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NZEI TE RIU ROA SUBMISSION
on
An (e) Learning Framework for the
Schools Sector
Ministry of Education Consultation Booklet,
2005

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Introduction

The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is the professional and industrial organisation that represents the interests and issues of its 43,000 members. Our members include teachers in the early childhood and primary sectors, support staff in the primary and secondary sectors, advisers employed by teacher support services and specialist staff employed by the Specialist Education Services. We have represented the interests of members for 125 years.

The main object of NZEI is to advance the cause of education generally while upholding and maintaining the just claims of its members individually and collectively. As most of our members work in primary schools and will be expected to implement the Ministry's (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector, the initiative has implications for our members' work and their involvement at a policy level is extremely important.

NZEI organised a group of primary principals, classroom teachers and a teacher from The Correspondence School to meet with Ministry of Education representatives in Wellington. Following this meeting the group collated their comments and these form the basis of NZEI's submission. NZEI's response follows the structure of the Ministry of Education's (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector from its Consultation Booklet.

This submission builds on recommendations made in NZEI's submission on the ICT Strategy in 2001. This submission also provides an analysis of the Ministry of Education's (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector in terms of NZEI policy and a critique of the Ministry of Education's implementation plan. Within this submission the Ministry of Education is referred to as the Ministry and the (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector is referred to as the Framework.

Summary of NZEI recommendations

- (1a) *That the '(e)' be removed, or replaced with 'electronic' in full, so that ICT is not seen as a learning mechanism in itself, but rather a tool that enhances teaching and learning.*
- (1b) *That the (e) Learning Framework be aligned with the goals and outcomes of the Schooling Strategy, and the integration of ICT into the proposed New Zealand Curriculum.*
- (2a) *That the (e) Learning Framework remains learner centred, and focused on the key competencies identified in the proposed New Zealand Curriculum.*
- (2b) *That emphasis be placed on continuing the momentum of learning and the integration of ICT into teaching practice across all learning areas, levels and sectors, with a seamless transition between sectors.*
- (2c) *That a set of ICT exemplars for schools be developed, to be used as progress indicators and an aid for teachers.*
- (2d) *That funding for the ICT professional development clusters be increased to ensure the initiative can be accessed by all schools.*
- (2e) *That professional learning and development be provided for all staff to enable them to integrate ICT successfully into teaching and learning programmes.*
- (2f) *That the Ministry gives greater direction and support to providers in the implementation of ICT into initial teacher education programmes.*
- (2g) *That a baseline provision be included in the (e) Learning Framework to ensure equitable ICT integration into all schools.*
- (2h) *That additional funding be provided and tagged for ICT, as a separate component to the operations grant, to ensure ICT is fully integrated in teaching and learning programmes.*
- (2i) *That a baseline of resources, accessible by all schools, be provided to reduce disparity, so that the implementation of the (e) Learning Framework can be effected.*
- (2j) *That the Ministry develop an easily accessible New Zealand Education Intranet so that teachers have quick and easy access to educational electronic learning resources and support.*
- (2k) *That funding be provided for a staffing component, allowing for a technician to be employed within and/or across schools.*
- (2l) *That the Ministry maintain a fully operational help desk that provides support facilities and problem solving assistance.*
- (2m) *That the national advisory service be expanded and given additional funding in order to provide professional development and effective ICT support for teaching and learning programmes across the curriculum*

1. Ministry Vision

*“All learners will use ICT confidently and creatively to help develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve personal goals and be full participants in the global community”.*¹

1.1 Removing / Replacing the ‘(e)’

NZEI members found the term ‘(e) Learning’ misleading. It suggests ICT is a learning mechanism in itself, rather than a tool that enhances learning. It gives the impression that the framework operates parallel to, as opposed to feeding into, other policy developments.

They were adamant that schools do not need another “stand alone’ initiative which will fragment learning and compartmentalise ICT. The intention of ICT being used to support teaching and learning, as an integration and support tool, will not be realised unless teachers can see its place and alignment with existing issues.

(1a) NZEI recommends:

That the ‘(e)’ be removed, or replaced with ‘electronic’ in full, so that ICT is not seen as a learning mechanism in itself, but rather a tool that enhances teaching and learning.

1.2 Alignment with the Schooling Strategy / New Zealand Curriculum Framework

NZEI is concerned that the Framework will be yet another layer that will sit on top of other strategies already in place. This view has also been expressed by others. NZEI believes that the Framework should not be a separate strategy, instead it should feed into and be integrated with the goals and outcomes of the Schooling Strategy and the proposed New Zealand Curriculum.

The Framework should support the goals of the Schooling Strategy, to improve the opportunities and outcomes for students and help all students to achieve their potential². Ensuring students have equitable access to ICT tools and are given the capability to use them is one way of equipping students with the skills they need to become ‘global citizens’ of the ‘changing world’³

(1b) NZEI recommends:

That the (e) Learning Framework be aligned with the goals and outcomes of the Schooling Strategy, and the integration of ICT into the proposed New Zealand curriculum.

¹ Ministry of Education - An (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector Draft Consultation Booklet. P.8

² Ministry of Education - Making a bigger difference for all Students = Hangaia he huarahi hei whaekarewa ake I nga taurira katoa: Schooling Strategy 2005-2010.

³ Ministry of Education - Schooling Strategy 2005-2010, p5

2. Principles

2.1 *Embrace a Learner Centred Approach*

NZEI is encouraged by the learner centred approach of the Framework, reiterating the stance laid out in NZEI's 2001 submission on the ICT Strategy for schools, that:

*"ICT should only be used to improve learning and should focus, therefore, on learning rather than skills"*⁴

It has been claimed that pedagogies which integrate ICT can enhance achievement and create new learning possibilities⁵. NZEI agrees with the statement that whatever the technology, learning is the vital element.⁶

NZEI maintains that the Framework is learner specific and therefore should support the key competencies of the proposed New Zealand Curriculum, in order to be successfully implemented.

(2a) **NZEI recommends:**

That the (e) Learning Framework remains learner centred and focused on the key competencies identified in the proposed New Zealand Curriculum.

Pan-Sector Framework

NZEI supports the 'pan-sector' approach of the Framework as an *"overarching mechanism for coordinating the efforts of education providers across all levels of the education sector"*⁷

NZEI sees the Framework as an opportunity to open up cross sector dialogue, and to support seamless transition for students as they progress through schooling.

Transition between sectors can be potentially disruptive for students' development and learning, this may also impact negatively on their knowledge, skills and use of ICT. There should be a focus on minimising this disruption and continuing the momentum of learning from early childhood through the primary and secondary sectors into adult life. Provision of capability and access needs to be continued throughout all learning areas, levels and sectors.

(2b) **NZEI recommends:**

That emphasis be placed on continuing the momentum of learning and the integration of ICT into teaching practice across all learning areas, levels and sectors, with a seamless transition between sectors.

It is important to build on the Early Childhood Education ICT strategy, which focuses on the idea that:

"ICT in early childhood education does not mean 'children using computers' it is about children, educators, parents and families/whanau using information (for example sending faxes to people in the community) and recording learning experiences (for example, using digital and video cameras) in ways that enhance children's learning including communication about and reflection on that learning".⁸

⁴ NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission on ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004, 17 August 2001, p 9

⁵ MCEETYA – Pedagogy Strategy: Learning in an online World, p2

⁶ Ministry of Education - An (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector Draft Consultation Booklet. P.3

⁷ Ministry of Education - An (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector Draft Consultation Booklet. p3

⁸ Ministry of Education – Foundations for Discovery, Extended Version. Supporting Learning in Early Childhood Education through Information and Communication Technologies: a Framework for Development, p5

2.2 ***Guided By and Share Effective Practice***

Pedagogical Practice

Quality teaching and learning enhances student outcomes, therefore it is important that teachers adopt pedagogical practices that integrate the use of electronic learning into all aspects of their classroom programmes. The adoption of a co-constructivist approach to learning would see the incorporation of ICT into classrooms as a connecting thread, recognising students as learners and teachers as learners. This pedagogical practice should be encouraged. It would lead to integrated processes that combine visual, audio, computer and other electronic devices with links to all aspects of the curriculum. Such effective pedagogical practice would enhance students' learning in a range of ways, from accessing and utilising information, to using ICT as a vehicle for creative processes such as mind mapping and higher order thinking.

Good Models

Teachers must understand how ICT can be integrated into the classroom programme. There are many good models of ICT being used in schools, and the development of exemplars is a way to support high quality teaching and learning. This is demonstrated by the wide use of the Ministry's exemplars in a number of the essential learning areas. It may be appropriate for students' good practice in using ICT to be exemplified. Exemplars can be effective progress indicators supporting stages of student's growth.

(2c) **NZEI recommends:**

That a set of ICT exemplars for schools be developed, to be used as progress indicators and an aid for teachers.

Correspondence School

Mainstream schools can learn much from The Correspondence School as a model for teaching and learning, using, and enhanced by, ICT. There is a huge resource base in The Correspondence School which has been largely overlooked in the development of the Framework. Schools should be able to tap into the processes and expertise of The Correspondence School and use their expertise as a model for developing effective teaching and learning practices using ICT.

2.3 ***Exploit opportunities for Collaborative Learning***

ICT Professional Development Clusters

The Education Review Office, in its Evaluation Report of February 2005 reported that:

*Schools participating in ICT professional development clusters were more likely than other schools to have made progress in integrating e-learning into the school curriculum and classroom programmes to improve teaching and learning.*⁹

There are issues of equity with the ICT Clusters; not all schools have had access to, or involvement with, a cluster group. Two principals in the NZEI discussion group reported that their proposals for involvement with an ICT cluster had been turned down twice and their school was unable to get into a cluster group. This illustrates a willingness to be involved in ICT which has been frustrated by the lack of resources.

⁹ Education Review Office Evaluation Report – E-Learning in Primary Schools, February 2005, p1

The obvious success for those involved in the initiative emphasises that funding should be increased, so that it is accessible to all schools, addresses issues of equity and ensures national consistency.

(2d) NZEI recommends:

That funding for the ICT professional development clusters be increased to ensure the initiative can be accessed by all schools.

2.4 **Be Innovative**

Professional Learning

While NZEI supports and encourages the intent of the Framework to improve teacher capability in electronic learning¹⁰, the Framework does not place enough emphasis on the need for professional learning, development and training. NZEI believes it is imperative that the money available to schools should not only be spent on hardware and software, but also on professional development to enable staff to utilise these tools¹¹. It is critical that teachers and support staff are provided with adequate ongoing professional development to ensure they have the skills to successfully integrate ICT tools into teaching and learning programmes.

Ongoing professional learning development and support must be a universal provision to enable staff to use electronic approaches to engage students with learning. There should be an ICT component within the curriculum with professional development to support it.

(2e) NZEI recommends:

That professional learning and development opportunities be provided for all staff to enable them to integrate ICT successfully into teaching and learning programmes.

Initial Teacher Education

NZEI advocates that it be must a requirement of all initial teacher education providers to equip beginning teachers with a baseline level of knowledge and competence in the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Principals report that while beginning teachers tend to be more capable in terms of using technology, they often lack the skills, confidence and knowledge of pedagogical practice for using ICT resources in the classroom to facilitate learning.

Currently there is inconsistency amongst providers in the delivery of ICT training in initial teacher education. It is the Ministry's responsibility to ensure that all ITE providers equip beginning teachers with electronic learning skills and abilities that are consistent nationally. The Framework must align with the Graduating Teacher Standards currently being developed, in particular:

GS 1.3 The graduating teacher has a range of literacies relevant to their professional roles and is proficient in oral and written language (English and/or Māori) in numeracy, and in ICT.¹²

(2f) NZEI recommends:

That the Ministry gives greater direction and support to providers in the implementation of ICT into initial teacher education programmes.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education - An (e) Learning Framework for the Schools Sector Draft Consultation Booklet. p.9

¹¹ NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission on ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004, 17 August 2001, p11

¹² Draft Graduating Standards for Teacher Education Qualifications that lead to Provisional Registration as a Teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand, Version 2

2.5 *Be Affordable and Sustainable*

Resources and Funding

During recent discussion with the Ministry of Education, it became evident that the Ministry does not necessarily see a need for additional ICT funding to implement the Framework. NZEI reiterates its recommendation made in its 2001 Submission to the Ministry¹³, that there should be a baseline provision made by the Ministry upon which individual schools and centres are able to build. This baseline should establish standards for internet access, hardware, software, technical support, building design, property matters, infrastructural developments and professional development.

(2g) NZEI recommends:

That a baseline provision be included in the (e) Learning Framework to ensure equitable ICT integration into all schools.

ICT must be adequately funded in all schools to ensure equitable access for all students regardless of their socio-economic status. NZEI believes there should be additional funding tagged for ICT, as a component separate to the operations grant.

In its submission to the Ministry on the ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004¹⁴ NZEI highlighted the problems that rural schools face with regards to internet access and connection. Although there have been some improvements, equity in connectivity remains a major issue for rural and small schools. Project PROBE is a good initiative and has been relatively successful in getting schools connected to broadband, but there are still funding issues for small and rural schools who struggle to meet the installation and running costs.

(2h) NZEI recommends:

That additional funding be provided and tagged for ICT, as a separate component to the operations grant, to ensure ICT is fully integrated in teaching and learning programmes.

Technology

NZEI is pleased that the Ministry has listed a wide variety of technologies in its definition of electronic learning. It is important that the Framework encompasses the wide breadth and depth of ICT resources available and does not focus solely on computers and laptops. In its report to Annual Meeting 2002, NZEI defined ICT as not just computers, but also telephones, facsimiles, tele and audio-visual conferencing, scanning and digital imaging, video and television, internet and email, library catalogues, online search engines and MPEGs¹⁵. The use of digital cameras and video recorders in early childhood education, to document children's learning through 'learning stories', is a good example of ICT tools being used to enhance children's learning and enthusiasm for learning.

With technology constantly evolving, schools face the problems of technology becoming quickly redundant and the cost of depreciation¹⁶. It is important that schools keep up-to-date with technological advances. All new initiatives must be properly resourced and teachers must be given adequate training to ensure they are able to effectively incorporate new technology into the classroom. The Laptops for Teachers Scheme is a good example of an initiative which helps schools keep up-to-date with technology by enabling them to upgrade regularly.

¹³ NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission on ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004, 17 August 2001, p6

¹⁴ NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission on ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004, 17 August 2001, p15

¹⁵ NZEI Te Riu Roa Report on ICT Provisions in Schools and Early Childhood Centres, 2002, p2

¹⁶ NZEI Te Riu Roa Report on ICT Provisions in Schools and Early Childhood Centres, 2002, p3

Implementing the electronic learning infrastructure

NZEI was concerned by comments made during the Ministry's presentation, which suggested that they would use the current model that applied to laptop application, ie that schools would have choice as to what tools for electronic learning they access when implementing the infrastructure for the Framework. NZEI believes there should be a baseline of resources that all schools must be able to access and build into programmes nationally, if schools are given choice there will always be disparity. For implementation of the Framework to become a reality for all schools the Ministry must provide schools with comprehensive, ongoing support, suitable resources and professional learning and development to ensure sustainability.

This cannot be done without accompanying resources and a timeframe planned.

(2i) NZEI recommends:

That a baseline of resources, accessible by all schools, be provided to reduce disparity, so that the implementation of the (e) Learning Framework can be effected.

New Zealand Intranet

To enable teachers to engage with electronic learning, access sites, data, resources and information it is imperative that a New Zealand Intranet be established. A national intranet should quickly and easily link all available resources to the curriculum areas and teaching processes. It should be the entry connector for all the current resources that are being developed on their own web base platform. A front entry index, enabling one password entry and fast track connection to education material needs to be established if teachers are going to use this resource. It should also be properly maintained and kept up-to-date to ensure that it will not be a financial burden to schools.

A national intranet would provide a vehicle for updating changes and the changing availability of newly developed resources. It could also be a place for sharing quality teaching and good practice. NZEI recommends that the establishment of a national education intranet be carried out as one of the first steps in implementing an electronic learning initiative.

(2j) NZEI recommends:

That the Ministry develop an easily accessible New Zealand Education Intranet so that teachers have quick and easy access to educational electronic learning resources and support.

Technical Support

NZEI advocates the need for a staffing component allowing for a technician to work within and/or across schools. In its submission to the Ministry on the ICT Strategy in 2001, NZEI highlighted that all members attending NZEI regional meetings in 2001 identified the need for technical support if ICT was to be integrated into the curriculum coherently and systematically¹⁷. These same issues were raised again during a recent NZEI meeting with the Ministry on the Framework. Technical support, accessible quickly and easily on site, and professional development are the keys to a successful and sustainable ICT framework.

(2k) NZEI recommends:

That funding be provided for a staffing component, allowing for a technician to be employed within and/or across schools.

¹⁷ NZEI Te Riu Roa Submission on ICT Strategy for Schools 2002-2004, 17 August 2001, p10

The ICT help desk

NZEI recognises the effectiveness and supportive nature of the ICT help desk. To provide a contact process that enables guidance to solve problems is an essential part of the electronic learning process. Other resources may eventually replace the help desk but NZEI continues to stress the importance in maintaining it in any early stages of development¹⁸.

(2l) NZEI recommends:

That the Ministry maintain a fully operational help desk that provides support facilities and problem solving assistance.

Advisory Service

The advisory service plays a crucial role in ICT professional support for schools, but a classroom ICT component needs to be included in its programme to provide greater depth. The advisory service must be extended, through additional funding and resources, to deal with educational aspects of ICT in the classroom.

(2m) NZEI Recommends:

That the national advisory service be expanded and given additional funding in order to provide professional development and effective ICT support for teaching and learning programmes across the curriculum.

¹⁸ NZEI Te Riu Roa Report on ICT Provisions in Schools and Early Childhood Centres, 2002, p5 (2.28)

3. Implementation Plan

NZEI recommends the following amendments and additions to the list of objectives, outcomes and actions in the Framework for the Schools Sector Implementation Plan.

3.1 CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Ministry objective:

To support New Zealand schools and teachers as they move towards embedding (e) learning into classroom programmes to support student learning.

NZEI Comment:

Change the objective to read:

To support New Zealand schools and teachers as they move towards integrating ICT tools into teaching and learning programmes to support student learning.

Outcomes:

Add the following to the list of outcomes:

- *Increase leadership capability to advance the school's strategic plan/implementation plan.*

Actions:

Add the following to the list of actions:

- *Increase advisory support services*
- *Increase provision of technical support*
- *Establish a staffing component to support schools in the implementation of their development plan.*

3.2 INFRASTRUCTURE, SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS

Ministry objective:

To support the development of a sustainable and dependable ICT infrastructure for New Zealand schools.

NZEI Comment:

Change the objective to read:

To support the phased development of a sustainable and dependable ICT infrastructure for New Zealand Schools which includes a baseline provision.

Actions:

Add the following actions to the list:

- *Increase advisory support services*
- *Increase provision of professional development*
- *Increase provision of technical support*
- *Provide access to exemplars at all levels of planning*
- *Establish a New Zealand Education Intranet service*
- *Ensure quality initial teacher education programmes reflecting the graduating teacher standards*

3.3 LEARNING RESOURCES AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Ministry objective:

To provide New Zealand schools with access to a wide range of relevant, high quality educational content.

NZEI Comment:

Change the objective to read:

To provide New Zealand schools and students with equal electronic access to a wide range of relevant, high quality educational content.

Outcomes/Actions:

Amend the listed outcome and change to an action:

- *Access to a flexible range of high quality support software and other digital/electronic resources, designed to meet the needs of and align with, the New Zealand Curriculum.*

In an environment of self-managing schools and schools needing to cater for diverse groups of students, no one model should be promoted. NZEI would be wary of highlighting Digital Learning Objects and would recommend a wider range of strategies being explored.

3.4 FAMILIES, WHANAU, AND COMMUNITIES

Ministry objective:

To support schools to strengthen links with their communities to enhance families and whanau confidence and capability.

NZEI Comment:

NZEI agrees with the wording of this objective.

Outcomes:

Remove reference to decile 1 in the listed outcome to read:

- *To empower the communities of schools with the tools and skills to become active participants on our online world.*

Actions:

Insert 'decile 1' after Homes in the listed example to read:

- *Computers in Homes for decile 1 students.*

Add the following to the list of actions:

- *Provide schools with access to World Book Online*
- *Explore interaction with The Correspondence School.*

3.5 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Ministry Objective:

To increase the evidence base of (e) learning practices that make a positive difference to the learning of diverse learners and support a teaching culture of reflective and critical decision-making around (e) learning.

NZEI Comment:

Remove reference to '(e)' or include the term in full 'electronic', to read:

To increase the evidence base of electronic learning practices that make a positive difference to the learning of diverse learners and support a teaching culture of reflective and critical decision-making around electronic learning.

3.6 ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

Ministry objective:

To develop systems and processes to support teachers, school administrators, and school management to deliver improved education outcomes in New Zealand.

NZEI Comment:

Include reference to support staff and the advisory services in the objective, to read:

To develop systems and processes to support teachers, support staff, school administrators, school management and school advisory services to deliver improved education outcomes in New Zealand.

Actions:

Remove the listed Student Management System Project (SMS). This is a management tool, NZEI feel that instead increased provision of advisory support services and focus on the library network would be more beneficial in improving student outcomes.

Replace with the following:

- *Advisory support services*
- *Library network.*



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