

Effective Teaching

What's happening in my child's classroom?



Who is this booklet for?

The Education Review Office (ERO) has written this booklet for everyone who parents a child – those who have care and responsibility for children attending school. The word 'parent' is used to include parents, caregivers and whānau.

Teaching is challenging and complex. To help every student make progress, teachers have to find out what each student knows and can do. Teachers want to build on the strengths of each of their students. This involves teachers constantly reviewing their teaching practice - is it working, and what changes are needed?

This booklet includes some of the questions teachers will ask themselves as part of this process. As a parent, you can use these questions to inform the conversations you have with your child's teacher. Teachers may also find the questions useful to reflect on their practice.



The principal, as the educational leader of the school, has an important role in supporting teachers to continually raise the achievement of their students. Boards of trustees expect that all the children in the school are making good progress.

This booklet has five sections of questions that teachers might ask themselves. Each section focuses on a key area of effective teaching:

- > student achievement and progress
- > teaching practices
- > teacher development
- > safety and inclusion
- > working in partnership

The Six Dimensions of a Successful School

These five areas are all important aspects of effective teaching and are reflected in ERO's Six Dimensions of a Successful School. ERO uses this diagram when it reviews schools. It shows how all aspects of a school relate to each other and have an impact on children's learning.



QUESTIONS ABOUT

achievement and progress

KNOWING WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN NEXT

Effective teachers have information about their students' strengths, needs and progress. Teachers reflect on the following questions:

- What evidence do I have about how well each student is achieving in the subjects I am teaching them?
- Is the assessment information I collect accurate, reliable and useful, and gathered from a variety of sources over a period of time?
- Do I know which students in my classroom require additional support or extension?
- What do I know about the strengths of each of these students and what they need to learn next?
- Do I have the information I need to decide what the next teaching steps are for all individuals and groups of students in my class?
- How do I know whether my teaching strategies are working for every student?
- How well do I share useful information about students' achievement with other teachers within the school, and at other schools, to ensure that all my students can move smoothly from class to class, and from school to school?

Effective teachers give students information about their achievement and progress to help them understand what they have already learnt and what they should focus on next. To do this, teachers ask themselves:

- In what ways do I provide each student with easily accessible resources that help them to work independently?
- Do I provide students with examples and learning models that help them understand what high quality work looks like?
- How do I design learning activities and experiences to help each student achieve their learning goals?
- Do students receive regular, specific and constructive oral and written feedback about what they have successfully learnt and what they need to work on next?
- Can all students talk about what they have learnt, how well they are achieving and their next learning steps?
- What opportunities do students have to take part in or lead discussions with me and their parents about their learning?



QUESTIONS ABOUT

teaching practices

RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUALS AND DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS

Effective teachers are flexible and responsive to all their students. Teachers think about:

- How do I plan my teaching to build on what students already know and give them opportunities to learn?
- How well do I use group and class activities to ensure all students have access to challenging learning opportunities?
- How can I learn more about the different backgrounds, experiences and cultures of my students to design learning activities that are interesting and relevant to them?
- How do I help students to see the point of their learning and how they might use the learning in the future?
- In what ways do I use information and communication technologies (ICT) to help students' learning?
- How do I respond to students who are not achieving at an appropriate level and how do I accelerate their learning?

Effective teachers use different teaching approaches for students who need extra support or extension.

Teachers reflect on the following questions:

- How do I support all students to achieve, taking into account their ethnicity, social background, gender, ability or particular needs?
- How can I extend my knowledge of different teaching approaches?
- Do I have a wide variety of teaching strategies that help each individual learn?
- How willing am I to find and try new and innovative strategies to accelerate students' learning?
- To what extent do I tailor my teaching for the development of specific skills or knowledge that individual students need?

- How do I provide challenging classroom programmes for students identified as gifted and talented?
- How do I ensure that any out-of-class programmes for gifted and talented students are linked back to my regular classroom programmes?

Effective teachers draw on the support and expertise of other adults to help with some of their students. In doing this they carefully consider:

- Is using a teacher aide the most effective means of support for a particular student, or would the student benefit more from my own teaching skills and knowledge?
- If one of my students is working with a teacher aide have I given the teacher aide a detailed plan of what was required? Do I closely monitor how the plan is being used, and how well it is working?
- Do I provide clear guidance and support for parents and whānau who help in my classroom?
- How well do I use the expertise of specialists such as Resource Teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO), or Learning Support teachers to help me develop the best teaching strategies for those students who are not making good progress?

Effective teachers also use the expertise of community members. These teachers ask themselves:

- What do I know about and how do I use the skills and knowledge that parents provide across a range of areas, including their cultural knowledge?
- How do I use the expertise of people in our school community and local businesses to provide students with relevant and interesting learning experiences?
- What links can I make with whānau, hapu and iwi to support my students' learning?

QUESTIONS ABOUT

teacher development

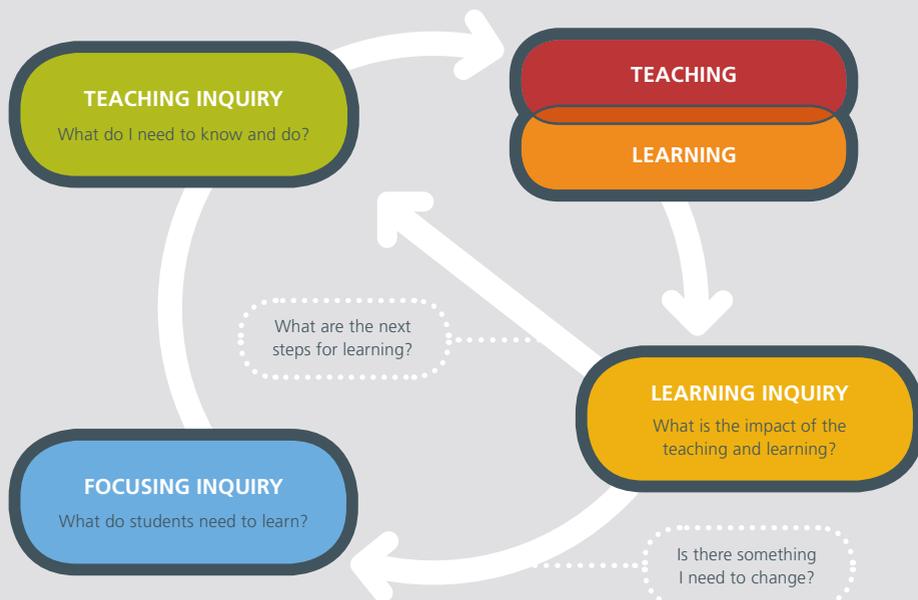
KEEPING UP WITH NEW APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Effective teachers look for ongoing opportunities to enhance their teaching skills. They use the teaching as inquiry cycle to reflect on their practice. They ask:

- What does the information I have about my students' learning tell me about what I need to focus on to improve my practice?
- What new knowledge and skills do I need to improve outcomes for all my students?
- What professional learning and development opportunities can I take part in that will challenge my assumptions and help me to change what is not working for my students?
- Do I have the opportunity to work with colleagues in a professional community focused on improving student outcomes?
- Do I have access to people with the knowledge and expertise to support me in my professional learning and development?

TEACHING AS INQUIRY

A process through which teachers question their decisions and teaching practice



Teacher-parent contact

Parents are welcome in their child's classroom.

Inclusive teachers ask themselves:

- Does my classroom have an open, inclusive and welcoming environment that gives both formal and informal opportunities for parents to meet with me?
- How can I make sure that parents are comfortable to contact me when they want to talk about their child?
- Do I know what parents expect for their children's learning and safety at school?

Teachers keep parents well informed about their child's progress and achievement. They consider:

- How do parents know how well their child is achieving in relation to other New Zealand children of the same age?
- How timely, accurate and easily understood is the information I give parents about their child's learning?
- Do I regularly provide parents with positive information about their child's learning?

Parents have an important role in supporting their child's learning. Teachers ask:

- How do I show that I value the contribution parents make to their child's learning?
- What opportunities do parents and whānau have to be active partners in their child's education?
- Do I meet with parents and their child to develop goals and actions for learning?
- In what ways do I encourage and help parents to work with their child by giving them strategies and activities they can use at home?
- How responsive am I to parents' suggestions about what might help improve their child's learning?
- What opportunities are there for parents to discuss any concerns they have about their child's learning and behaviour with me?

Teenagers benefit from their parents' support and guidance at secondary school level. Secondary teachers might ask themselves:

- Do I give parents clear information about their child's programme choices, qualifications' requirements, career pathways and progress towards achieving their goals?
- How are parents involved in identifying possible future career pathways and making subject choices for their child?
- How do I make sure parents receive regular and timely information about their teenager's progress towards achieving NCEA credits, including any concerns about work completion?
- Do I share resources and web tools to help students and their families make subject choices for future career pathways?



QUESTIONS ABOUT

safety and inclusion

PROVIDING A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN FEEL INCLUDED

Children's safety at school

Trustees, school leaders and teachers are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that students learn in a safe and supportive environment.

Teachers who provide a safe and supportive learning environment ask:

- Do all students feel welcome and supported?
- Am I aware of the social and emotional needs of all the students in my class?
- What do I do to make students who are new to their class, or the school, feel welcome and secure?
- How do I ensure that students in my class who have disabilities or high learning needs are welcome, included and learning?
- What do I do to encourage and assist students with high needs to take part in activities outside the classroom alongside regular students?
- How do I know that all students are safe from bullying, both in the classroom and in the playground?
- How do I make my classroom routines and expectations predictable and well understood by students?
- How do I help students work together in caring, collaborative and inclusive learning groups?
- Do students know who to talk to if they see or experience any bullying?
- How do I find out students' views and opinions about my teaching practices?

Principals and teachers have a particular responsibility to ensure students are safe during Education outside the Classroom (EOTC). Teachers consider the following questions:

- Do I understand and enforce safety guidelines for EOTC?
- How do I ensure that all students are prepared to take part in EOTC activities?
- Do I allow students to choose whether they participate in more challenging EOTC activities?
- Do I consider affordability for all students when planning EOTC activities?
- How well do I engage parents in out-of-class activities and enable them to participate effectively in the programme?



Responding to the different cultural backgrounds of students

Effective teachers recognise and celebrate the different cultures of their students. They regularly ask themselves:

- Do I say my students' names correctly, asking their help if necessary?
- How does the learning environment in my classroom reflect the cultures of all my students?
- Do students from different cultural backgrounds, including Māori and Pacific students, feel that I value the cultural experiences that they bring to my classroom?
- How am I improving my knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and identity of Māori and Pacific students in my class?
- Do I look for opportunities to attend events in the local Māori and Pacific communities?

Helping each student succeed

All students should have the opportunity and support to succeed. A teacher who is committed to success for all students would answer 'yes' to the following questions:

- Would my students say that I never give up on them?
- Am I committed to successfully reintegrating students who have been stood down or suspended back into my classroom?
- Do I support every student to succeed?



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa The Child – the Heart of the Matter

Other useful resources



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE

For individual school reports, national reports on education issues and information about the review process.

National Office, PO Box 2799,
Wellington 6140
Email: info@ero.govt.nz
Phone: 04 499 2489



How is my child doing?

Questions to ask at school (2012)



School Trustees

Helping you ask the right questions (2013)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

For information and resources for parents, go to the Ministry website.

www.minedu.govt.nz
National Office, PO Box 1666,
Wellington 6140
Phone: 04 463 8000



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

For information about NCEA

www.nzqa.govt.nz
PO Box 160,
Wellington 6140
Phone: 0800 697 296