRTs come back more resourceful and confident about finding information
and networking (e.g., using Google, networks). It has helped the PRTs understand
it’s a 2-year process and they’ve got 2 years to get there don’t panic or rush.
Documentation skills and reflection, related to the draft Registered Teacher Criteria

The PRTs now seem really focused on the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria – it has enabled clear direction rather than just setting a goal. The PRTs have learnt more about the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria through the workshops and then have been able to set specific goals.

[Mentor of Pasifika PRTs]: It helps documentation skills and supports them to be reflective practitioners… For us, reflection is not really us. But now they are doing it everyday and now they are reflective practitioners and they know how to reflect.

They’re reflecting on teaching as it happens daily. They’re reflective practitioners.

The PRTs know what they are doing, they know what constitutes evidence. They’re more proactive in their practice, in asking for help, and looking for evidence they can use.

They reflect more and are reaching out for feedback on their practice from colleagues more, and for input from other team members. Other teachers in their teams are reflecting more as a result.

Seeking feedback

There’s more give and take in the feedback process. More professional discussion and debate among the PRTs perhaps, and within teams. More feed-forward and feedback are taking place. The PRTs are taking turns in leading this.

Turning again to the NZ Teachers Council Draft Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring Programmes and for Mentor Teacher Development in Aotearoa New Zealand:

**Question Four: How useful are the Draft Guidelines in leading to PRTs’ full registration?**

Mentors commented that the Guidelines provide a potentially useful focus when PRTs work with mentors. They also spoke about the usefulness of the draft Registered Teacher Criteria when PRTs work towards registration. In response to the probes from the vision statement in the draft Guidelines, their discussions included the following comments.

**In regard to: Professionally engaged teachers committed to ongoing inquiry?**

It helps them focus and sets them up for reflection. It’s all about the reflection thing, the system gives them opportunity to talk about it rather than stew about it, the system is for good times or bad times. It’s good that they’ve got other mentees to access.
Effective teachers for diverse learners? (vision statement p. 4)

The [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria tease this out. It gets PRTs thinking about what they’re doing. As mentors it’s up to us to ask these challenging questions about effectiveness and diverse learners. It highlights questions: “What is an effective teacher for diverse learners?” “Do the PRTs know about the words?” It creates discussion with PRTs – there isn’t one answer.

Encouraging teachers who have newly graduated to keep learning and keep reflecting on their practice. The Guidelines, [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria, and registration process help shape the expectations. More so than the standards.

PRTs have a more organised portfolio –more reference points than in the past.

Clear guidelines and expectations.

The [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria are used more than the Guidelines in everyday practice and reflection.

The PRTs are taking more notice of the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria…by using the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria the Guidelines are being covered.

Question Five: How useful are the Draft Guidelines for mentor development and quality mentoring (pp. 5-6)?

The Guidelines provide role clarity for mentors

Mentors from all groups described the draft Guidelines as useful in providing role clarity:

They are good for making it clear on our role, have used them as a reference (as a job description). In the past as a mentor it was a ‘stab in the dark’. There was “Towards full registration” but it wasn’t as specific – the [old] folder turned you off still focused on registering teacher and it was all about signing things off, it wasn’t really about being a really good teacher.

They expressed enthusiasm about the usefulness of section 6.2 in the draft Guidelines, and were finding this section on the role of the mentor particularly helpful to guide their day-to-day mentoring practice:

Some [of the draft Guidelines] are useful. 6.2. Sums it up beautifully (6.2) the practical stuff.

It’s just a guideline not too prescriptive.
The Guidelines seem less clear than the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria; some of the Guidelines are too wordy. But 6.2 is very clear.

**The Guidelines focus usefully on quality teaching**

Mentors from several groups commended the focus in the Guidelines on quality teaching and learning:

The new stuff has an emphasis on teaching. It strengthens us professionally, and makes you aware of your own teaching practice.

Reflecting on the Guidelines makes mentors and PRTs more aware of what we are doing.

It’s making us step up, its underlying stuff, collegial discussions. I think the mentees are inspirational as well, they want to learn and they want to get involved – this role helps you realise that we’re very lucky to have them – it takes you back to your first days of teaching, mentees challenge you and make you think.

We need to encourage PRTs to see registration as an achievement and a celebration – registration isn’t a right, it’s a process and requires professional time.

The draft Guidelines remind mentors of your own learning and professional development. They keep you on track about whether I am doing this so well or not.

They’re a reminder about the professional development you have to do to be able to be “consistent.

**Question Six: Would you recommend any changes to the Guidelines? (If yes, what specific changes?)**

There were further positive comments about the content and lay-out of the draft Guidelines, for example: “The vision statements are important to focus on. The bullet points are valuable”.

All three groups had some suggestions for changes. These were: include more emphasis on shared learning and co-construction (important to ECE teachers], limit the use of jargon, and provide the Guidelines in both languages (Maori and English).

**Co-construction**

We would like more emphasis on partnership and shared learning. More emphasis on “working with” the PRTs.
Wording clarification

We would like to see less jargon, and more user-friendly.

Some of the wording needs clarification. For example: “consistently”, “outstanding”, “educative”, “handy, just in time tips” – we want to know what that means!, “change agent.” It has to be defined before it can be unpacked. “Educative”, “change agent”, and “handy, just in time tips” would need to be looked at and defined.

Modify the “outstanding” statement.

The first parts need to be condensed. The terminology can be obscure.

Te Reo Māori

Guidelines need to be in both languages: te reo Maori and English. ECE has a strong bicultural focus.

These findings from the mentors’ focus group interviews are relevant to the NZTC’s proposed revision of the guidelines.

Provisionally Registered Teachers’ (PRTs) Focus Groups, July 2009

Question One: What are you finding most useful at this regional workshop?

Both in February and in July, the PRTs’ comments about the workshop were overwhelmingly positive. Key points that PRT groups from all regions found useful in the July workshops were: new ideas and motivation, networking, and practicing skills like feedback and reflection.

Examples of excerpts of their discussions follow.

New ideas and motivation

[We were] Motivated to go back and have a lot more energy and be a positive energetic teacher.

Motivational speaker.

Networking

Networking. Hearing from everyone as all come from different backgrounds and areas. Hearing other PRTs’ opinions. Getting to know other PRTs. Nice to come back and see the same people – being able to ask people about things. Knowing that we are not alone on this journey; realising that others have the same worries, for example, “Am I doing it right? Have I done enough?”
Practicing skills like feedback and questioning

Learning and practicing more about “feedback and reflection”: “More awareness of reflective practice and how important this is for practice.” “It made us even more aware of where we are at”.

Given more tools – actual questions to ask. To have really good reflective practice we need to have those key elements for the relationships – trust, honesty, respect, flexibility.

Interactive approach: Being informal – having the ability to give feedback, not being told but being involved. Nice to have interactive things happening not just sitting.

Other useful experiences were related to the specific content of each regional workshop. These included: motivational speakers affirming the value of teaching, and unpacking and discussing the draft Registered Teacher Criteria.

Discussing the NZTC Draft Registered Teacher Criteria

At one of the regional workshops, where there was a major focus on unpacking the draft Registered Teacher Criteria, PRTs’ comments included:

Discussing the [draft Registered Teacher Criteria] in the small groups, focusing on putting the criteria into practice.

Discussion about what it would like in practice.

I found the discussion in small groups useful, I’m more confident to share in small groups than later in the large group.

The use of humour in the discussion groups.

Overall, it has been useful in terms of feeling less scary about registration, not being so anxious, not so nervous. [Registration requirements] becoming clearer, making it something you talk about all the time.

Narrowing the goals down to something smaller and more manageable.

[As second year PRTs]: In the first year it was blurred. This year the workshops have provided us with the opportunity to talk about it more – about the registration process, and about the evidence needed.
Question Two: To what extent are these regional workshops changing your teaching practice in kindergartens/centres? In what ways?

PRTS found collegial support and continued learning and reflection important to their teaching practice. They also valued having mentors and PRTs both participating and learning in workshops. They found that participation in the workshops led to improved goal setting and documentation.

Collegial support

Understanding you’re not alone, there’s collegial support. When you are working in teams where others have all been working for years – it is great to talk with other teachers on the journey…I have relaxed more – having honest conversations with others – others share similar challenges – allowing myself to be on the learning journey.

Having the PRTs and the mentors participating in workshops has facilitated more discussion between the mentors and PRTs about registration. Better awareness of how mentors can support PRTs.

Becoming more confident in discussions. My mentor gives me good feedback as a result of the workshops. The mentors’ involvement in the pilot is supporting the mentors in their role and this supports me.

Relationship with others within the region and outside, building the relationships, making friends, texting, “It’s good to develop relationships with colleagues outside of our association, we’re now texting each other”.

For PRTs in EC centres: Commitment has been made by PRTs in the same centre to take time to sit down together to talk and share teaching and documentation experiences.

Continued learning and reflection

It’s still important to be doing reflective journeys even though we’ve finished study. Importance of continuing reflective journals and practice.

[The workshops have] given me, through discussion, another perspective, and changed my teaching practice – gives another alternative, through reflection on others’ comments and thoughts (not just the mentors/team members).

Goal setting, documentation, and the draft Registered Teacher Criteria

After coming to these workshops I go away with a challenge for myself to achieve – [for example] seeking feedback, or making time to sit and talk to each other.
You have your overall practice goals but these promote process goals – different goals which I really like. They are giving process goals – more things unlock.

It’s changed how I look at my folder and how I link the evidence.

I’ve reorganised my folder, linking evidence to more than one area of practice, and to more than one of the draft Registered Teacher Criteria.

Gaining confidence in talking with others about my teaching practice.

It’s good to get different ideas and [the workshops have] made me think of different ways to do things, teaching practice, evidence folder, documentation, sharing ideas with others.

Thinking about the NZ Kindergartens’ mentoring programme overall; as PRTs:

*Question Three: To what extent is the NZ Kindergartens’ mentoring and induction pilot programme meeting your expectations? How?*

*Probes: As well as the workshops, the programme/model includes, for example an on-line facility and on-line discussions:*

*The online facility?*

At the time of the July workshops and focus groups, PRTs’ uptake of the online facility had been relatively limited. Comments from the three regional groups included:

Four of the 10 focus group PRTs have signed up to online. Although signed up, they have had no discussion to date.

Only one of the group (of 8) has actually been on “There was no-one there”.

It seems like a good idea, but at the end of a long day…It’s just another thing to do, we would be doing it out of obligation rather than wanting to. Maybe when registration is over will want to do then.

Not everyone has a link to the online facility – but it will be such an exciting thing to get onto – only two have had password confirmation. Personalise emails that are just to PRTs so they know they are for them. Everyone would like access so need emails for link and password

These access issues were addressed after the July workshops. The online facility was also seen as unfamiliar territory for some PRTs:
I don’t feel like have the skills and knowledge of how to do it.

An introductory workshop could support the use of ICT.

Some PRTs who were experienced ICT users offered suggestions about what they would find beneficial for their learning and teaching, for example: “It would be good to have access to curriculum areas/readings/references/links”.

**Contact between mentors and PRTs?**

**Mentors’ and PRTs’ shared learning**

The groups of PRTs all expressed enthusiasm about the shared learning that was taking place, throughout the pilot programme, between mentors and PRTs:

It’s good that mentors share their learning from their workshops.

My mentor seems to have more confidence (after the July 2-day workshop); she offers more support, puts more responsibility on me around registration discussions/meetings.

[The group agrees].

Both PRTs and mentors are learning from each other. Great there is more support for the mentors – in past the mentors have been thrown in the deep end, now they get support and recognition for what they do for PRTs. There’s now a mindset of we’re in it together.

**Increasingly regular, focused meetings**

In general, PRTs noted that meetings and discussions with their mentors had become more regular and focused:

As a result of the pilot programme, meetings with the mentors are more regular, more focused.

Registration was always there, but it has brought this more to the forefront, more discussion.

Workshops have exceeded our expectations in terms of focusing discussion between PRT and mentor. We have new ideas from workshops to share with each other. [There has been a] change the focus of the way we talk to each other and make professional dialogue more focused…Mentors having time to observe is great. Mentors see the value in having time to work on registration ‘stuff’ during ‘work’ hours and recognise it is a ‘big thing’
Question Four: How is the NZ Kindergartens’ mentoring and induction programme impacting on your teaching practice, (as PRTs) in centres/kindergartens?

Documentation is more meaningful

PRTs commented that the induction and mentoring programme was “making the evidence [their documentation] more meaningful”.

> When I add things to my folder, it makes me reflect on that piece of evidence and my practice.

> Making the evidence more meaningful, as have to slow down and reflect.

> Coming from University straight to work, it has been good to keep track of my learning and see the changes to my practice. For example, the changes from my first learning story until now.

Mentors are more confident

PRTs also said that, through participation in the programme, the mentors were becoming increasingly confident, and this in turn supported their (PRTs’) teaching practice:

> I think the confidence in myself to approach and talk to my mentor has increased and our relationship has gone to a new level as we are both more informed about what we are supposed to be doing.

> I feel I can freely discuss things with her that have happened in my practice.

Probes:

Teaching practice in relation to your being: (Guidelines, vision statement p. 4)

Effective teachers for diverse learners?

Sharing experiences with other PRTs

Participants explained how it was useful networking with other PRTs from different circumstances and engaging in discussions focused on learning and teaching:

> Talking to others and their experiences and ideas your awareness develops and you take this back to kindergarten.

> Sharing strategies to work across cultures with children.
Sharing your own experiences with other PRTs - supporting other teachers who are working with Pacific children and hearing that the strategies worked.

Reflecting on practice and applying new learning

PRTs said that the workshops and the programme as a whole:

Helped me to look at my beliefs, and where they have come from, and whether that prejudices me and other people, and how this affects my teaching – maybe there is a better way.

Encouraged open-mindedness – We realise we are in practice and looking for new ideas. We are open to suggestions, willing to give things a go – we all know where we are with our practice and are looking for other ideas from other people. It’s been good to get different perspectives.

Professionally engaged teachers committed to ongoing inquiry?

Learning, questioning, and goal setting

PRTs spoke about the impact of the programme on their learning about and applying the draft Registered Teacher Criteria, and on goal setting. They noted that the programme:

Empowered me to set goals that are in line with the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria and to work towards them with my mentor. To put in place good systems, so when I’ve done a good reading write what impact, influence this will have on practice. These good systems will continue past the registration process so will continue to be reflective.

They also commented, for example, that:

It’s good to ask questions and learn.

It’s been a challenge from day one [the first workshop in February] “why do you do it that way” asking questions for my learning, always asking so that I can understand.

Networking and professional learning across centres, communities, regions, and sectors

PRTs described how the programme facilitated the development of professional relationships:

Develops a closer relationship with a team working together towards teacher registration – not just between two people.

Coming to these workshops increases your professionalism, having the opportunity to talk with other professionals.
It’s all part of the relationships and wider community.

Participants at one of the PRTs regional focus groups engaged in a vibrant discussion about the enhanced connections with families and communities that they were experiencing as a result of the programme. They explained how the programme makes not only the mentors/PRTs more informed about the registration process, but also the parents, families, and the wider community:

Communicating with families about attending workshops makes it more open to the parents, puts a spotlight on registration. Parents will ask how the workshop went. Involves the community more, there is increasing dialogue about the workshops and about registration.

Through the inclusion (in another region - Dunedin-Southland) of links with the primary sector, the programme has also supported some PRTs to “Think outside the zone” by “visiting a new entrants class rather than another centre”.

*Question Five: Is there anything else you would like to say about:*

- **the regional workshops?**

PRTs from across the regions expressed enthusiasm about how the workshops have included useful, focused discussion times and strategies to work with the draft Registered Teacher Criteria, inspirational speakers, and encouragement to set goals and develop team goals.

- **NZ Kindergartens’ mentoring and induction model/programme overall?**

PRTs commended the overall programme as beneficial for mentors, and their comments about their own experiences were also favourable:

  It’s been really beneficial for the mentors; there’s previously been more of a focus on the PRTs,

  Increased networking for mentors, learning from other mentors, meeting times, sharing ideas – for example about how they give feedback to PRTs.

Second-year PRTs from several regions noted the impact of the new programme on mentors:

  [Through being in the induction and mentoring pilot programme] my mentor has become more committed to meeting and giving advice, and listening to me instead of diving in with her ideas.
There’s a difference with having mentors trained – now they are more committed to meeting, give more advice, and [my mentor] waits and allows me to have my say. There’s more of a shared understanding.

The mentor and us, we are all on the same page now. The mentor makes a point of asking how it is going, she’s checking in more.

PRTs were strongly supportive of having consistent Guidelines for programmes and the draft Registered Teacher Criteria for registration:

It will be good to get consistent guidelines across associations. Great it’s going to end up in a more standardised format across the country. Associations’ registration booklets vary across the country.

-the draft Registered Teacher Criteria?

Overall the PRTs commented very favourably on the clarity of the draft Registered Teacher Criteria:

I like them – it seems simpler to identify where I am at – not so many words. Especially the key indicators, they are easier to follow.

The new Registered Teacher Criteria are quite specific. The [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria are a little bit prescriptive e.g., “Fully registered teachers will….”. But when you’re working towards a goal such as registration it is nice to have clear, straightforward criteria. They’re clearer than looking at different association documents, there will be fewer areas in our folders.

They were also enthusiastic about having the same clear criteria used across regional kindergarten associations and across ECE services/circumstances:

It will be good to have one document across all sectors. It’s good to have something specific to work towards. The new [Registered Teacher Criteria] should be great.

Some PRTs had noticed the different numbering used in different drafts of the Registered Teacher Criteria, and commented on how they needed to check the wording as well as the numbers. One group had expressed concern [at the February workshop/focus group] about potential overlap of two of the criteria (4 and 10), but after further reflection they decided that this was beneficial, not problematic:

Although 4 and 10 seemed the same at the start of the year, PRTs have realised, since working with them, that they are different:
One interesting thing is why do we have 4 and 10 about bicultural partnership – they are quite different – people thought they were similar earlier at beginning of the year. They overlap but are different - they are interlinked.

The overlap of the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria is good, it reflects Te Whāriki and how that works with interweaving- it’s socio-cultural.

Feedback from Mentors, PRTs, and Senior Teachers

Feedback from the Workshops

First round of workshops: February 2009

At a meeting of the advisory committee that followed the February workshops, advisory group members provided written feedback on the workshops and shared with the group the aspects of the workshops that “surprised and delighted” them. These included:

- a strong sense that “participants felt they were doing this for themselves (rather than for the association or Teachers Council) and that it was their programme” and that many viewed the programme as their “serious professional responsibility”;
- seeing PRTs realise that the registration process is about “the excellence of the teaching profession” and the process being ‘visible’;
- travelling, staying together overnight and being with the group for an extended period built stronger relationships between PRTs and mentors and across groups;
- the importance of PRTs seeing mentors and senior teachers as learners as well;
- the benefit of having a two day programme as opposed to people working in the evening: people were fresher and better able to contribute. It also gave the programme a status – that this is an important activity to be engaged in.

One of the advisory group members also commented that:

As a result of the workshop, we have revamped our induction, appraisal and registration processes and our visiting schedule so we can visit PRTs and mentors between workshops.

Senior teachers noted that workshop participants appreciated these specific aspects of the programme structure:

- Formal welcome – bicultural protocols
- Start times to accommodate travellers
- Mentors welcomed and introduced the PRTs into the group.
- A mix of small and large group work, plus presentations.
• Time to work on skills: practical sessions.
• Plenty of time to network: to talk and build relationships.
• Participants brought laptops and spent time as a group, becoming familiar with the links and online resources that will support them in the programme.

It was evident from the feedback at the advisory group that bringing people together was critical for both PRTs and for mentors. It was the first time in most cases that mentors had come together as a group and a first in all regions, that a programme had been designed specifically for them. The feedback also showed the importance of trusted relationships, and the need to take the time to build those relationships including having sufficient time as part of the workshop programme to talk, share ideas, listen, reflect, discuss and debate together.

**Feedback from the second round of workshops: May 2009**

Senior teachers asked workshop participants for feedback on a number of areas. PRTs identified the most valuable aspects of the workshops as being:

• in-depth discussion on the draft registered teacher criteria: unpacking and examining meaning
• goal setting: reasonable, realistic and achievable
• networking: discussing ideas and sharing resources with peers
• discussion on documentation and evidence: understanding what is needed.

[I liked] the discussion on evidence, even though I’m a second year, I have always wondered what is expected and what is quality. (Nelson PRT).

When the PRTs were asked about what changes they would now make to their practice, PRTs identified setting goals, asking and giving feedback, linking the reflective journal to the draft criteria and “deeper and more meaningful reflection”.

PRTs requested these content areas for future workshops:

• more discussion on gathering and evaluating evidence
• evaluating progress towards goals
• working through examples of reflections and understanding how to write them
• extending specific areas of teaching such as music, science
• talking more about discourse
• time management strategies
• understanding the process to recommend full registration

Overall, the May workshops were well received by PRTs in each of the regions, the content building on the first workshop, and on PRTs teaching experience and experience of mentoring since the February workshops. Participants were engaged and welcomed the opportunity to be with their peers:
I was really impressed with what I heard from the PRTs – the depth of their thinking, their understanding of their roles as teachers, and their appreciation for the support they are getting from you and within their centres (Ruth Mansell, comment to the advisory group members).

Senior teachers asked the mentors participating in the May workshops for feedback to assist with future planning. Some mentors commented positively on the learning they experienced and its likely influence on changing their practice:

[I hope] to be more open and available, accessible to my PRT. Sometimes [I] get caught in the busy-ness of the day (Wellington/Ruahine mentor).

When asked what issues they would like more information on, or the opportunity to discuss, or areas they would like to develop further, mentors identified:

- communication: coaching, giving feedback
- relationships: understanding generation X and Y, building team cultures, managing conflict respectfully
- documentation: how much is enough
- technology
- mentors’ and PRTs’ responsibilities: “Who has what responsibility? How much do I lead the process, how much does the PRT lead? How do you empower the PRT to lead the process if and when appropriate?” (Wellington/Ruahine mentor).

Advisory group members reflected on the workshops, identifying highlights and key issues including:

- allowing time to talk, share ideas, experiences and resources is important
- participants stayed focused: “we were struck with how engaged they were”
- visiting an online community helped PRTs to feel more confident about using that facility
- the value in working with primary teacher mentors
- clarity around evidence: “the message given was quality not quantity…[There] seems to be an ongoing stress for PRTs what, how much, etc.” This was also an issue for mentors
- taking time to unpack the registration criteria and the mentor guidelines and ask ‘what does this mean for me and for teaching practice/mentoring’
- the discussion at the Southland workshop about registration being a continuation of the teacher education programme: five years not three
- managing tensions: “Putting theory into practice is a real challenge for some graduates. There is a tension between the socio-cultural theory from college and working in settings based on development theory”
- forming trusted relationships is key to the success of induction and mentoring
- the necessity of scheduling regular time for mentors and PRTs to meet: this needs to be a priority
- mentors are keen to develop and extend their skills.
The advisory group identified issues for further development for mentors and for PRTs, to be addressed in subsequent workshops.

*Feedback from the third round of workshops, July 2009*

*Mentors’ National Workshop, July*

Mentors’ written feedback showed that they rated networking as the single most important and valued aspect of this national workshop. It was the first opportunity they had had to network across the regions and services at a national workshop. They also rated the value of discussions highly. When asked about each session, mentors identified the following points as the most useful:

- **Reflections on mentoring**: the critical mentor; clarification of roles and responsibilities; developing trust; validation of practice.
- **Creativity to reach our potential**: recognising original ideas have value; understanding and valuing individuals; encouraging people to take risks.
- **Giving meaning to the guidelines**: working with PRTs; unpacking and testing meanings.
- **Professional conversation online**: understanding the process and purpose.
- **Generation X and Y**: respect and understanding (motivations and attitudes); greater awareness of others in the team; understanding more about ourselves.
- **Relationships and difficult conversation**: being aware of our impact on others; building effective relationships; being prepared for conversations; knowing what we are trying to achieve and want from others; listening; appreciating people have different perspectives and experiences.
- **Gaining full registration**: the high trust model; knowing what the Teachers Council expects; accepting some PRTs may not be ready to be recommended for full registration; documentation should be realistic and evidence readily available (rather than it being ‘on top of’ what PRTs already do).

*Panel of newly registered teachers*: importance of good relationships; effective communication; good planning; feedback.

*PRTs’ Regional Workshops, July*

Senior teachers across the regions reported that PRTs identified their key areas of learning from the workshops as:

- reflective practice: what it looks like
- sharing goals and strategies, and documentation
- meaningful discussion on criteria
- understanding the potential of online facilities
- developing communication skills
- networking and discussion.
Feedback from the fourth and final round of workshops, October 2009

Overview of the nature and content of the final feedback

Overall, the feedback provided by mentors and PRTs towards the conclusion of their final workshops was overwhelmingly positive. At the October workshops, senior teachers asked the mentors and PRTs to complete written feedback forms. In all regions, mentors and PRTs provided feedback specifically on the October workshop, and on their experiences of the NZK induction and mentoring programme as a whole. They were also asked about shifts in their teaching practice. Mentors described ways in which being a participant in the NZK programme had changed their mentoring practice, and PRTs described how being a participant had changed their teaching practice in kindergartens or centres. Mentors were asked what advice they would offer to first-time mentors, and PRTs were asked what advice they would give a first-year PRT about undertaking the induction and mentoring programme.

Mentors

Usefulness of the October workshop

Across the regions, most mentors responded that the workshop met their expectations. Although the precise content of each regional workshop varied, the comments across the regions showed that mentors and PRTs valued the networking and the focused discussions that took place at the final workshops.

Useful aspects for mentors included:

- “recapping and tying up loose ends”
- clarifying mentors’ roles and responsibilities
- the speaker’s presentations
- meeting and networking with other mentors
- discussions with other mentors (centred on the draft Criteria and the draft Guidelines).

Mentors made fewer comments about what was not so useful. These included: the timing and spending time away from the centre at a busy time, discussions about the wording of the draft Guidelines, and distance travelled (Dunedin-Southland).

Usefulness and successes of the NZK programme as a whole

Almost all (94.59%) of the mentors responded that the programme had met their expectations fully. In response to the question, “Overall did the programme meet your expectations?” 35 mentors responded “yes” and 2 responded “in part” (there were 37 responses in total across the regions).

The most useful and successful aspects of the programme for the mentors were:
• mutual support and networking with other mentors
• giving and receiving feedback, and listening skills
• the two-day national workshop with mentors
• the importance of relationships
• mentoring skills, understanding the mentor role
• “unpacking” the draft Guidelines and draft Criteria.

Mentors’ statements about aspects of the programme they found successful included:

Sharing ideas and clarifying expectations. Looking at different perspectives and tools for having difficult conversations. The hui – different presenters, new ideas, tools, and tips. Great for networking.

The hui in Wellington [the national workshop for mentors] was a wealth of information and provided some very good tools to work not only with my PRT but with others in the teaching team.

All the workshops were useful. The conference in Wellington [the national workshop for mentors] covered a broad range of topics that I found interesting and provoked me to think of wider issues.

Professional development opportunities around the mentor teacher role and developing interpersonal skills for mentoring.

The variety of different workshops that were skill based, giving and receiving feedback, goals setting, networking, what it means to be a mentor.

Hearing how PRTs feel about the process, the great speakers.

The least useful aspects for mentors were: the distances travelled, timing of the workshops and “early starts”, “one late meeting”, “sometimes a double-up of information”, no “feedback and lack of participation on Wordpress” (the interim online facility).

When mentors were asked for other general comments about the NZK programme, their responses affirmed the importance of: networking, relationships, insight into the draft Guidelines and draft Criteria. As well as many general comments along the lines of “fantastic programme”, “well worth doing”, their comments included:

Great to network with other PRT mentors. Valuable especially for first time mentors.
I would have liked more time to fill in this form and reflect on the year’s journey by relooking at all my notes.

I have found the P.D. this year very valuable especially in relation to having difficult discussions and being confident about what I know. Giving feedback and feed forward.
Great to have the insight into new draft criteria. Shame website/online discussion group wasn’t well used. Hui in Wellington invaluable. Focus groups gave more understanding of the implications for the future of mentor/PRT programme.

It has been a worthwhile project and a similar model should be available to all mentors.

This has been a wonderful robust programme from which I have gained much both personally and professionally. Hope that this can be afforded to others in the future.

I feel this programme has made me reflect on my own practices. Become more confident in taking a PRT through registration. Clear direction with criteria.

It has been great for my learning as a mentor and also in other leadership roles within my kindergarten. A very valuable professional experience. Probably the best professional development I have been involved in because it was so easy to follow and I felt confident and I know I was always being reinforced with more meetings to come.

This has been an invaluable process for demystifying what has the potential to be an enriching process for both parties. It has been exciting to be on the journey.

At the start, teacher registration always felt it was about the PRT and now I understand that it is a journey for both parties and learning for both.

**Changes made to mentoring/teaching practice**

When the responses were collated across the three regions, it was apparent that that mentors believed they were more confident in their role, their relationships with PRTs had become centrally important, they were giving PRTs more written feedback, and they had developed more skills as educative mentors.

Mentors’ responses about their confidence in the role included:

- It has made me more aware of my responsibility and ensuring I make regular time available to give feedback, be specific in my observations. It has made me more self-reflective of my own practice.

- I have become more confident in expressing the knowledge I do have and being able to articulate it. Also I haven’t shied away form courageous conversations. I have grown in these ways as a leader.

- More confidence in giving feedback and better understanding of how PRTs feel. Felt part of a much larger group.
Because I feel more empowered and confident, it has been a more positive and enjoyable task. I have also found that 2 way feedback is important with my team, just between mentor/PRT.

Mentors commented on how they were applying their newly developed skills to their practice:

Now have strong foundation and new skills/knowledge base to work with PRTs and each journey will continue to strengthen this foundation. Communication skills, understanding personalities. It has given me the opportunity to grow personally and professionally.

I have become more reflective, hopefully have refined and enhanced my communication skills, I believe I have challenged some of my prior beliefs and thoughts as a mentor/leader.

I would use a more planned approach to mentoring, with more emphasis on a critical culture and developing the relationship as a foundation. The importance of a 'crucial culture' and the ability to have reflective and at times courageous conversation.

More reflective of my own teaching, strategies for feedback, challenging/questioning PRTs, more of a priority, focused.

Increasingly, through participating in the induction and mentoring programme, they had built learning relationships with the PRTs:

Built closer relationship with PRT, being able to have in-depth and reflective discussion with PRT, developing ways to provide written feedback. Shared understanding and clear direction. Making mentoring a focus and keeping it in the limelight.

Opportunity to think about the formal side of the relationship, highlighting of pivotal nature of building relationships to allow learning conversations to occur, creating a culture of reflection and critical dialogue.

Advice for first-time mentors

In response to the question, “If you were to give a first time mentor advice about undertaking the mentoring role, what would it be?”; mentors’ advice for first-time mentors also emphasised relationships and understanding the role of an educative mentor. Mentors’ responses included:

Build a relationship, understand PRT's learning style. Set firm guidelines in contract around expectations and norms. Unpack what the criteria mean.
Take time to get to know your PRT. Set meetings, be specific about what the role of the PRT is in driving this, so that they take responsibility around what they will do between meetings and what they want the mentor to observe.

Develop positive relationship and take into account the wider background dispositions and style of learning, Be patient, encourage, praise, Reflect in a variety of ways.

I know that whilst it is a big time commitment it will enhance kindergarten operation i.e. having confident, developing beginning teachers enhances kindergarten operation and quality programmes, Relationship building crucial. Develop a contract.

Have a good understanding of the role so feedback practices can be established early. Read guidelines for mentors and reflect on what they will mean in practice.

Build a solid foundation built on trust and create a ‘climate’ of professional debate and dialogue.

Other suggestions mentors often mentioned were about networking and professional development: “network with other mentors”, “go on a course about mentoring”.

*PRTs*

**Usefulness of the October workshop**

Almost all PRTs from all regions found that the final workshop met their expectations. PRTs’ comments across the regions showed that they considered these aspects of the workshop were most useful:

- having Teachers Council expectations for registration explained;
- receiving practical advice about gathering evidence related to specific Registered Teacher Criteria;
- networking with other PRTs from their own and other regions.
- In response to a question about what they experienced as less useful, several PRTs commented that they would have preferred having a session from the Teacher Council about expectations for registration right at the beginning of the pilot. It was also mentioned that the online facility was “not working” for PRTs.

**Usefulness and successes of the NZK programme as a whole**

The majority (87.87%) of the PRTs responded that the programme had met their expectations fully. In response to the question, “Overall, did the programme meet your expectations?” 29 PRTs ticked “yes”. Four PRTs responded “in part”, but one wrote that this was only because not all the PRTs had attended the October workshop, and another indicated that she/he had just
joined the programme and therefore could not comment on the whole programme. (There were 33 PRT responses in total across the regions).

For the PRTs, the most useful and successful aspects of the programme were:

- the support networks that have evolved
- meeting other colleagues for discussion and feedback
- “unpacking” the Draft Criteria
- gaining an understanding of the registration process
- support for mentors and enhanced relationships with mentors:

  Better relationship with the mentor as a result of both of us being more aware of the process. (Wellington-Ruahine PRT).

Less successful aspects were that some PRTs found the days very long, with the additional travelling time. Two PRTs also identified the online facility as a less successful aspect.

Other general comments from the PRTs about the NZK programme included the value of having mentors and including them in the same programme, the usefulness of discussing registration, and the importance of networking. Comments included:

- I think the inclusion of mentors as well as PRTs is really important; as well as a workshop for mentor training. The venues, speakers and organisers have done a great job.

- I have found the whole programme to be informative and empowering and inspirational.

- Focuses on reflective practice. So much better [than past models] as the focus is on our own practice and responsibility.

- Great to meet people from other associations and see how they do things

- It's been great to be part of this extended learning community. The workshops in communication and relationships were extremely valuable and have had a huge impact on my teaching practice.

- Ensure the support networks are continued and become part of the NZK registration process.

Enhanced understandings

Many teachers felt that being a participant in the NZK programme changed their teaching practice by making them more reflective, confident, objective, and open-minded. Overall, PRTs stated that the induction and mentoring programme had contributed to enhanced relationships.
with their mentors, which in turn has a positive influence on their teaching. Their notes about this included, for example:

- Given me a clearer picture and building the relationship between the PRT and the mentor. More focus/professionalism towards teachers’ registration in kindergarten.

- Empowered discussions with mentor, given broader view of what is evidence, helped in being a reflective, ongoing learner.

- Getting things done on time without delay, work on non-contact time to update all my learning stories, gaining more understanding through sharing with others.

- Better relationship with my mentor, stronger awareness that being a PRT does not mean my opinions are any less valid that a fully registered teacher, better understanding of the feedback process.

**Advice for first-year PRTs**

In response to the question, “If you were to give a first-year PRT advice about undertaking the induction programme, what would it be?” PRTs advised that it is worth undertaking the programme, that it is important to be open-minded, to see registration as part of their day-to-day teaching practice and not get inundated with the work, and to do small amounts of evidence gathering on a regular basis. PRTs’ suggestions offer reassurance and enthusiasm. Comments included:

- It is worth being part of the programme.

- To use the new criteria! To use a programme affiliated to the Kindergarten Association so they can attend the daily workshops.

- Go into meetings with an open mind. Be willing to reflect and take risks try new things.

- Don’t stress over what is needed to go in your folder. Ask your mentor for as much feedback and advice when you can. Be honest about where you are at in your learning/teaching practices and what you want to work on.

- Be open-minded, embrace and enjoy the journey.
Summary

Feedback received from mentors and PRTs throughout the pilot was useful to the NZK team for ongoing reflection, and for fine-tuning the planning of the programme. Mentors’ and PRTs’ final written feedback demonstrates considerable satisfaction with the NZK programme overall, and offers some useful suggestions for further development of induction and mentoring programmes within the sector.
Discussion and Implications

Key Findings: Themes and Issues

Key findings pertain to the usefulness of the series of workshops (including the value of networking), and mentors’ and PRTs’ experiences with the draft Guidelines and draft Registered Teacher Criteria.

Usefulness of the workshop series

The findings strongly support the usefulness of the series of workshops developed for the mentors and PRTs. Both the mentors and the PRTs were enthusiastic about the workshops, and their expectations were exceeded. This was evident in the data from the focus groups and from the feedback that mentors and PRTs provided at the workshops.

Building relationships and making time to talk emerged as two critical elements of effective induction and mentoring programmes. Open and honest communication, respecting views, taking risks, and setting clear expectations are all key elements of a trusted relationship. Goal setting, “courageous conversations”, seeking and giving feedback, creativity and reaching our potential, understanding generational differences, and mentoring models, were among the topics explored and skills that were developed.

For mentors in particular focusing on these aspects was important. While many mentors already felt they had these skills, as the pilot progressed it became evident that they needed to build confidence in these areas.

As evident in their feedback and in the focus group interview findings, PRTs appreciate and learn from being in a programme where they:

- are a valued and respected member of the teaching team
- will work with the mentor and other teachers and can expect their help and support: a collegial rather than hierarchical model; recognising both PRTs and mentors are learners
- are clear about what is expected of them; evidence/documentation
- will have the time and resources to confidently participate in the programme.
Enhanced reflection on teaching practice and applying new learning, effective questioning and feedback, and more meaningful documentation were some of the changes identified by PRTs in their practice as a result of the pilot. For mentors, examining their own practice and engaging in genuine professional dialogue around the registration criteria, developing strategies to provide more effective mentoring and working with empowered and more confident PRTs, were major shifts.

At the initial focus groups in February, mentors across the regions had stated that they expected the workshops would enhance their mentoring practice because: their role would be clearer and goal setting more effective, their use of resources and documentation would be better informed, they would be empowered and stimulated to engage in more professional discussion, and they would have more shared understanding with the PRTs in order to work collaboratively with them.

Clearly, the results show that mentors’ specific expectations were met. This is evident in the mentors’ comments at the second (July) round of focus groups, and in their feedback at the conclusion of the pilot. Mentors from all three focus groups found that attendance at the workshops had a considerable influence on their mentoring practice. The research results show that this was happening in several ways, for example by providing role clarity and affirmation for mentors, and demonstrating strategies for responding to PRTs as diverse learners. Examples from the focus groups included:

- It has helped us understand our mentor role better. The workshops helped the PRTs and mentors formalise that part of our relationship, and we now have a clearer idea of our roles, and clear expectations.

- It has opened up professional discussions on the whole of the draft [Registered Teacher] Criteria. It has probably put the whole process on a more reciprocal relationship, mentor and PRTs learn from each other.

Similarly, the PRTs’ expectations of the workshops, and the pilot programme as a whole, were met. The groups of PRTs all expressed enthusiasm about the shared learning that took place, throughout the pilot programme, between mentors and PRTs, and with other PRTs. They explained how the workshops were useful for networking with other PRTs from different circumstances and engaging in discussions focused on learning and teaching. Specific findings about what they found useful included:

- Talking to others and their experiences and ideas your awareness develops and you take this back to Kindergarten.

- Sharing strategies to work across cultures with children.

- Sharing your own experiences with other PRTs - supporting other teachers who are working with Pacific children and hearing that the strategies worked.
The results compiled and triangulated across the regional focus groups, PRTs’ feedback on the programme, and workshop observations also show that PRTs benefit from having increasingly regular and more focused meetings with mentors:

Workshops have exceeded our expectations in terms of focusing discussion between PRT and mentor. We have new ideas from workshops to share with each other. [There has been a] change the focus of the way we talk to each other and make professional dialogue more focused…Mentors having time to observe is great. Mentors see the value in having time to work on registration ‘stuff’ during ‘work’ hours and recognise it is a ‘big thing’.

Experiences with the Draft Guidelines and Draft Registered Teacher Criteria

Findings emerged from the focus group discussions and the workshop observations on the mentors’ and PRTs’ experiences with the Draft guidelines for induction and mentoring programmes and mentor teacher development in Aotearoa (2008/2009) and the Draft Registered Teacher Criteria (2009).

As described in the results section of this report, mentors commented that the Guidelines provide a potentially useful focus when PRTs work with mentors. Mentors also spoke about the usefulness of the draft Criteria when PRTs work towards registration. When referring to the vision statement in the draft Guidelines, they made many comments about PRTs becoming “professionally engaged teachers committed to ongoing inquiry”. An example was:

It helps them focus and sets them up for reflection. It’s all about reflection…, the system gives them opportunity to talk about it rather than stew about it…

Mentors also commented on how the PRTs participating in the induction and mentoring programme becoming more “effective teachers for diverse learners”:

As mentors it’s up to us to ask these challenging questions about effectiveness and diverse learners. It highlights questions: “What is an effective teacher for diverse learners?” “Do the PRTs know about the words?” It creates discussion with PRTs.

Encouraging teachers who have newly graduated to keep learning and keep reflecting on their practice. The Guidelines/Criteria and registration process help shape their expectations.

The PRTs are taking more notice of the [draft Registered Teacher] Criteria…by using the Criteria the Guidelines are being covered.

In addition, the results demonstrate how mentors from all regional groups found that the Guidelines provide role clarity for themselves as mentors:
They are good for making it clear on our role, have used them as a reference (as a job description). In the past as a mentor it was a ‘stab in the dark’.

More specifically, mentors expressed enthusiasm about the usefulness of section 6.2 in the draft Guidelines, and found that this section on the role of the mentor particularly helpful to guide their day-to-day mentoring practice. Mentors from several groups also commended favourably on the focus in the draft Guidelines on quality teaching and learning.

When asked if they would recommend any changes to the Guidelines, mentors made further positive comments about the content and lay-out of the draft Guidelines, for example: “The vision statements are important to focus on. The bullet points are valuable”. At all three focus groups, and at the mentors’ workshops, mentors made some suggestions for changes. These were: include more emphasis on shared learning and co-construction (important to ECE teachers], limit the use of jargon, and provide the Guidelines in both languages (Maori and English).

Overall the PRTs commented very favourably on the clarity of the draft Registered Teacher Criteria. They were also enthusiastic about having the same clear criteria used across regional kindergarten associations and across ECE services/circumstances:

It will be good to have one document across all sectors. It’s good to have something specific to work towards. The new [Registered Teacher] Criteria should be great.

The findings of this pilot show that, in an ECE induction and mentoring programme, providing the time and opportunity to talk about what is expected of the PRT and of the role of mentor, thereby giving meaning to the draft Registered Teacher Criteria and the NZTC draft Guidelines, was important. Time spent in networks discussing, debating, exploring and testing specific criteria and guidelines, provided clarity and shared understanding.

**Implications for Successful Induction and Mentoring in ECE**

**Summary Appraisal**

This pilot addressed the overarching research question, How does the induction and mentoring programme, implemented by New Zealand Kindergartens, make a difference to the mentors’ and provisionally registered teachers’ (PRTs’) learning and teaching?

The introduction to this report described in some detail how the workshop programmes and collaborative processes were developed and implemented with reference to the NZTC draft Guidelines and the Registered Teacher Criteria. In this way, the introduction itself sets out an example of a collaborative model of teacher induction and mentoring that was appraised as appropriate by mentors and teachers in the ECE sector. The results section of the report presented
and synthesised data that demonstrate the ways in which the series of workshops, and continuing interactions, fostered supportive educative relationships and shared understanding among mentors and PRTs and led to changes in their professional practice.

Overall, the establishment of an online facility for mentors and PRTs was less successful initiative initially. Comments from the focus group participants, feedback from across the regions, the uptake of the facility, and the workshop observations all support this conclusion. On a positive note, the introduction to this report describes how this issue was addressed and the strategies that were developed to overcome barriers during the process of the pilot. It should also be noted that the online facility does exist and is available for future development.

Insights from the Advisory Group

On several occasions during the pilot, the project’s advisory group scrutinised the accumulating research findings from the focus groups and drew on their experiences, the observational records, and feedback from the regions. This process was consistent with Gordon Wells’s (2001, 2002) notion of a community of inquiry, jointly questioning and reflecting on the meaning of the data. Later in the project, during the process of reflecting on the preliminary findings of the research, the advisory group worked collectively to identify a number of key points that are potentially success factors for induction and mentoring in early childhood education contexts. These factors included:

- Our pilot, developed in synchrony with early childhood values, was consistent with the principles of Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), and included socio-cultural approaches and team collaboration.
- The NZK induction and mentoring programme was developed “by practitioners for practitioners”, and this contributed to increasing confidence among the participants.
- The pilot was fully supported by kindergarten employers, and implemented across associations and geographical regions.
- A nationally designed approach to regional workshops overseen by a central advisory group contributed to a consistent and sustainable processes of induction and mentoring.
- The pilot programme included “exemplary” planned professional development for beginning teachers, “hooking teachers early in their careers”, and influencing wider teaching teams, It “tapped into an energy for more”.
- Collaboration was a major strength of the formalised and focused professional development opportunities offered to mentors and PRTs.
There was consistency of quality of the programme as a whole and the workshops specifically, amidst regional diversity.

There was a focus among the participants on benefits for children, through enhanced teaching and learning.

This pilot has contributed, as intended, towards facilitating greater consistency of induction programmes and assessment for registration for PRTs across the different regional associations, while retaining adaptability to the circumstances of different sectors and individual teachers.

Sustainability and transferability

The NZK pilot model relied on bringing people together to share ideas, debate and discuss issues, learn from and support each other, and more broadly to build a professional learning community both for teachers new to the profession and for mentors. The collaborative model is transferable and the content of the workshops are relevant to PRTs and mentors across the education sector.

Our pilot shows the issues PRTs and mentors have around expectations of the process and of their roles, are the same across services. This is evident in the feedback from participants in focus groups who reflected on the questions from a teacher’s perspective and focused on teaching practice rather than from a service perspective. We suggest this would also be true for PRTs and mentors in schools.

Teachers participating in professional development within their centre or school and often within regional networks, is well established and reflected in the pilot model. The model requires a plan for professional development which focuses on supporting PRTs and mentors over a sustained period of time. This may require ECE services, and in particular education and care centres, to commit to professional development over time rather than to ‘one off’ opportunities which is likely to be the case at present. Feedback from the participants from kindergartens and centres strongly supports the importance of building trusted relationships and making the time to talk together to understand and give meaning to the draft Criteria and draft Guidelines. These features are relevant to all teachers regardless of the age of the children they teach.

The sustainability of the programme, particularly for teachers in education and care services, will rely on managers and committees being better informed about teacher registration, funding to support participation, and appropriate professional development programmes and opportunities. (See Emerging Issues and Trends) The removal of the target for 100% qualified and registered teachers in teacher-led services by 2012 and the cuts to the Ministry of Education professional development budget announced earlier this year, have the potential to undermine both effective induction and mentoring programmes. Centres may not be able to afford to support teachers to undertake a comprehensive professional development programme.

The sustainability of the programme for kindergarten teachers is assured. NZK associations are committed to employing 100% qualified and registered teachers and the will look for ways to realise that commitment. The research presents rich information for senior teachers to include in
revised induction programmes and to reflect in professional development for kindergarten leaders and mentors. It highlights the key elements of successful induction and mentoring programmes, which can be built into associations’ programmes that both reflect local characteristics and are nationally consistent.

For early childhood education, the issues or potential difficulties in participating in the pilot were not in relation to differences in teaching and learning between services: the model was sufficiently robust to be relevant to teachers in any setting. These were issues such as the appropriate use of available funds to support participation in an induction programme. While these issues have an impact on programmes, they fell outside the brief of the pilot. We have identified the issues nonetheless as they will be critical to address if effective professional development for PRTs and mentors is to be a reality across the sector. (See Emerging Issues and Trends)

Emerging Issues and Trends

The advisory committee identified a number of issues and trends emerging from the project relating to the induction and mentoring process, relationships, and access to resources and support as referred to above.

These issues have the potential to create barriers to effective induction and mentoring programmes in early childhood education setting. The advisory committee recommends these issues be considered by the Teachers Council and strategies developed to address them.

Relationships

- Difficulties for PRTs particularly in education and care centres, asking employers for support when there is no programme in place.
- Mentors need to adapt their approaches in different situations: working with PRTs who are new graduates and have been working in the sector for a number of years; working with people who have worked in other services; working with those who are new to the sector.
- Addressing the particular difficulties for some mentors mentoring PRTs who are older and may have had considerable experience working in a centre prior to gaining their registration.
- Managing the tension between socio-cultural theory from teacher education programmes and working in settings based on development theory.
- Establishing and maintaining networks of PRTs/mentors is an important way to share ideas and resources, identify issues, and gain support.
Criteria

- Some PRTs have never seen the Teachers Council material and there are no resources in centres.
- Clarity around the transition from the old to the new criteria is needed.
- Clarity about the purpose of the (professional) dimensions/criteria, the (compliance) ERO review indicators, and the (industrial) professional standards, and the links between them, and with appraisal. The advisory group identified the need for senior teachers and others with oversight of the registration process, to have a shared understanding and view of the criteria.

Mentors

- Mentors managing the pressures of working with more than one PRT in a centre.
- Mentors do not always choose to be in that role: de/refining expectations of leadership.
- Consideration of whether there should be an optimum number of PRTs per mentor in each centre.
- Additional pressures on kindergartens and teachers such as kindergarten reorganisation resulting in larger more complex teams, increase demands on mentors and PRTs. In kindergartens and centres, the mentor is generally the head teacher or supervisor/person with registration taking on the induction programme as an extra responsibility. Finding ways to recognise and support mentors manage the additional responsibility and the expectations of the role should be part of the employer’s induction or registration policy.

Process

- Clarity around expectations of the mentor and PRT is central to the success of the programme.
- PRTs need to be aware that reaching full registration may take longer than two years, and that the mentor may not recommend it if they do not think the PRT has satisfactorily completed the induction programme.
- Mentors need to have the confidence to make a recommendation for full registration or not, and be supported in that decision.
- Finding time for PRTs and mentors to meet on a regular basis is a challenge in early childhood education settings. People may not have the same non-contact times, or work full-days, and the staff hour count policy affects a centre’s funding if registered teachers are absent from the centre for more than 40 hours.
- Priority should be given to spending time working through and giving meaning to the criteria and guidelines, and discussing what each looks like in practice.
Teacher education

- Variable and insufficient information given by teacher education providers to graduates, and in some cases, no information.
- Promoting registration as part a continuing teacher education journey.
- Ensuring graduates know and understand what is expected of them to reach full registration.

ICT

- PRTs may not have access to the internet – at home or at work, or can spend the required time using ICT to source and review information, or have access to suitable printing equipment. There may only be one PC on site which is being used by a number of people in the centre for purposes such as administration.
- Using ICT will help build an ICT culture in kindergartens and centres.
- Clarity of purpose, time to participate and confidence in using technology are central to the effectiveness of the online facility.
- People need time and support to build their confidence using ICT as a teaching tool as well as a means for ongoing professional dialogue as part of their induction programme or mentoring professional development.
- Security and confidentiality of the online discussion is an important consideration for people signing up to an online learning community.
- Consideration of whether a web-based online facility be for professional discussion and debate, or a place to share resources including readings, or both.

Funding

- Accessing release time for PRTs and mentors is difficult when early childhood education funding to services is attached to the number of ratioed/registered teachers in the centre at all times (staff hour count policy).
- People are using their own time to participate in programmes because of funding pressures and/or a lack of relievers which limits the amount of time a person is granted by the employer to be involved.
- Accountability and guidance is needed for the use of the ministry funding to support PRTs. In some cases, centres have received the funding and no or limited support has been put in place, or the PRT has left and the centre has retained the funding and the next centre does not receive funding to start/complete the programme, or no more funding can be claimed (more than 2 years).
• Some education and care centres give the funding to the PRT to use at their discretion which may not be used appropriately eg: a trip to a conference in Australia; purchasing equipment such as a camera or laptop which the centre keeps; regarding the funding as belonging to the centre, making it difficult for the PRT to access.

• Teachers ‘subject to confirmation’ do not attract funding support but in many cases, need a similar programme to the PRT. This situation is likely to become more prevalent as more teachers come back into the service as a result of the recession or teacher supply issues.

• There is concern about access to professional development to support induction and mentoring programmes in the future with the reduction in funding announced in the government’s 2009 budget.

• Concern was expressed towards the end of the project, when the Minister of Education announced the target for 100% qualified and registered teachers in teacher-led early childhood education services had been abandoned. The implications of this major policy shift for ongoing support for professional development and induction and mentoring programmes are significant for the sector.

Overcoming the barriers

Drawing on informal feedback from PRTs and mentors, and the research findings, the advisory group identified a number of issues that would need to be addressed in order to support effective induction and mentoring programme in the early childhood education sector in the future.

**Resource development**

• In workshop two or three, focusing on the draft Criteria or draft Guidelines and identifying teaching strategies against each.

• The New Zealand Teachers Council clearly setting out its expectations both content and process, particularly on the level of documentation.

• Clarifying the level and use of available funding to services to support the registration process.

• Clarifying the Registered Teacher Criteria in relation to the industrial professional standards, and teacher appraisal.

• Producing guidelines on entitlements and expectations: for beginning teachers and mentors, employers and other teaching staff.

• Developing a package for employers – to be received when a PRT applies for registration.
Information distribution

- Providing more information on induction and mentoring is via the internet.
- Making the resources (above) available to teachers to pass on and discuss with students in their final year of study.
- Arranging ‘Introduction to the profession’ days for graduates post-exam time.
- Identifying opportunities to present the NZK pilot research findings, to talk about the pilot and to initiate discussion on the key elements such as the kindergarten senior teacher hui in March 2010 and Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa conference in July 2010.
- Hosting an annual beginning teacher’s conference for teachers across the education sector nationally or regionally.
- Meeting with teacher education providers to present the findings, highlighting the connections pre/post graduation and expectations of beginning teachers.

Policy areas

- Funding: ensuring accountability for funding and monitoring of expenditure tagged to supporting PRTs to become fully registered; exploring excluding teachers undertaking registration related activities from the ‘staff hour count’ policy requirements.
- Professional development: providing opportunities for PRTs and mentors to undertake professional development.
- Mentors: exploring how people other than those employed as a registered teacher in a centre, can maintain registration and therefore be available to be a mentor.
References


Glossary

ECE: Early childhood education

NZCA: Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association

NZK: New Zealand Kindergartens Inc.

PRT: Provisionally Registered Teacher

Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa: New Zealand Childcare Association

NZTC: New Zealand Teachers Council