

A Brief Introduction to Pedagogies for ILE

The relationship between pedagogy and spatial design

An **Innovative Learning Environment (ILE)** is less about the open-plan spaces, which are perhaps their most obvious feature (at least in New Zealand), and more about a shift to new pedagogies identified as being most effective for **the kinds of learning goals desired for the modern workforce and participation in society**. These pedagogies are generally focused upon developing self-regulated learners that can set goals, develop plans, manage time, and monitor and evaluate progress. Indeed, the design of new, spacious and flexible spaces is intended to facilitate and promote pedagogical changes such as grouping learners according to need, employing the combined expertise of several teachers, and utilising a wide range of teaching styles including direct teaching, experiential and guided teaching, and inquiry.

The spatial redesign of ILE will only be effective if the staff and community have the ability to make the pedagogical changes that underpin their vision of teaching and learning. These pedagogical changes should focus on making students central to the learning process and accommodating diversity in approaches. This is because there is no single way to teach all students effectively, and different approaches are needed for different situations, even for the same student. This means that more conventional approaches to learning, such as direct teaching, for example, can still be included when judged to be the most suitable for meeting the need of the individual student.

Innovative pedagogies for ILE

Discursive and co-constructive approaches (student-centred, active, interdisciplinary learning)

Discursive teaching practices are linked to higher achievement for certain students, while student-inquiry approaches are shown, when implemented effectively and judiciously, to lead to higher performance and lasting learning. Inquiry approaches also support students to develop **the skills and competencies deemed important for the demands of modern day employment and participation in society**. It is important to note that inquiry learning is most successful when it is used in conjunction with teacher-directed instruction. Direct instruction is critical for enabling students to acquire the base level of knowledge and skills needed before they are able to successfully undertake their own inquiry-style or discovery learning.

Inquiry or research projects encourage students to actively construct knowledge and also provide opportunities to develop skills in generating hypotheses, scientific investigation, analysis and self-monitoring learning. Such learning is often interdisciplinary and allows students to develop learning capacity through exploring and creating knowledge within more than one subject area and from a variety of disciplines. When inquiries are collaboratively devised and shared, and regularly assessed through self and peer observation and reflection, ILEs become strong communities of learners capable of continuous improvement.

Inquiries can be developed around challenging problems which span multiple domains (social and moral, economic, political and environmental) and which involve contradictory issues. These inquiries would not be intended to move towards clear or logical solutions but instead would be based on highly complex, real-world and meaningful problems. These are co-constructive approaches which seek not to transfer or assimilate knowledge, but to encourage higher level thinking by enabling students to work across and between ideas and knowledge systems in order to produce something new. Students learn about existing ideas and knowledge but also to think beyond and between them when they are encouraged by an inquiry or project to focus on the connections between people, ideas and things, rather than on the things themselves.

Assessment-focused pedagogies

Large academic gains are observed when pedagogical approaches focus on formative assessment elicited through questioning and class discussion, which enable teachers to refine their instructional approach to address gaps in student understanding and provide greater differentiation. Assessment-focused practice has also been found to lead to a greater provision of student-led and informal learning experiences in different groupings, with teachers guiding and supporting groups and providing more focused instruction to those who need it.

Personalised learning

Within personalised learning approaches, teachers and students work together to determine what each student needs to learn, how best to learn it, and what kind of support they will require. Goals and tasks are defined and students are encouraged to develop ownership of and personal responsibility for what they learn. Both teachers and students are active in the learning process, which leads to greater responsiveness on the students' part. Personalisation involves a focus on students' interests and choices not only for their learning, but also in the ways that they learn, who they work with and how they would like to demonstrate and present evidence of their learning. This requires a flexibility of practice that includes flexible approaches to timetabling, use of technology and other resources, as well as flexible trajectories for the development of skills, competencies and knowledge.

References

Byers, T., & Imms, W. (n.d.) Solution? Evolution? Or revolution? *Learning Spaces*, 3(3), 50-58.

Groff, J. S. (2013). *Technology-rich innovative learning environments*. Paris: OECD.

Ministry of Education. (2016). *Māui whakakau, kura whakakau: The impact of physical design on Māori and Pasifika student outcomes*. Wellington: MoE.

Mourshed, M., Chijioke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved systems keep getting better*. New York: McKinsey & Company.