

# What do we mean by Modern Learning Environment?

For many of us, our school days were largely spent sitting in a darkish classroom with desks lined up in rows, and all facing the blackboard.

Most information was probably also paper-based, such as text books and printed handouts. However, our children are just as likely to be using electronic notepads and emailing or messaging their classmates and teachers.

Just as learners are moving with the times, classrooms and school spaces need to keep pace with the way modern children learn, and provide all the flexibility they need to keep developing into the future.

This is where modern learning environments come in.

Teachers at schools where these are already in place might share large learning spaces, rather than traditional classrooms. Children at different levels, learning different things that day might be working in distinct areas of the same large space together. Whole walls can move, and glass sections can slide to open up or close down spaces.



*Everything can  
be designed with  
learners in mind.*



Specialist equipment within a school can be shared by all, and with the wider community. That might mean 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 all white-boards can be movable. Teachers can opt to change the way the class is facing, or break children up into groups. Everything can be designed with learners in mind, and can be at their eye level.

Schools no longer have to be a collection of classrooms positioned in rows.

Some modern options have included hexagonal shapes with a shared common centre area, and outdoor areas and decking off each learning space. Whole glass walls can slide back, providing an open, bright environment.

These new spaces allow teachers the flexibility to use innovative and imaginative methods, which is as it should be. School facilities should not only serve learners. They should also serve teachers, and work for them.

Some of the changes may take some getting used to, but we'll be providing the professional development and support to help teachers learn what a Modern Learning Environment can help them achieve.

The earthquakes have provided an opportunity for greater Christchurch to create some of the best Modern Learning Environments anywhere.

There is no template; just a lot of ideas.

You can have your say on what you think these facilities can be – not just for our learners, but perhaps for the wider community.



Come along to one of three forums in November and share your thoughts.

These forums are pitched at youth and adults. Younger learners have been able to provide their views at our stand at the A&P Show. Two youth forums will also be held early in December, once exams are over, to allow greater Christchurch's senior learners to also give their thoughts.

If you can't attend, you can still give your input via the shaping education website [www.shapingeducation.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.shapingeducation.minedu.govt.nz).

1. Tuesday 20 November  
*Focusing on primary school design*  
7-9pm at Burnside High School's Aurora Centre.
2. Wednesday 21 November  
*Focusing on both primary and secondary school design*  
7-9pm at Grace Vineyard Church Beach Campus in New Brighton.
3. Thursday 22 November  
*Focusing on secondary school design*  
7-9pm at Burnside High School's Aurora Centre.