

# Lessons from New Zealand

Last February, members of ISTE's Special Interest Group for Teacher Educators (SIGTE) traveled to New Zealand as part of a SIG-sponsored study tour. While there, the 13-member group visited seven schools and attended the Learning@School 2010 conference. In this third and final installment about their trip, they share observations about New Zealand's distributed leadership for achieving student, staff, and community learning.

We saw individuals, both students and staff, learning their leadership roles as interdependent members of the community at school and beyond.

## A Vision for Education

In New Zealand, education policy and strategy focus on building a world-leading education system that equips all citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values to be successful in the digital age. School leaders, teachers, students, families, and communities across the country share the Ministry of Education's vision. Its curriculum empowers each constituent of the education community by including key competencies for self-realization of critical thinking, communication and development of relationships, and participation in and contribution to the community. We saw individuals, both students and staff, learning their leadership roles as interdependent members of the community at school and beyond.

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# d: Leadership for Learning

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The ministry delegates decisions for how to implement its policies and curriculum to the schools and, in turn, its leaders. They are the ones who implement the national objectives and curriculum through shared vision, inquiry, learning communities, reflection, trust, and valuing teacher and student learning.

New Zealanders describe leadership as *distributed*. It is shared with teachers and students and modeled throughout schools. As one principal said, leadership is subversive. The principal is proactive in leading through modeling.

Teachers and administrators engage in learning together using inquiry to examine effective pedagogy in authentic contexts—such as events, activities, and community roles—and to integrate knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills into the learning. Lyn Byrd, principal at Ilam School, says, “It is not just about delivering a curriculum framework. Passion is important, as are relationships within the school.” For Ilam teachers, this relationship building took place as they developed norms for behavior called *mutually agreed team expectations and behaviors* (MATEs). School leaders are engaged in inquiry, self-reporting, and reflection to discover effective ways to implement the national curriculum and to promote student learning.

At the 2010 Learning@School conference in Rotorua, Anne Tolley, the minister of education, shared her realization of the potential that information communication technology (ICT) has to transform learning. She outlined the ministry’s commitment to several strategies, including:

- Substantial investment to roll out broadband for learning, administration, and communication
- Support for upgrading in-school ICT networks
- Effective professional development and reflective practice for implementing new national standards for literacy and numeracy
- A national education network (NEN) to provide reliable access to examples of innovation and use of ICT for improved learning outcomes

The ministry’s commitment creates conditions for learning so that the vision for building a world-class education system can be realized, and so that New Zealanders will have the knowledge, skills, and values to be successful citizens in the digital age. However, as the principal of the secondary school at Christ’s College stated, “Education is not learning about technology, but rather using technology to learn.” As we journeyed across the country to other schools, we saw many examples of technology for leadership and learning.

## Student Leadership

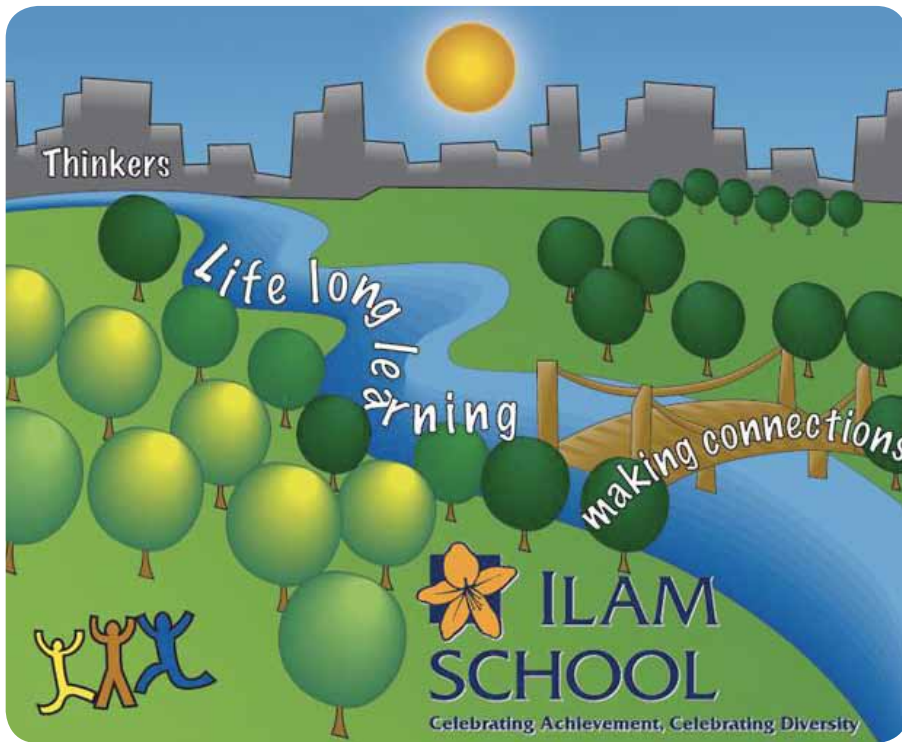
In several schools we visited, student learning portrayed leadership development. Technology, independence, and self-regulation gave students voice. At Pt. England School in Auckland, we saw leadership opportunities in student-led reports that highlighted

their learning using e-portfolios, Web publications on blogs, podcasts, and video broadcasts on YouTube. The focus was on the development of self-confidence in students, many of whom are from immigrant families, through Web and video production for a global audience. At Ilam School, TEKE Angels is a formally organized student technology leadership group that helps teachers and other students learn to use technology. The TEKE Angels also run CHILL Expo: Children Leading their Learning, a two-day event of student-led workshops on specific software for teachers, students, and parents.

We saw other examples of student leadership at Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery 1 schools in Christchurch city center. Students in these schools develop individual education plans, which often involve traveling beyond the school in search of mentors and extended learning environments. Several students commented that working at home and in the community gives them confidence and a feeling of connectedness, and it offers other ways to be actively involved in their own learning.

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Students at Ilam School in Christchurch develop key competency skills, such as thinking, self-managing, participating and contributing, and relating to others, in an effort to become successful lifelong learners in a global community.



Students and staff at Viscount School embrace the obligations to learn and to help others learn as part of a learning community. The school's motto is *BEST*, an acronym for better every single time. The underlying concept is that the learning community will provide the best teachers, the best resources, and the best learning environment.

community: to learn and to help others learn. During our visit, the whole school was engaged in activities to consider questions such as:

- What is a learning community?
- What makes a group of people unique?
- What makes someone a good learner?

Strategies included students observing one another and collecting data to track how many times they demonstrate what is at the heart of the learner. Later in the year, they conducted the same intense investigation of what's at the heart of curriculum by examining questions, questioning techniques, and exploring the thinking behind decision making.

In one class we visited, students interviewed a relative about these two obligations and asked them two questions: *What makes you a great learner, and how do you help others learn?* The students also asked us to respond to these questions, which caused us to reflect on how effective questioning fosters metacognition and inquiry-based learning. Giving students examples of how others learn promotes self-monitoring of their own learning and creates a context for accepting their role as members of a learning community who help others learn.

We also saw student leadership in performance assessment practices. At Ilam School, students often lead parent-teacher conferences. The student presents his or her progress and learning goals, which focused on

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key competencies related to participation, contribution, and self-management at the beginning of the school year when we were visiting. The focus on students' learning addresses home culture influences on the student in school as well as how the school culture affects behaviors at home. Student presentations consist of an e-portfolio with samples of work, including annotated photographs, videos, and reflections. Students develop leadership skills as participants in the assessment of their own learning, recognize the transparency of expectations, and accept responsibility for self-regulated learning.

### Teacher Leadership

New Zealand supports teacher leadership with professional development. The Ministry of Education supports professional development at the national level through a cluster model. Clusters comprise like-minded schools

to leverage resources and collaborative learning opportunities. The Ministry enlists CORE Education, the agency that hosted our study tour, to advise clusters and the schools within them on the implementation of the national curriculum. The nonprofit research and development organization supports the use of educational technology across New Zealand through professional development, consulting, and education events. CORE is also involved in providing professional development through two national conferences: Learning@School and ULearn. The goal of these conferences is to provide opportunities for professional learning that educators can effectively and directly apply in teaching and learning. CORE also provides EDTalks, a free repository of videos featuring leaders and innovative edu-

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cators. Targeted professional development for specific topics in schools includes ICT projects and initiatives, staff development across the education and business sectors, facilitation training, new curriculum and learning design, online communities of practice, and international study tours, such as the SIGTE visit.

At the Learning@Schools conference last February, Derek Wenmoth of CORE Education addressed the changing roles of teachers and learners. He said that students were consumers in the past, but now they

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The SIGTE study group. Front row (left to right): Sarah McPherson, Holli Buck, Arlene Borthwick, Linda Forrest, Karen Gotimer, Ginger Seeley, and José Hernández; second row (left to right): Matt Tippen (CORE Education), Ann Cunningham, Mia Kim Williams, Eleanor Binstock, George Lipscomb (standing), Mike Charles, and Alexis Torres.



This self-directed approach helps students define their role as organizers of their own learning, identify what they will learn and with whom they will work, and develop self-management skills for leading their own learning.

are collaborators and communicators. He went on to say that teachers' success in making coherent instructional decisions depends on developing a position or stance on six dimensions: knowledge, professionalism, collaboration, instruction, agency, and authority that is focused on learning and the learner. He explained that much of the change in teachers' roles is a result of the ICT available for learning and teaching, such as open source and digital resources, mobile phones, games, and cloud computing. The focus for teachers, defined by the ministry, is on developing digital citizens and considering how schools and classrooms are preparing students to become members of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global village.

School-based practices also illustrate teacher leadership. At Ilam School, teachers and administrators conduct classroom observations and learning

walks to get a group snapshot of what is going on in classrooms. They then meet in groups called *quality learning circles*, comprised of six-person, cross-age teams, to discuss the observations and identify topics to pursue for professional development. At Discovery 1 School, professional development is primarily created in house, with each staff member conducting a yearlong inquiry to share with others. The inquiries include talking with students about their own learning journeys. Unlimited School has even changed the term *teachers* to *learning advisers*, which reflects a personalized approach to guiding every student that allows them to work collaboratively with teachers and parents when setting learning goals for individualized education plans. Each adviser has the goal of supporting new learning for each child. The principal at Discovery 1 said that this self-directed approach helps students define their role as organizers of their own learning, identify what they will learn and with whom they will work, and develop self-management skills for leading their own learning.

### Teacher Education

University teacher prep programs also have a role in leadership development. We talked with faculty from Canterbury and Auckland universities about teacher preparation programs for digital age schools. Faculty gave us insights into their approach through examples of key questions they pose to teacher candidates, such as:

- How can children design their own learning?
- How do you sustain open inquiry-based curriculum rather than teach for anticipated learning outcomes?
- What resources can students access to accomplish their inquiry and problem solving in teams?
- How can you determine student progress based on narrative assessment versus normative assessment?
- How will you cope with daily global communication via mobile devices, social networking, and open source materials in your classroom?

At the Learning@School conference, speaker Alan November gave a keynote called "Emerging Culture of Teaching and Learning," in which he described three skills teachers must have. Teachers should know how to:

1. Build global collaboration
2. Deal with overwhelming amounts of information
3. Be self-directed

Just as we heard from the university faculty, teachers must understand that every student is a teacher and every teacher is a learner.

Leadership in New Zealand focuses on learning from multiple perspectives, including those of the Ministry of Education, school staff, students, their families, and communities. At every level is a vision for the future built on community relationships, transparent expectations, collaboration, communication, and self-regulation. School leaders, such as Russell Burt at Pt. England School in Auckland, shared their strategies of working with people in the communities who are dependent to make them more interdependent. This vision of learning—inclusive of the community—

empowers teachers and students as they see how their learning contributes to the community both within and beyond the school setting. What a great lesson for how to look at leadership for learning!



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### Resources

Christ's College: [www.christscollege.com/home.html](http://www.christscollege.com/home.html)  
 Discovery 1 School: [www.discovery1.school.nz](http://www.discovery1.school.nz)  
 EDtalks: <http://edtalks.org>  
 Learning@School conference: [www.core-ed.org/learningatschool](http://www.core-ed.org/learningatschool)  
 ULearn conference: [www.core-ed.org/ulearn](http://www.core-ed.org/ulearn)  
 Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti school: <http://unlimited.school.nz>

online @ [www.iste.org/LL](http://www.iste.org/LL)



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