

STUDENT LED CONFERENCES

Freemans Bay School / Waiatarau

2009 – 2010

Sandra Jenkins



Student Led Conferences

Successful educational partnerships focus on learning.

Student Led Conferences

Part 1:

Research

**Evaluation of the effectiveness of student led
conferences at Freemans Bay / Waiatarau**

2009

Context: Freemans Bay / Waiatarau

- Decile 6 inner city school
- 35 identified nationalities
- Whanau Ata - Rumaki
- 50% have English as their second language
- Rapid roll growth
- Diversity
 - Cultures
 - Socio-economic backgrounds



Literature Review:

Brooking (2007, page 1)

Effective partnership as one that “Involves parents, families and whanau in their children’s learning.”

Robinson and Timperly (2000) contend that parents need to understand current and desired achievement expectation

Timperley and Robinson (2002) suggest that both parties must have an understanding of the issue that needs to be solved and that the issue should be explicit.

Biddulph et al., (2008) advocate regular two way timely communication around student achievement

Literature Review:

Robinson and Timperley (2000) argue that parents need to understand what is needed to close the gap between current and expected achievement levels

Anderson and Minke

(2007) advocate that schools need to have strong, supportive relationships with their communities committed to supporting students to succeed at school.

The Flaxmere project, aimed to build relationships with school and communities – a key finding of this project was that the partnerships empowered parents to better support their students learning. (Clinton, Hattie, & Dixon, 2007)


Identified conditions of educationally effective partnerships:







Constraints

- Parents have a clear understanding of the purpose of the partnership
- It is a collaborative experience around learning

- 
- Helps parents to understand the expected level of achievement for their student
 - Against the students actual level of achievement.

- 
- 
- Supports parents to know how they can support learning goals at home.
 - The relationship between the teacher, parent and student is constructive , open and respectful.

Parent Survey

Purpose:

To evaluate the extent that the conditions identified in the literature review were met through SLC.

To identify areas to strengthen in future slc practice.



What would this look like?

- SLC focus is on learning
- On what the student knows and the next learning steps
- The parents and student discuss the current level of achievement
- Compared with expected level
- How the learning can be supported at home
- School partnership for learning is strengthened



What are the consequences?

- Common understanding where the student should be achieving
- And where the child is actually achieving
- Parents support the student with their next learning steps at home
- School partnership for learning is strengthened



Survey Questions:

1. At the student led conference we talked mostly about my child's learning
2. The student led conference helped me to understand my child's current achievement compared to expected standard for age
3. My child was able to show how his / her work compared with the expected standard for age.
4. The student led conference focused on steps my child needs to take to improve his/her achievement
5. I support my child's learning steps that were discussed at the conference at home
6. There is a stronger home school partnership around learning built through this student led conference

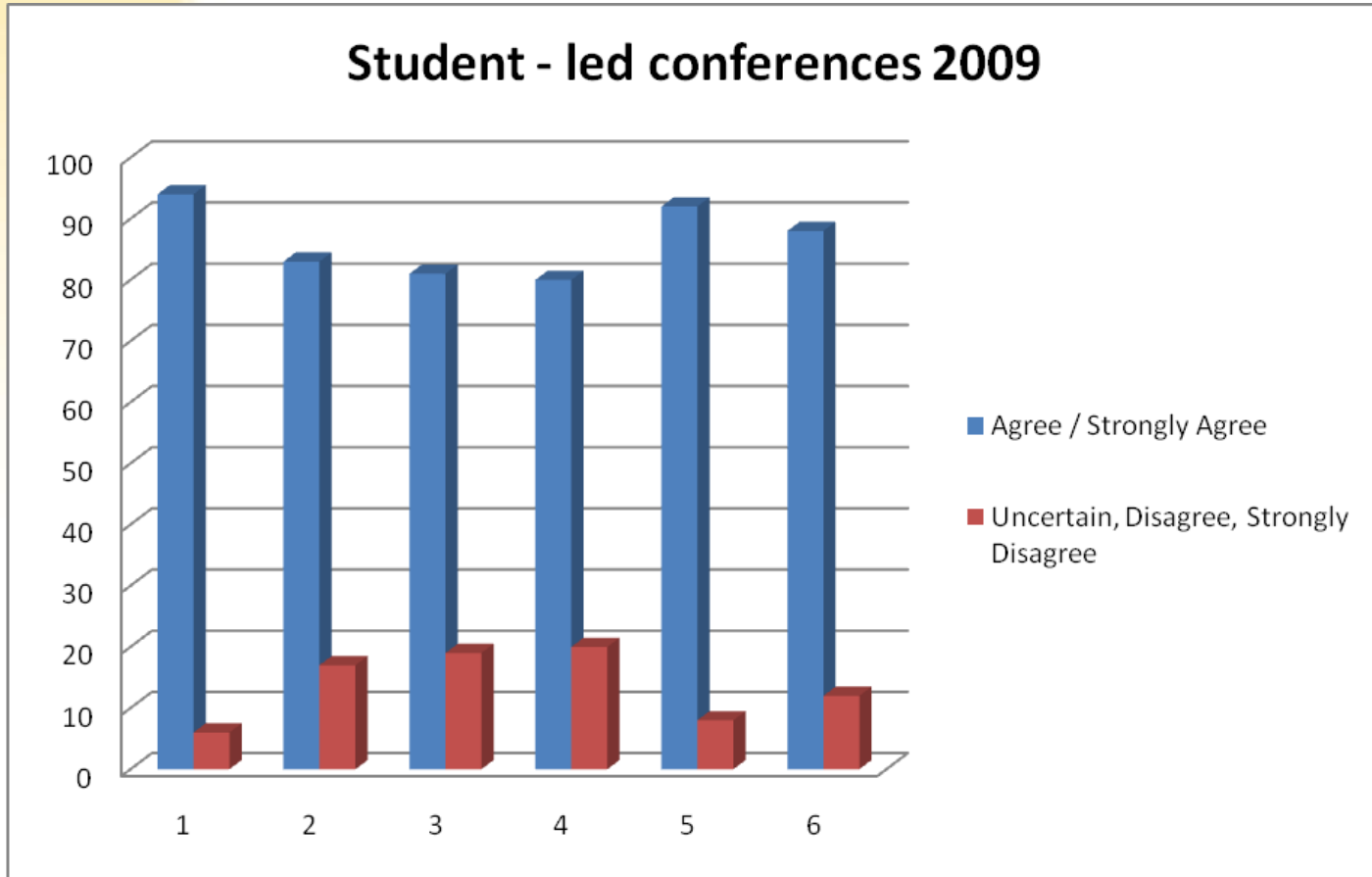


RESULTS:

- 374 students had parents attend their student led conference out of 395 students.
- The participation rate was 95%.
- The 21 students who did not have student led conferences on the evenings set, had their conferences at a later date either with their parents or a staff member.
- Survey participation was encouraged by class teachers by direct approach to parents who had just completed the student led conference.
- It was preferable to distribute the survey at the student led conference to ensure that the experience was still fresh in the minds of the parents.
- A total of 184 parents (49%) filled out survey forms.

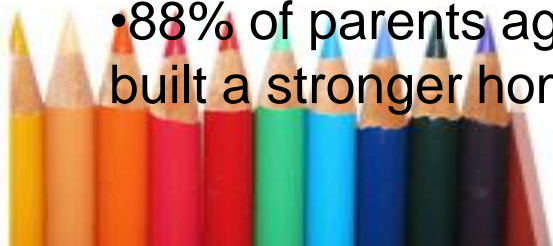


Results:



DATA:

- 94% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their student led conference focus was on learning.
- 83% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood their child's current achievement compared to expected standard for age.
- 81% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child was able to show how his / her work compared with the expected standard for age
- 79% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the student led conference focused on steps their child needed to take to improve his/ her achievement.
- 92% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to support their child's learning steps at home
- 88% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that student led conference built a stronger home school partnership around learning.



Comments:

- 91 parents put a comment on the forms. The comments overall were very positive and supported the concept of students taking ownership of their learning and sharing this with their parents.
- There were three comments that objected to this style of conference.
- 103 supported the student led conferences.



Comments:

- This was a wonderful attempt which help the child to assess themselves and make them understood what they have to learn so far and now what have to be learnt. Really great.
- I enjoyed this conference much more than others I have been to. It wasn't rushed. My child was relaxed and more confident than in the past. She remembered things she wanted to show me as we went along. It was great having the teacher in the background prompting as well.



Conclusion:

We can confidently conclude that our student led conferences, meet the identified conditions of an educationally effective partnership.



- Parents have an understanding of the purpose of student led conferences with learning as the prime focus.
- They report accurately to parents about their students achievement.
- They help parents to understand the expected level of achievement of their students and their students achievement against that expected level of achievement.
- They support parents to know how they can support improving students learning at home.



References

Anderson K, & Minke, K. (2007) Parent involvement in education: Toward an understanding of parents' decision making. *The journal of Educational Research* 100(5), 311-323

Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and Family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education

Bull, A., Brooking K., Campbell., (2008) Successful Home-School Partnerships Report prepared for Ministry of Education pp 1-69 Report prepared by New Zealand Council for Education Research. Online: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications

Clinton, J., Hattie, J.' & Dixon. (2007) *Evaluation of the Flaxmere project: When families learn the language of school*. Wellington. Ministry of Education

Desforges, C. & Abouchar, A (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment. A literature review*. (Research report 433 Department for Education and Skills). Downloaded from: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR433.doc

Education Review Office. (2008) Report on Freemans Bay School, 2008 downloaded from: www.ero.govt.nz/ero/report

Robinson, V.M.J., and Timperley, H.s.(2000). The link between accountability and improvement: The case of reporting to parents. *Peabody Journal of Education*,75(41), pp 66-89.

Timperley, H., & Robinson, V. (2002). *Partnership:Focusing the relationship on the task of school improvement*. Wellington: NZCER

Robinson, V. & Lai, M.K. (2006) Collaborating to improve practice. Chapter 10 in *Practitioner research for educators: a guide to improving classrooms and schools*. p197-211 Carlifornia. USA. Corwin Press.

Ministry of Education. (2005). Making a bigger difference to all students. Hangaia He huarahi hei whakarewa ake I nga tauria katoa. *Schooling strategy 2005-2006*. p7

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media



Part 2

What do Student Led Conferences look like at
Freemans Bay / Waiatarau?



SLC and Key Beliefs:

- SLC puts the student in the centre of the learning conversation
- Students are the ones who need all the information yet traditionally they are the ones who have known the least.
- In the 21Century students need to be at the centre of the learning conversation.



- If the teacher or the parent does all of the talking – the message is the teacher is in charge of the learning – not the child
- Every child should have an opportunity to discuss their learning with a significant adult in their life



What does a SLC look like?:

- A conversation between the tamariki and their parent about learning
- Other families are present in the room at the same time
- The teacher is present to provide support if needed
- Student portfolios, workbooks, displays in the room, and activities support the conversation



Learning Questions

- What is the best part of this work?
- Which part are you most proud of?
- How do you know that you have been successful in your learning?
- What did you / do you find easiest?
- What are the tricky things?
- What is the next step for you?
- What can I / we do to help you with this?



Learning Questions

- What are you learning to do in writing at school?
- What are you learning to do in reading?
- What are you learning to do in mathematics?
- What “habit of mind” are you practicing?
- How do you practice it?

- ESOL students translate into home language
- Parents ask students in their own language
- Have questions available for parents to use?



Support

- Students work
- Written comments by the teacher
- Assessment information
 - Where the student is at
 - Compared with expected achievement
 - Next learning steps
- Language, Maths, e-learning activities



Support

- Students work
- Written comments by the teacher
- Assessment information
 - Where the student is at
 - Compared with expected achievement
 - Next learning steps
- Language, Maths, e-learning activities
- Interview sign up sheet



Support

- Students work
- Written comments by the teacher
- Assessment information
 - Where the student is at
 - Compared with expected achievement
 - Next learning steps
- Language, Maths, e-learning activities
- Interview sign up sheet



SLC In Action

- [..\My DVDs\sandy student led conference dvd.avi](#)



Part 3

Where to Next:

- In 2010 National Standards come into effect
- Schools report to parents at least twice a year in writing about their child's progress in relation to National standards



Part 3

We are required to:

- Help students understand the standards and their goals in relation to them
- Assess student achievement using a wide range of assessment tools
- Ensure students understand their progress and achievement and their next learning steps



Reporting Student Achievement at Freemans Bay / Waiatarau

Taylor (2004) has provided a model for effective communication between teacher, parents and student that is underpinned by research.



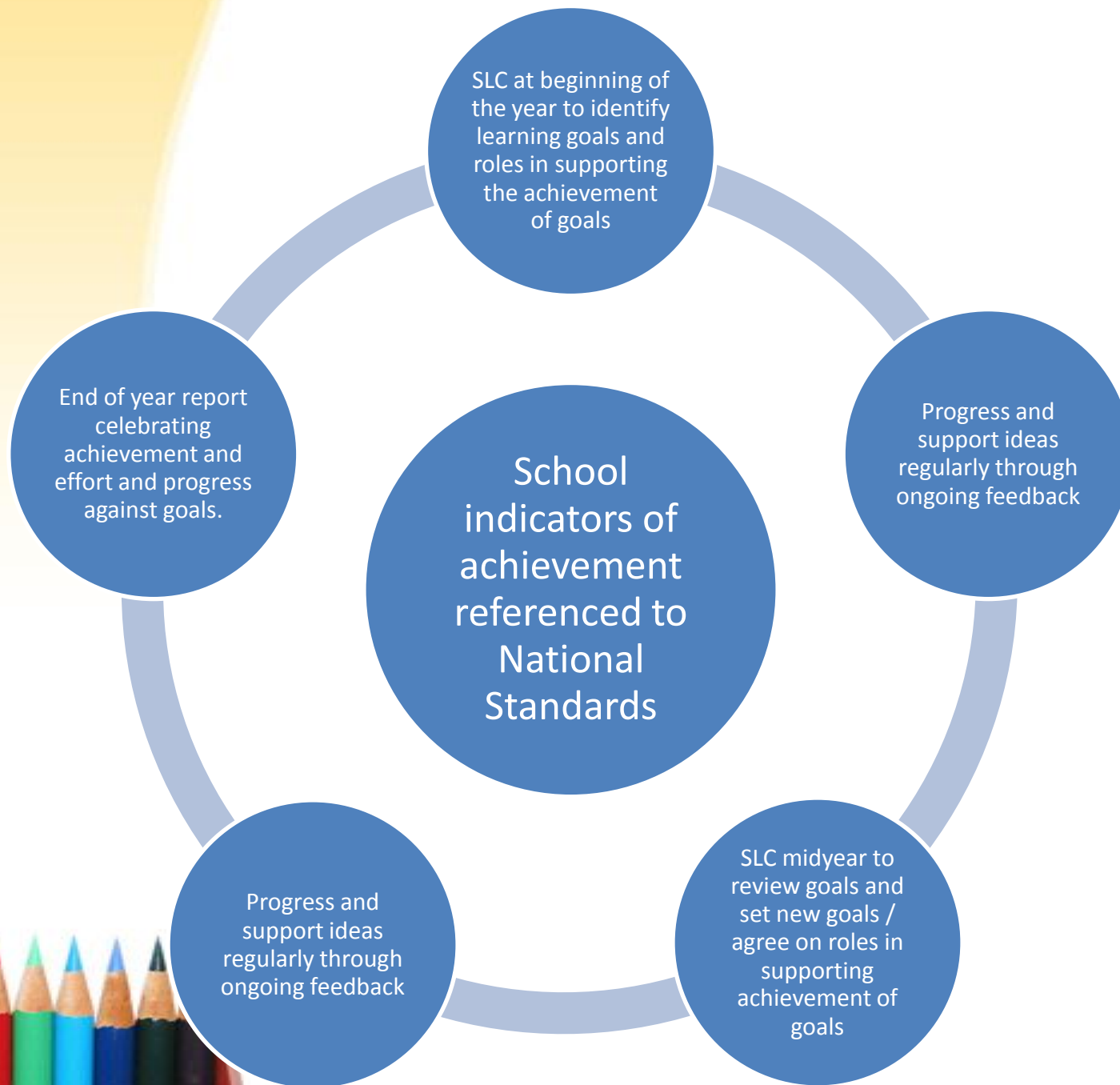
Your turn:

What do you remember about your own school reports / interviews from when you were at primary school.

Name two things you would like to keep.

Name two things you would like to discard.





Process

Key Features

SLC Beginning of Year

- Led by student
- Informed by achievement data
- Goals are challenging and achievable
- Goal setting and plan written

First six months – plan in action

- Effective teaching and learning
- Regular feedback to student
- Student self regulating
- Regular communication to parent

Mid Year SLC

- Led by student
- Informed by achievement data
- Goals are reviewed and rewritten
- Plan is written

End of Year Report

Written by teacher and student.

Recognises that the audience is the family and extended family

Identifies goals for next year



Process

SLC Beginning of Year

- Everyone is clear about:
- What the learning goals / intentions are.
- Their role in achieving the learning goals / intentions

First six months – plan in action

- The student is able to evaluate their own progress based on feedback / feedforward
- The student is reflective and regulates actions based on feedback

Mid Year SLC

- Everyone is clear about:
- What the learning goals / intentions are
- Their role in achieving the learning goals / intentions

End of Year Report

Families are able to celebrate all of the successes of the year

The students learning is continuous.

Identifies goals for next year



Give and Get

From everything we have engaged in about SLC and reporting to parents and the principles identified in the literature research

Write two things you think are going well in our school and two things that you think need further development.

In 4 min blocks meet with each other and share one – do this three times.

