

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report – it captures the key points and highlights findings that you may find useful. The full report is available on our website – www.ero.govt.nz

Leading Innovative Learning in New Zealand Schools

What did ERO do? ERO visited 12 schools to find out how they were equipping their students with the knowledge, skills and qualifications required to set them up for their future. We also wanted to see how digital technology and flexible learning spaces were being used to make the most of the learning opportunities they offered.

The schools were varied, some primary, some intermediate, some secondary, single sex and integrated. Some had new buildings, some had flexible learning spaces, and others had traditional classrooms.

Why did we do it? Our world is changing rapidly. There is an ever increasing volume of information readily available and young people must be able to critique it to make sense of it all. We must educate our young people to prepare them for success in that world.

ERO wanted to share how schools were meeting this challenge and to show how their successes could be enhanced by, but were not dependent on, the digital technologies they used or the flexible learning spaces they had.

What did ERO find?

ERO found that school leaders were the key to successful innovation in teaching and learning. We found that to successfully lead innovation school leaders have to:

- work proactively with the whole school community

- develop a strong, shared, future-focused vision for their school
- ensure the vision has learner outcomes at its centre
- be well informed, so that decisions build on best practice for 21st century learners
- have a growth mindset, believing that abilities can be developed and are not limited; that brains and talent are just the starting point in the creation of a love of learning and resilience as a learner
- develop a school culture of continuous improvement in support of the vision
- be supportive of experimentation
- quickly address elements of strategy if they are not working
- maintain coherence across all domains of the school, aligning everything to the vision
- be effective change managers able to take staff with them on the improvement journey through timely professional development and good communication.

Teachers in these schools:

- have a growth mindset
- are committed to working in new ways
- share responsibility for all learners
- work collaboratively
- personalise curriculum and pedagogy tailored to individual learner needs, their strengths and interests.

FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/publications

Continue...what did ERO find?

ERO found there were many different approaches to successfully implementing change to make the learning in a school future focused, preparing students for the world beyond school.

The report uses real-life examples of effective practice to illustrate these different approaches. We hope that other leaders, wanting to make changes in the teaching and learning in their own school can identify something that could work for them and be motivated to initiate their own improvements.

School leaders found challenges along their improvement journeys relating to

- working with resistant teachers and allaying teachers' concerns
- cultivating trusting, professional relationships
- making the best appointments
- aligning everything that happens in the school to the vision
- managing community concerns and resistance.

ERO shares some of the effective strategies schools were adopting to address these.

Finally school leaders share suggestions for those about to embark on a major improvement journey. For each suggestion, the leaders identified the positive impact of this change on the adults in the school community and most importantly for the students in the school. Their advice covers:

- developing a vision
- professional learning
- expectations
- research
- flexible learning spaces
- review
- digital learning.

The report even includes material that could be used in a school's professional learning programme, examples of resources and hyperlinks to important research and websites.

An important part of the report is the inclusion of voices—leaders, teachers, parents and most significantly the students.

Teachers should not be the fountain of all the knowledge rather they should be facilitating learning.

Don't be afraid to fail – it's called learning. Reflect on it, ask why, move forward.

You need to capture the heads and hearts of your teachers, then build their confidence. Confidence so they can take risks, debate with each other, be vulnerable and be compassionate professionals.

Principals

The visits [to innovative schools] as a whole team really got us going – excited.

So wonderful to be in a school prepared to change, and not just sit in a traditional setting and not look to improve things.

Teachers

Till you see it, [learning in a flexible learning space] it's hard to get a real feel for what it was

My daughter loves the range of teachers gets bored with one teacher all the time. she's more excited, more interested.

[They] don't throw the baby out with the bathwater – my child is introverted and they keep a close eye on her as she struggles with the distractions – she needs the break-out and quiet work spaces.

Parents

The emphasis on self motivation and learning helps prepare you for beyond school.

Flexibility is really good. Allows you to push yourself. Opportunities to build yourself.

For most people it works well. If not working – you're monitored. Teachers are there to support and help you.

The technology aids learning – crosses the boundary of learning, making better connections between subjects.

There are more guidelines and structure to our work, a framework for learning, especially in assignments. We are taught what needs to be found.

Learning is fun.

Students

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