

ICT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION 2008-2012
NZEI Comments on V2.3 (February 2008)

OVERALL COMMENT

1. NZEI is pleased that the second version of the ICT strategic framework reflects a great deal of the discussion that our members raised with the Ministry in the initial consultation phase, in particular, the intent that by 2012 “all education sector participants are trained to use new ICT tools, systems and services” and that “ongoing technical support is provided for all ICT tools, systems and services” (p6).
2. Other welcome improvements on the initial draft include the
 - reduction in the size of the framework
 - alignment with other ICT initiatives
 - extended timeframe from 2010 to 2012.
3. While the comment and focus of the framework is all very fine the issue of who is to take responsibility for financial costs remains. The comments within the framework on how money should be invested shows that the Government is still not taking responsibility for ICT hardware in schools/kura. This is a major concern as the costs exceed schools’ ability to manage and yet expectations continue to build. Schools/kura will not be able to upgrade their hardware if they do not get support. How are schools/kura to overcome this major problem?

SPECIFIC COMMENT

Foreword

4. Change in educational practice is often difficult because of the language used to communicate the desired vision and ideas associated with it.
5. In the Foreword, there is too much jargon and too many ideas to engage with. Take paragraph three, for example, it talks about: multiple curricula, collaborative communication and knowledge building tools; flexible and distance learning opportunities; seamless transition and information, digital knowledge repositories and personalised and enhanced learning materials. Paragraphs four and five continue this relentless onslaught of ideas and claims. What is “Really effective use of ICT...” is that the same as “effective use” and is the concept of “burgeoning digital information” necessary?
6. Another problem is that no matter how comprehensive a list appears there is always something left out. There is no mention in the Foreword of the relationships between

culture, ICT tools and cognitive development – and yet all three are key aspects in the work of teachers in all sectors.

7. The Ministry may wish to consider deleting from the Foreword paragraphs three, four and five so that the purpose of the Foreword becomes one of engaging teachers with the profound changes ICT can bring about by building on existing practice.

Vision and Goals

8. The ICT vision and goals for the education sector is supported.
9. In the initial Ministry consultation 78% of respondents agreed with the Framework's goals. These respondents also believed the goals were achievable, especially if certain conditions were met. The necessary conditions were the provision of funding, technical support and professional development. NZEI emphasises that the success of the strategic vision is dependent on these conditions.
10. Examples and vignettes which are not yet included need to be relevant to and achievable by teachers.

Targets

11. We are pleased to note that the target date has been extended to 2012. This is more realistic and will provide the opportunity to ensure funding and technical constraints are able to be put in place. It will also be less intrusive on school and centres' daily activities.

Confidence and Capability

12. The term "21st century literacies" is one that is becoming jaded. What are these and how are they different from the "20th century literacies"? Will the literacies remain the same throughout the 21st century?
13. Being able to cope with technological change is part of the goal of having learners proficient in a range of complex literate environments. Proficient students are more likely to actively participate and contribute to society. The way the statement is framed suggests that 'technological change' is an endpoint in itself.
14. Teaching staff are learners too and this is particularly so in the field of ICT literacies including technological change.
15. NZEI was interested to note the section on "Education organisations delivering value for money" and its target that "all annual ICT investment is measured against agreed standards for value for money". We are not clear about the explanation of "how" this might be achieved. We also question who will determine the achievement of this outcome?

Approaches

16. Although there is acknowledgement of "teaching methods" within the 'learner centred' approach advocated in the strategy, there is no mention of teachers. It

would be useful if the strategy identified where it sees the role of the teacher. Teachers do not fit under headings such as Providers, Community or Government and should not be defined simply by their activity and their role is more important to be hidden in the generic term “educators”. We know that it is the teacher’s relationship with the child/student, and not “teaching methods”, that is one of the most important conditions necessary for learning. While NZEI is aware that the focus must be on the learner the strategy must not render the teacher invisible.

17. NZEI would like clarity on whom the strategy sees as the “end-user”. Is it the responsibility of the student or the teacher or the school/centre to provide the assurance of “quality, usefulness, reliability, timeliness, sustainability and security of resulting information and services?” Students in centres and primary schools/kura may not be able to provide this level of sophistication. A teacher would be able to provide the information but there is a danger that the assessment would become a burdensome task.
18. The strategy also identifies “open standards” rather than “standardisation”. While this seems a sensible approach NZEI requires the next layer of information before commenting further. For example, how will it be measured and who will do the checking,

In conclusion

19. While NZEI accepts that a strategy needs to be at a particular level more information is still needed on practical elements so that teachers can assess the implications of implementing the strategy in their centre, school or kura. In particular, an outline must be provided to show how ongoing resource support, especially hardware is going to be carried out so that the strategy can be effectively implemented.



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