

Modern learning environments

Historically, children and young people were seated at desks in rows, all facing the blackboard, using text books, printed hand-outs, and hand-writing notes.



As technology has advanced, classrooms have evolved and today electronic notepads, emailing and messaging have become the reality for many students and their teachers.

The introduction of technology to New Zealand's schools means the design of our classrooms needs to keep pace with the different ways children are learning.

New approaches to classroom design give teachers in modern schools the opportunity to use innovative and imaginative teaching practices to better meet the needs of all their students.

Teachers might share large learning spaces, rather than traditional classrooms, with children at different levels, learning different things.

Classroom design developments include flexible teaching spaces that can be expanded or reduced in size depending on what's being taught and what technology requirements are needed.

Some modern options include hexagonal shapes with a shared common centre area, and outdoor areas and decking off each learning space. Sliding glass walls can

be used to open up or close down spaces providing both flexibility and an open, bright environment.

Specialist equipment within a school can be shared by all, and with the wider community. This could be a fully-fitted industrial kitchen, or a modern science laboratory lined with wall-to-wall glass that allows other students to walk past and observe what's going on.

Whole walls can be whiteboard, or whiteboards can be movable. Teachers can opt to change the way the class is facing, or break children up into groups. Today everything about a school can be designed with the needs of students in mind.

The aftermath of the destructive Canterbury earthquakes has provided an opportunity for greater Christchurch to create some of the best modern schools in the country.

These new environments benefit both student and teachers. The Ministry of Education is committed to providing the professional development and support to help teaching staff as they adapt to modern learning environments.



Further information, including a video on modern learning environments is available on the *Shaping Education* website: www.shapingeducation.govt.nz or call 0800 746 338

