



A Professional Inquiry: Supporting Teacher Implementation of the Incredible Years for Teachers Programme through Group Leader Teacher Visits

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Mā te huruhuru, Ka rere te manu

(Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly)

ABSTRACT

The Incredible Years for Teachers programme (IYT) is an evidence-based classroom behaviour management programme which, since 2011, has been offered to teachers who are teaching students aged 3 - 8 years, in New Zealand primary schools and kindergartens. The IYT course has been designed so it can be flexibly implemented to meet the needs of course participants while still maintaining course fidelity. A critical component to individualising the IYT programme is between workshop and group leader teacher visits. This professional inquiry set out to identify how IYT group leaders, as part of teacher visits, can effectively support teachers to implement the IYT programme in their classes. Teachers' perceptions of group leader actions that support them to implement the IYT programme in their classes were gathered using an online questionnaire. The main finding of this inquiry is a collaborative and differentiated approach based upon a coaching model should be utilised throughout all phases of the teacher visit. Findings from this inquiry suggest this could be best achieved through basing the group leader and teacher visit on the 'Teaching as Inquiry' cycle, as this is consistent with research about sustaining effective teacher learning.

Research paper

Keywords:

coaching; collaboration; differentiation; incredible years teacher; teaching as inquiry

INTRODUCTION

The Incredible Years for Teachers programme (IYT) is part of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) nationwide Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiative. IYT is one of several interlocking evidence-based programmes developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton and her United States' team for use with teachers, parents and students (Wylie & Felgate, 2016). The goal of these programmes is "to prevent and treat young children's behaviour problems and promote

their social, emotional and academic competence" (Incredible Years website, 2013, para.1). Numerous studies over the past thirty years by Webster-Stratton and independent researchers (Fergusson, Horwood & Stanley, 2013; Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2004; Wylie & Felgate, 2016) have shown the IYT series is effective for parents, teachers and students in a range of countries and cultural contexts.

Since 2011, New Zealand teachers in primary schools and early childhood centres have been offered the IYT programme through Ministry of Education (MOE) providers such as Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), MOE staff and the Kindergarten Association (Wylie & Felgate, 2016). The IYT programme is conducted over a period of six months, in a series of six full day workshops with a follow-up workshop three months later. Courses delivered by RTLb cater for sixteen primary class teachers who are generally teaching students in Years 1- 4 (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Two trained group leaders work in partnership in all aspects of the course delivery (MOE, 2015). This includes planning and organising workshop activities based on the course content and principles as outlined in the IYT series Leader's Guide (Webster-Stratton, 2008), the teacher textbook *Incredible Teachers: Nurturing Children's Social, Emotional and Academic Competence* (Webster-Stratton, 2012), and DVD video vignettes. Both group leaders are responsible for facilitating discussions, modelling and providing opportunities for teachers to share and practise strategies, questioning to promote teacher self-review and collaboration, supporting teachers to develop individual student behaviour plans, as well as providing individual support for teachers as part of teacher visits (MOE, 2015).

This paper reports on an inquiry, which sets out to investigate teacher perceptions of group leader teacher actions that are effective in supporting them to implement the IYT programme with their classes. The inquiry grew from the experiences and professional practice of the researcher, an RTLb and experienced, accredited IYT group leader. The researcher believes

the Māori whakataukī “*Mā te huruhuru, Ka rere te manu*” (Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly) is an appropriate metaphor for this inquiry as it conveys the essence and underlying values of RTL and IYT group leader practice. Through facilitating teacher learning, group leaders support teachers to acquire the knowledge, skills and beliefs - the “feathers” - to successfully implement the IYT programme in their classes, resulting in improved learning and behavioural outcomes for students.

The professional development for group leaders is an important aspect of the IYT programme (MOE, 2015; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011; Wylie & Felgate, 2016) and the researcher found that opportunities such as MOE supervision days, peer coaching and the IYT accreditation process supported her to effectively deliver the IYT workshops. However, it has only been more recently with the addition of the MOE publication, ‘Guidelines for the Incredible Years Teacher Programme’ (MOE, 2015), that group leaders in New Zealand have been provided with written guidelines for undertaking teacher visits. Despite these guidelines, recent New Zealand research conducted by Wylie and Felgate (2016) found there was some variation in how group leaders worked with teachers between workshops. They suggested that it would be worthwhile to understand more about what helps and hinders work with individual teachers.

Group leader teacher visits are a crucial aspect of the IYT programme as they provide individual support for teachers to implement the IYT programme (MOE, 2015; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). Individualised support is essential because teacher learning is a complex undertaking (Timperley, 2010) and research indicates that sustained change occurs when teachers are supported to contextualise and transfer their learning into classroom practice (Reinke, Herman, Stormont, Newcomer & David, 2013; Timperley, 2008). In the United States, the literature suggests that individualised support for teachers is conducted by specifically-trained IYT Classroom Management coaches (Reinke, Stormont, Webster-Stratton, Newcomer & Herman, 2012) however, in New Zealand, this is the role of the IYT group leader (MOE, 2015).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to ‘Guidelines for the Incredible Years Teaching Programme’ (MOE, 2015) the ongoing aim for the IYT programme in NZ is to achieve significant improvements in teachers’ use of positive behaviour strategies and, in doing so, increase behavioural outcomes for students. For this to happen, it is vital the IYT course is delivered in a way which is consistent and upholds the fidelity of the programme (MOE,

2015). The literature review will begin by exploring the elements of programme fidelity (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011) which includes individualising teacher-support through teacher visits (Reinke et al., 2013). Another important feature of the IYT programme is that it is strengths-based and supports teachers to achieve personal goals that they have identified as part of the workshops (Reinke et al., 2012). In order to achieve this, Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) espouses group leaders utilise a culturally-responsive, partnership model of coaching (Knight, 2011). Within the New Zealand context, the New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007) and the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, ‘Our Code Our Standards’ (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017) guide teacher professional practice. It is clear in both these documents “Teaching as Inquiry” (MOE, 2007, p. 35) is the foundation for teacher professional learning (Timperley, 2008), and this literature review will therefore examine the significance of teaching as inquiry as part of the group leader teacher visits.

Group Leader Teacher Visits Support the Fidelity of the IYT Programme

The IYT programme is an example of an evidence-based professional development programme which, because of its design, has been successfully adapted with fidelity across a variety of nations, cultures and teaching contexts (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). Fidelity of programme delivery is important as it is only when interventions are implemented by class teachers as they were intended that learning outcomes for students are enhanced (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Power et al., 2005; Reinke et al., 2013). According to Power et al. (2005), the term *fidelity* is interchangeable with the word *integrity*. Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) identifies three dimensions to the IYT programme fidelity: (1) Core delivery of workshop content (including number and length of workshops); (2) Group leaders’ skill level and competence in the programme delivery, and (3) Programme differentiation that allows tailoring of the programme to meet the individual needs of participants. Group leader teacher visits fit under this third aspect of fidelity (Reinke et al., 2013) as the intention is to provide personalised support for teachers, enabling them to achieve their workshop goals and generalise skills learnt in workshops into their classroom context (MOE, 2015; Reinke et al., 2013; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). The evidence from research (e.g. Reinke et al., 2013; Wylie & Felgate, 2016) highlights the importance of teacher visits because they assist in generalising the principles and skills learnt in the workshops to the teacher’s specific classroom setting and therefore contribute to improved learning outcomes for students. The group leader is able to experience first-hand the teacher’s efforts to implement workshop strategies and through

highlighting teacher successes builds teacher self-efficacy and confidence (Reinke et al., 2012). MOE (2015) emphasises teacher visits as a collaborative process, which leads to teachers being confident and skilled to continue to self-review and sustain the programme once the course is completed.

The Use of Coaching to Support Teachers Between Workshops

Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) describes the collaborative process between the group leader and participating teachers as one based on a partnership learning philosophy (Knight, 2011). Partnership learning uses strategies based on reciprocity, reflection and dialogue, enabling both teachers and group leaders to learn with and from each other. Moreover, through these interactions, relationships that are built on trust are developed, and research has shown teachers who are supported through trusting relationships are more-likely to reveal challenges and commit to implementing new approaches (Cowie, 2010; Knight, 2011; Spee, Oakden, Toumu'a, Sauni & Tuagalu, 2014; Timperley, 2008; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). According to Webster-Stratton et al. (2011), the partnership approach is embedded throughout the IYT programme delivery, including teacher visits, using a coaching model. Reinke et al. (2013) define the IYT coaching model as "learner centered, supportive and collaborative and focuses on building teachers' strengths" (p. 154). It is evident from many studies (e.g. Cowie, 2010; Knight et al., 2015, Spee et al., 2014) the partnership approach to coaching is culturally-responsive as the key components of care and support (manaakitanga), relationship building (whanaungatanga), reciprocity of learning (ako), communication and problem-solving (wānanga), and context-based practice (tangata whenuatanga) and can be directly linked to Tātaiako Cultural Competencies of Māori learners (MOE, 2011).

While much literature advocates the use of various coaching models in supporting teachers to inquire into their practice and successfully implement new strategies (e.g. Cowie, 2010; Devine, Houssemand & Meyers, 2013; Knight, 2011), there has been only limited research into the individual factors that make coaching effective. In a comprehensive review (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010) of 13 studies that focused on the impact of coaching on teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices, the authors found the critical practice to be small group training followed by coaches observing multiple times, providing feedback, and modelling. However, they noted that only a few of the studies provided data that supported coaching having a positive effect on student outcomes.

According to Reinke et al. (2013), the only proven individual aspect of coaching to impact positively on outcomes for teachers and students is the use of ongoing performance feedback. Noell et al. (2005) define performance feedback as "monitoring a behaviour that is the focus of concern and providing feedback to the individual regarding that behaviour" (p. 88). In two studies conducted by Noell et al. (2005) and Reinke et al. (2014), it was found that teachers who received more performance feedback had higher levels of programme implementation over time and therefore had the greatest impact on child behavioural outcomes.

Kretlow and Bartholomew (2010) suggest that one way to allow for increased repeated observations, assessment, and feedback of teacher performance is with the use of audio/video technology. There is significant research (e.g. Knight et al., 2015; Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014) that supports the use of video recordings of class teaching as the focus of the coaching process. Video recordings provide a clear picture of reality, which can aid in the identification of goals and teaching strategies, however Knight et al. (2015) suggest coaches use a range of data collection methods as not all goals can be evaluated through viewing video recordings. The MOE guidelines (2015) maintain that teacher visits should focus on viewing and discussing video recordings of teacher practice. However, Wylie and Felgate (2016) overwhelmingly found teachers and group leaders spent more time discussing the target student's progress and strategy use, class observations and the workshop self-reflective inventory, while only 29 percent of teachers surveyed had their group leader view their video and provide feedback.

Teacher Professional Learning – The Teaching as Inquiry Model and IYT

From synthesising research on teacher professional learning that has a positive impact on student outcomes, Timperley (2008) identifies ten key principles which are essential for effective teacher learning. Significantly, Timperley emphasises for sustained and meaningful teacher learning to occur it is necessary for all ten principles to be integrated in a teaching learning cycle, such as "Teaching as Inquiry" (MOE, 2007, p. 35). The Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand 'Our Code, Our Standards' (ECOANZ, 2017) state teacher professional learning should be based on increasing professional capability through collaborative problem-solving inquiry, which is adaptive and focuses on learning and achievement.

The NZC (MOE, 2007) describes teaching as inquiry as a cyclical process in which teachers investigate the impact of their teaching on their students'

learning. Muijs et al. (2014) and Timperley (2010) explain this continual cycle of collecting evidence, posing questions, making decisions about changes to teaching practices and then evaluating these in terms of student achievement as a professional process of adaptive expertise. Adaptive expertise is important as it is only when teachers take flexible approaches to solving problems through locating new knowledge and integrating it with their existing knowledge that learning and teaching challenges can be resolved. Moreover, Timperley (2010) asserts it is challenging for teachers to single-handedly undertake the teaching-as-inquiry process, as it is unlikely, unsupported, they will make the mindset shift required, use assessment data effectively, or sustain and adapt interventions in ways that will impact positively on student outcomes. Thus, it would seem that group leader teacher visits are crucial if teachers are to successfully integrate their skills and knowledge and become adaptive experts.

Wylie and Felgate (2016) state in their flow-chart, “The Theory of Change for Incredible Years Teacher – Short-term Outcomes”, teachers are using the teaching-as-inquiry cycle when they plan and implement their target student behaviour plan. The development of the behaviour plan is one element of the IYT programme which allows teachers to individualise the IYT workshop content to meet the needs of individual students in their classes with behaviour difficulties (Reinke et al., 2012; Reinke et al., 2014). Throughout the IYT workshops, teachers work collaboratively in small groups to identify the negative and positive opposite student behaviours, complete a simple functional assessment, and identify strategies they can implement when they return to their classes (Reinke et al., 2012). MOE (2015) and Reinke et al. (2014) state group leader teacher visits provide teachers with further support to implement their behaviour plans. It is suggested (Reinke et al., 2012) the IYT Classroom Management coach provide teachers with feedback on their strategy use, collect and discuss data on target student behaviour, model strategies, and assist with problem solving when the plan is not working as intended.

In conclusion, there would appear to be sound reasons why group leader teacher visits are imperative if teachers are to be effectively supported to implement the IYT programme in their classes. Individualised support for teachers maintains the IYT programme fidelity and therefore increases positive outcomes for teachers and students (Reinke et al., 2013; Wylie & Felgate, 2016). While there is promising research around coaching to support teacher learning (e.g. Knight, 2015; Spee et al., 2014), researchers (e.g. Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Noell et al., 2005; Reinke et al., 2013) have also identified the need to further investigate the specific components of

coaching that are effective in supporting individual teachers to implement evidence-based programmes. Whereas MOE guidelines (2015) promote reviewing video footage of teacher practice as the basis of group leader teacher visits, it is evident that this is not yet common practice (Wylie & Felgate, 2016). It would be valuable to gather teacher perceptions of the enablers and barriers to using video recordings along with what methods they view as being the most supportive in assisting them to achieve their goals. For coaching to be effective, it needs to be part of a collaborative process, focusing on inquiring into practice (Knight et al., 2015; Reinke et al., 2014; Spee et al., 2014). Key New Zealand educational documents (ECOANZ, 2017; MOE, 2007), as well as research (Timperley, 2008), asserts the use of teaching-as-inquiry cycle as the basis of teacher learning as it encompasses the 10 components of teacher learning (Timperley, 2008) resulting in teachers becoming self-regulated learners and adaptive experts (Muijs et al., 2014). Equally important, Timperley maintains that external expertise is necessary to support the teaching-as-inquiry process as it is only with this support that existing assumptions can be challenged, allowing for new learning to be implemented as intended. While it is intended that teachers engage in teaching-as-inquiry when they plan, implement, review and refine their individual student behaviour plan (Wylie & Felgate, 2016), it would be worthwhile to investigate further ways group leaders could work with teachers to make this link explicit. Finally, while research indicates the importance of IYT group leaders providing individualised support for teachers between workshops, it is evident that further investigation is required into the components that make this support effective.

With these points in mind, the researcher set out to gather teacher perceptions to answer the research question: *As part of teacher visits, how can IYT group leaders effectively support teachers to implement the IYT programme in their classes?*

METHODOLOGY

After considering a range of data-gathering tools (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2011) an anonymous online questionnaire was selected as the most efficient method of gathering teacher perceptions on the various components of the group leader teacher visits. As Burton and Bartlett (2004) state, “A well-designed questionnaire can provide useful information on respondents’ attitudes, values and habits” (p. 100). The questionnaire also enabled the researcher to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from a larger group of teachers in a relatively short time period compared with other methods such as interviews or focus group discussions (Burton & Bartlett, 2004; Menter et al., 2011).

Data Gathering Process

The questionnaire consisted of quantitative questions including five multi-choice questions which gathered teacher demographic data, and four sections where the respondents used a five-point Likert scale to rate the usefulness or desirability of group leader actions (as specified in Tables 1- 4) and their perceived concerns with reviewing video recordings of their teaching practice. Finally, four open-ended questions were included which provided an opportunity to gather more in-depth qualitative data. Questions were based upon the suggested group leader actions identified in *Guidelines for the Incredible Years Teacher programme, 4.0 Programme Delivery: Running the Sessions, 4.3 Between Session Tasks for Group leaders* (MOE, 2015, p. 4-5) and key areas identified through the literature review (e.g. Wylie & Felgate, 2016).

The questionnaire was piloted with several volunteers from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Additionally, the researcher invited two IYT group leaders to review the questionnaire and provide feedback. Through this process, the researcher was able to collaboratively refine the wording of questions as well as gauge the length of time the questionnaire would take to complete. This was important as ensuring question clarity and simplicity is crucial to the success of a questionnaire (Burton & Bartlett, 2004; Gillham, 2007).

Participants

A total of 55 teachers who had completed the IYT course prior to 2017 from eight schools in New Zealand (Deciles 2-9) were invited via email to participate in this inquiry. Written approval was gained from their principals, and subsequently the researcher collaborated with each school's Special Education Needs Coordinator to compile a list of IYT trained teachers. This ensured that all teachers who had completed the IYT course, regardless of course location and provider, were invited to participate. Teachers were contacted via their school email addresses, provided with the research information sheet and a link to the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was accessible to teachers for one month from the initial email.

Data Analysis

Teachers responses to the Likert items were collated using a Google spreadsheet, checked for accuracy, and displayed as tables using frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data gained from responses to each open-ended question were collated and then analysed using a manual thematic approach (Raibee, 2004, as cited in Menter et al., 2011).

RESULTS

A total of 30 teachers completed the quantitative sections of the questionnaire with 18 also providing further information by answering all or some of the four open questions. Most teachers (74%) who responded to the questionnaire were experienced junior school teachers who had more than six years of teaching experience. Teachers who responded to the questionnaire were mainly teaching in Years 0 - 4 (73%) and they had completed the IYT course between 2011 and 2016. All teachers had received at least one class visit from their group leader, while 14 (46.6%) received two or three visits, and 3 (10%) had received more than three visits. Perhaps due to completing the course some time ago, the remaining eight teachers (26.6%) were unsure of how many visits they had received.

Group Leader Personal Qualities

Eighteen teachers provided written responses regarding the group leader personal qualities they found supportive as part of the teacher visits. Analysis identified three key themes: 1. Positive and non-judgmental attitude; 2. Ability to communicate and listen, and 3. Professionalism including content knowledge.

Just over half (56%) the teachers mentioned the importance of the group leader demonstrating a positive and non-judgmental attitude when conducting the teacher visit. This included identifying strengths in teacher practice, supporting teachers to analyse and problem-solve, and providing guidance and support in the implementation of strategies. Teachers identified the group leader's ability to show empathy, understanding and kindness, and to be accepting of teacher differences as contributing to a positive experience. Skills of a good communicator and listener were also identified by 44 percent of teachers. For example, teachers commented on the value of receiving a written report, reflective discussions where information was shared in an honest and open way, and the group leader's ability to listen and give constructive feedback. A high level of professionalism, which included demonstrating professional knowledge, was identified as an important group leader attribute by 37 percent of teachers. They felt that it was important for group leaders to conduct the visit in a way which was unobtrusive and that acknowledged the diversity and complexity of teaching contexts. Teacher F commented, "She was very supportive and very professional, particularly with ILE (Innovative learning environments) pedagogies".

Organisation of Teacher Visits

Table 1

Usefulness of Group Leader Actions (n=30)

How useful is each of the group leader action in supporting you to implement the IYT programme in your class?	Very useful	Useful	Neutral	Unlikely to be of use	Not at all useful
Contacting me prior to the visit and negotiating the visit focus.	15 (50%)	15 (50%)			
Providing funding for teacher release so that I can be released during teaching time for a feedback meeting.	20 (67%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	
Having regular visits throughout the course that focus on my implementation of the strategies covered in the workshops	11 (37%)	18 (60%)	1 (3%)		
Arranging feedback meetings at break times or after school.	9 (30%)	11 (37%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)

Table 1 shows that teachers (97%) overwhelmingly agreed that pre-arranged, regular group leader visits which focused on their implementation of workshop strategies were vital in supporting them to implement the IYT programme in their classes. Two thirds (66%) of the teachers felt that scheduling feedback meetings at break-times or after school was a useful practice, however the majority (87%) of teachers agreed that

providing funding for teacher-release so that feedback meetings could be held during class would assist them in the implementation of the IYT programme. However, Teacher B, who had completed the course in 2014, did not feel that providing teacher-release for feedback meetings would be useful as it is disruptive to the students, and schools face difficulties employing relief teachers for part-day release.

Preferred Process for Teacher Visits

Table 2

Preferred Processes for Group Leader Teacher Visits (n=30)

Which process would you prefer as the basis of the group leader teacher visit?	Very desirable	Desirable	Neutral	Undesirable	Very undesirable	No response
Group leader observing my use of behaviour strategies followed by discussion and written feedback.	15 (50%)	13 (43%)	2 (7%)			
The group leader observing my target student followed by reviewing my behaviour plan with me.	11 (37%)	16 (53%)	2 (7%)			1 (3%)
The group leader coaching me so that I have 'hands on' support to implement workshop strategies.	11 (37%)	16 (53%)	1 (3%)		1 (3%)	1 (3%)
The group leader supporting me to use "Teaching as Inquiry" process (NZC, 2007 p. 35) as a framework to meet teacher and student needs	7 (23%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)		1 (3%)
The group leader modelling strategies for me with the students	12 (40%)	9 (30%)	7 (23%)	2 (7%)		
Meeting with the group leader and reviewing a video recording of my teaching practice.	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	7 (23%)	6 (20%)		1 (3%)

Teachers were asked to rate (Table 2) the desirability of five possible group leader practices which could be the basis of the teacher visit. Teachers overwhelmingly identified class observations of teacher use of behaviour strategies followed by discussion and written feedback as the most desirable practice. When asked to comment on the overall preferred process for teacher visits, eleven (61%) teachers mentioned the importance of timely, specific and written feedback. For example, Teacher I, an experienced practitioner wrote, “Feedback was really important about my progress and what I needed to focus on”. Feedback was identified by teachers as being valuable as it engaged them in reflective discussion which enabled the identification of their learning steps.

Teachers also commented that they valued collaboration; for example, Teacher Q who had completed the course in 2016 wrote, “Collaborative approach really worked for me. I didn’t feel intimidated”. A partnership approach, such as the group leader observing the target student, providing feedback and then reviewing the behaviour plan or coaching teachers in the use of workshop strategies, was also seen as being very desirable. Several teachers

commented on the value of having group leader ‘hands-on support’ in their classes and the positive effect of the teacher being able to observe modelling in an authentic class context. Using the “Teaching as Inquiry” model (MOE, 2007) was also seen by most (83%) of teachers as a desirable collaborative process that could be utilised to meet their individual and student needs. Teacher S suggested that the process should be negotiated with each individual teacher so that individual concerns could be problem-solved.

The least-favoured process for group leader visits was a teacher meeting which focused on reviewing a video recording of practice. While just over half (53%) indicated that reviewing a video recording was desirable, there appears to be many (43%) who would be reluctant to engage in this process. Teacher P explained that while the thought of videoing could be uncomfortable, it was indeed a powerful tool. While Teacher F, an experienced junior school teacher, suggested that as video feedback is so powerful, it could be a good use of group leader time to video different teachers over a time period and then review particular parts with each teacher.

Use of Video Recordings to Review Teaching Practice

Table 3

Teacher Concerns with the Use of Video Recordings to Review Teaching Practice (n=28)

	Not a concern	Somewhat of a concern	Moderate concern	Serious concern	Total number of teachers with concerns
Sharing the video recording with my group leader	16 (57%)	9 (32%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	12 (43%)
Having access to video equipment	11 (39%)	13 (46 %)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)	17 (61%)
Technological know how	10 (36%)	15 (54%)	3 (11%)		18 (66%)
Time to set up and make a recording	10 (36%)	8 (29%)	7 (25%)	3 (11%)	18 (66%)
Teacher privacy	9 (32%)	12 (43%)	4 (14%)	3 (11%)	19 (68%)
Student privacy	6 (21%)	13 (46%)	6 (21%)	3 (11%)	22 (79%)
Teacher self-consciousness	6 (21%)	9 (32%)	8 (29%)	5 (18%)	22 (79%)

When it came to reviewing teacher practice through the use of video, teachers’ greatest concerns were their own self-consciousness and student privacy (see Table 3). While just over half of the teachers (57%) indicated that they had no concerns with sharing their video with their group leader, 43% of teachers indicated that they had some concerns around this practice. Teacher G who had completed the course in 2016 commented,

“I feel as though when I know I am being videoed, I tend to get nervous which affects my teaching”. Other teachers commented that it was their preferred process as they found it beneficial to be able to see and then reflect on their practice. Two thirds of teachers were concerned about having access to the video equipment, the technological know-how required, and having enough time to set up the equipment.

Feedback Meetings

Table 4

Usefulness of Group Leader Actions: Teacher Feedback Meetings (n=30)

As part of the feedback meeting how useful is each of these group leader actions in supporting you to implement the IYT programme in your class?	Very Useful	Useful	Neutral	Unlikely to be of use	Not at all useful
Brainstorming solutions with me for any difficulties which I have identified.	19 (63%)	9 (30%)	1 (3%)		
Reviewing and discussing my goals that I have set as part of the IYT course.	14 (47%)	14 (47%)	2 (7%)		
Providing examples that will assist me to link the IYT programme to the New Zealand Curriculum.	14 (47%)	14 (47%)	2 (7%)		
Reviewing and discussing my target student's behaviour plan.	13 (43%)	16 (53%)	1 (3%)		
Discussion of ways that I can use to promote positive parent-teacher relationships.	15 (50%)	11 (37%)	4 (13%)		
The group leader telling me what I need to do to improve my practice.	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	
Recommending and suggesting further reading from the textbook that will support my practice.	10 (33%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	

Teachers were asked to rate the usefulness of group leader actions that could be part of a feedback meeting (Table 4). Overwhelmingly, teachers indicated that collaborative approaches (e.g. brainstorming, problem-solving, discussions, reviewing goals and behaviour plans) were useful group leader actions. However, most teachers (80%) also believed that the group leader telling them how they could improve their practice was a useful strategy. Teachers also believed it was useful when the group leader supported them to make links between the IYT programme and the New Zealand Curriculum, and suggested further readings in the textbook (*Incredible Teachers: Nurturing Children's Social Emotional and Academic Competence*).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this study was to identify how IYT group leaders, as part of teacher visits, can effectively support teachers to implement the IYT programme in their classes. Firstly, in order for teacher visits to be effective, this study aligns with recent NZ research (Wylie & Felgate, 2016) which found that it is essential that group leaders apply a flexible approach to teacher visits. This is crucial as teachers who attend the IYT course have diverse needs based on wide ranging teaching experience and cultural backgrounds (MOE, 2015). According to MOE (2015), the only prerequisite for entry to the IYT course is that teachers are qualified with preferably one year's teaching experience and are teaching students aged 3 - 8 years. Furthermore, the findings from this inquiry indicate that teachers

value group leaders who utilise a differentiated and collaborative approach throughout all phases of the teacher visit.

This finding is not surprising as Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) state a key principle of the IYT programme is, "Collaboration and developing relationships are essential to teacher learning" (p. 421). According to Webster-Stratton et al. (2011), group leaders achieve this through utilising a coaching model (Reinke et al., 2013) where interactions based on reciprocity, reflection and dialogue enable group leaders and teachers to learn with, and from, each other. This reciprocal interaction between group leaders and participants allows the course to be adapted to meet the needs and the individual teaching contexts of participants while still maintaining programme fidelity (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011; Wylie & Felgate, 2016). Teachers in this study identified the importance of developing a professional relationship with their group leader through participating in ongoing and shared interactions. Teachers also identified collaborative approaches (discussions focused on problem-solving and reviewing goals and behaviour plans) as being very useful in supporting them in their implementation of the IYT programme. These findings clearly show a collaborative approach based on shared classroom teaching and learning experiences is effective in supporting teachers to implement the IYT programme in their classes. Teachers also identified they value group leaders who display a strengths-based approach, a positive and non-judgmental attitude, are good

listeners and communicators, and have a high level of professionalism and content knowledge. This is important as these qualities allow the group leader to collaborate effectively with teachers and build positive professional relationships based on shared real-world experiences (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011). Moreover, the coaching model supports the group leader to facilitate culturally-responsive interactions with teachers (Cowie, 2010; Knight et al., 2015; Spee et al., 2014) allowing workshop skills and concepts to be adapted and generalised into classroom practice (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011).

The course founder, Webster-Stratton (2008), emphasises it is important that group leaders use the coaching approach to empower teachers and increase their self-efficacy, enabling them to respond effectively to situations when the group leader is not there to help them. Therefore, Webster-Stratton recommends that group leaders should not position themselves as “experts” who dispense knowledge and advice. In contrast, a surprising finding of this study was teachers also believed that the group leader telling them what they needed to do to improve their practice was useful in supporting them to implement the IYT programme. While this could be viewed as an “expert - novice” stance, it may well be teachers’ perceive that the group leader has superior skills and knowledge and this advice is useful when used as part of an overall collaborative approach. Moreover, Wylie and Felgate (2016) report group leaders who work with individual teachers in a way where they share their knowledge and strategy choice along with modelling ongoing review and inquiry, impacts positively on teachers’ learning and implementation of the IYT course.

When it came to the actual process for the teacher visit, this study found most teachers preferred the group leader to visit their class, conduct a class observation (either of the teacher’s use of workshop strategies or the target student’s behaviour), and then follow this with a discussion and feedback meeting. This finding is supported by previous studies (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Noell et al., 2005; Reinke et al., 2014) which found the only element of coaching that is proven to result in long-term positive outcomes for teachers and students are multiple observations of teaching practice followed by performance feedback. Class observations are also useful, as MOE (2015) state through conducting class visits group leaders have an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of individual teaching contexts allowing them to target support and build relationships. Developing a trusting relationship (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011) is important as it positions teachers to be more confident to reveal challenges about their teaching practice and then commit to implementing new approaches (Cowie, 2010; Knight, 2011; Spee et al., 2014; Timperley, 2008).

While there is much research (e.g. Knight et al., 2015, Zan & Donegan-Ritter, 2014) that supports the collaborative review of video recordings of teacher interactions with students as the focus of the teacher visit, it was interesting that only around half of the teachers who participated in this inquiry felt that it was their preferred process. The results indicate teachers either strongly support the use of video recordings or, for a variety of reasons, would be reluctant to engage in this process. MOE guidelines (2015) recommend group leaders remind teachers who have concerns around the teacher visit that the focus is on their professional learning rather than appraisal. However, it is clear teacher concerns regarding technological requirements, personal feelings of self-consciousness, and fears regarding teacher and student privacy would need to be discussed and problem-solved if video recordings are to be used successfully as part of the teacher visit. While MOE guidelines suggest that the teacher visit is based on the collaborative review of a video recording of the teacher’s interactions with students, the findings of this study show that while this may be valuable there is also value in the group leader conducting class observations of teaching practice. It is apparent that to be effective the teacher visit needs to be based on evidence gathered on teaching and learning. Importantly, it may not be of consequence how this data is collected but rather that as part of the feedback meeting it is used to discuss, review and refine teaching practice.

Research (Muijs et al., 2014; Timperley, 2008) and key New Zealand educational documents (ECOANZ, 2017; MOE, 2007) assert that central to teacher learning is increasing professional capacity through focusing on teaching and learning using a collaborative inquiry approach. A collaborative inquiry approach individualises teacher learning and results in teachers becoming self-regulated learners (Muijs et al., 2014; Timperley, 2008). There is no doubt the results from this study demonstrate the components of teaching-as-inquiry underpin teacher visits which are undertaken using a collaborative partnership process. As Wylie and Felgate (2016) state, teachers are using the inquiry cycle when they plan, implement and review their behaviour plan. It is also evident group leaders are utilising an inquiry approach when they meet with teachers and use teaching and learning data to support teachers to review their goals, provide feedback on strategy use, brainstorm and problem-solve solutions, and provide support to implement agreed strategies. Importantly, it is the flexible and collaborative approach of the teacher visit that supports teachers to become adaptive experts (Muijs et al., 2014; Timperley 2010). It may well be that a barrier to teacher learning as part of the IYT class visit, is teachers do not make the link between discussions at the feedback meeting or the behaviour plan process to teaching-as-inquiry.

This could be mitigated by group leaders referring to the inquiry cycle and supporting teachers to record their goals and next steps using a teaching-as-inquiry format described in Timperley (2008) and MOE (2007).

Limitations

There are several limitations that need to be considered when examining the findings from this inquiry. Firstly, this research was a small-scale study based on the responses of thirty teachers from eight New Zealand primary schools. For many, it had been several years since they had completed the IYT course and possibly their perceptions may be influenced by their recollection of what occurred. If time had allowed, the findings could have been explored further through conducting teacher interviews or focus group discussions (Menter et al., 2011). The researcher suggests that a nationwide study which includes the views of a larger number of teachers, perhaps as they complete the course, could be useful in establishing whether the findings from this inquiry can be applied to other contexts. The researcher acknowledges that elements of the questionnaire design (e.g. constraints of Google Forms, use of a Likert scale, question design based on researcher knowledge and professional lens) and analysis (e.g. researcher subjectivity with the analysis of open-ended questions), may possibly affect the validity of the findings (Menter et al., 2011).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Several questions have arisen from this study, which could be the focus of further investigations. Firstly, what is the optimal frequency and duration for the teacher visits? MOE (2015) guidelines recommend that visits would ideally occur after every session however acknowledge, that in practice, it is likely that a minimum of three visits are made to each teacher. Secondly, this study gathered teachers' perceptions of what support they found effective as part of the class visits; the researcher believes it would be also worthwhile to gather IYT group leaders' perceptions of what has worked best for them, what further professional support they require, and how they have overcome any barriers regarding the teacher visit.

CONCLUSION

Group leader teacher visits are a crucial component to supporting teachers to successfully implement the IYT programme in their classes (Reinke et al., 2012; Webster-Stratton et al., 2011; Wylie & Felgate, 2016). Webster-Stratton et al. (2011) states teacher visits are an important aspect of achieving course fidelity as they enable the programme to be tailored to meet teachers' individual needs and teaching contexts. This is important as research has shown when evidence-based professional development courses are implemented

with fidelity, learning outcomes for teachers and students are enhanced (Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Power et al., 2005; Reinke et al., 2013). The area of group leader teacher visits is one aspect of the IYT programme that has not been extensively researched (Reinke et al., 2012; Wylie & Felgate, 2016) and for that reason, this study's findings are of direct practical relevance to group leaders. This study has found teacher visits are effective in supporting teachers to implement the IYT programme in their classes when a collaborative, flexible and differentiated approach based upon the "Teaching as Inquiry" (MOE, 2007; Timperley, 2008) model is utilised. While there are wide-ranging actions that teachers find useful as part of the group leader teacher visit, findings from this study suggest group leaders should negotiate the focus and data collection methods with each individual teacher prior to undertaking the visit. Feedback meetings are an essential component of the visit as discussion and reflection can occur which supports teachers in their ongoing implementation of the IYT programme while providing an opportunity to formalise teacher learning using a teaching-as-inquiry model. Through this shared process based on real-life teaching and learning, group leaders and teachers build meaningful communities of collaboration as they learn from and with each other. While the teacher visits are only one element of the IYT programme, in the words of the Māori whakatauki - "*Mā te huruhuru, Ka rere te manu*" (Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly) - they are essential to ensuring teachers are able to sustain their implementation of the IYT programme, resulting in improved behavioural and learning outcomes for students.

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