

28 MAY 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 2 May 2018 about learning environments. Your request was transferred to the Ministry of Education on 4 May. You asked:

*MLE 'Modern Learning Environment', FLE 'Flexible Learning Environment', FLS 'Flexible Learning Spaces' ILE 'Innovative Learning Environment.'*

- *Can the Ministry of Education please provide what research and evidence it has on file that the above classrooms improve academic outcomes and children's' social development?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The key contributors to academic outcomes and social development are the teachers and educators within our schools. The design of learning spaces fundamentally supports the teaching and learning approaches that schools are taking.

The importance of teachers and effective teaching is demonstrated in the Ministry's Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme. This resource is a collaborative knowledge building strategy designed to strengthen the evidence base that informs education policy and practice in New Zealand and is available on the Education Counts website at: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/BES>.

The following publically available resources outline research and evidence on how a range of teaching and learning approaches can be supported by different designs of learning spaces.

The Ministry of Education's only requirements for learning spaces are that they have good acoustics, thermal comfort, indoor air quality and lighting. These are set out in our Designing Quality Learning Spaces (DQLS) guidelines found at: <https://education.govt.nz/school/property/state-schools/design-standards/flexible-learning-spaces/designing-quality-learning-spaces/>.

These are also backed up by two reports published by the Ministry:

- *The impact of physical design on student outcomes*
- *Māui whakakāu, kura whakakau – the impact of physical design on Māori and Pasifika student outcomes*

Both reports are available at: <https://education.govt.nz/school/property/state-schools/design-standards/flexible-learning-spaces/design-student-outcomes/>.

The Ministry is currently participating in a research project about learning environments being led by the University of Melbourne. You can find out more about that study at: [www.ilet.com.au/](http://www.ilet.com.au/).

The OECD has an ongoing project called the Learning Environment Evaluation Programme (LEEP). Further information about LEEP is available here: [www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/centreforeffectivelearningenvironmentscele/joinleepandsharegoodpracticeineffectivellearningenvironments.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/centreforeffectivelearningenvironmentscele/joinleepandsharegoodpracticeineffectivellearningenvironments.htm).

Within New Zealand, the Education Review Office (ERO) has published a report on Leading Innovative Learning in New Zealand Schools. This can be found at: <http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/leading-innovative-learning-in-new-zealand-schools-april-2018/>.

If you're interested in further reading on this topic, the aforementioned Best Evidence Synthesis and John Hattie's *Visible Learning*<sup>1</sup> would be good starting points.

I appreciate your interest in this topic and if you would like to share your views, I would encourage you to participate in the ongoing Education Conversation survey. The survey is available at: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/>.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review our decision on your information request. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



**Kim Shannon**  
Head of Education Infrastructure Service

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<sup>1</sup> Hattie, John. *Visual Learning: A synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Oxford: Routledge, 2009.