

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report – it captures the key points and highlights findings that you may find useful. The full report is available on our website – www.ero.govt.nz

Newly Graduated Teachers: Preparation and Confidence to Teach

What did ERO do?

In Terms 2 and 3, 2016, ERO talked to leaders in 109 early learning services, and 209 newly graduated teachers (NGTs) in these services. Seventy teachers across 36 of these services also completed an online survey.

ERO also talked to leaders and teachers in schools. ERO talked to leaders at 118 schools, and 379 NGTs at these schools. One hundred and eighty-two NGTs from 75 different schools, completed the survey.

Why did we do it?

There is considerable system-wide interest in the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). This evaluation was not directly of ITE provision, but our findings contribute to discussion about the role of ITE in developing a highly capable and confident teaching workforce.

Several recent ERO national evaluation reports about curriculum, assessment and achievement have identified issues and concerns about leader/teacher capability to design and implement a curriculum that is responsive to all learners, particularly those whose underachievement is of concern, or those who need additional support to experience success.

The [*School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success*](#) highlight the importance of addressing persistent disparities in our education system.

There has been significant government investment in teacher education and attempts to raise the status of the teaching profession in response to these challenges.

In this evaluation, ERO wanted to learn about the experiences of newly graduated teachers (NGTs) as they entered the workforce.

What did ERO find in early learning services?

ERO wanted to know:

How confident and prepared do NGTs in **early learning services** feel/think they were to use the early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* to:

- design, implement and evaluate a curriculum that is responsive to the language, culture and identity of all of the children they are responsible for in their service, particularly those children at risk of poor educational outcomes
- assess children's progress and learning and use this information to develop teaching strategies to promote positive learning
- work collaboratively with the parents and whānau of children to develop and maintain learner-centred relationships.

ERO found that:

- there was variability in how confident and prepared NGTs felt
- NGTs who felt confident and prepared to teach generally felt they had a good understanding of theory associated with curriculum and foundational knowledge of the early childhood curriculum, [*Te Whāriki*](#)
- NGTs who felt less prepared or confident felt they knew the theory but not how to implement it in practice
- assessment was an area NGTs were least confident and prepared for, particularly using assessment information to inform teaching strategies
- NGTs were often confident to develop relationships with parents and whānau, but were not so confident to discuss children's learning with them
- NGTs' practicum experience was critical to building their confidence and preparing them as teachers.

FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/publications

What did ERO find in schools?

ERO wanted to know:

How confident and prepared do NGTs in **schools** feel/ think they were in relation to:

- having content and pedagogical knowledge appropriate to the learners and learning areas of their programme
- having an understanding of the complex influences that personal, social and cultural factors may have on teachers and learners
- using assessment tools to assess students' progress and achievement
- using assessment data to plan teaching strategies that respond to the identity, language and culture of all learners and accelerate the progress of students at risk of underachievement in their class
- systematically and critically engaging with evidence to reflect on and refine their practice
- working collaboratively with the parents and whānau of identified students to develop and maintain learner-centred relationships.

ERO found that:

- overall, NGTs felt confident in their preparation to be teachers
- there was variability in the content and quality of their preparation— across lecturers, courses, ITE providers and practicum experiences
- they were more confident about their content and pedagogical knowledge than their ability to use assessment data
- NGTs who felt less confident in their preparation wanted to know more about how to support students with additional learning needs, or those that were achieving well below or well above expectations
- NGTs' confidence to work collaboratively with parents and whānau was largely dependent on NGTs' interpersonal skills and life experience
- NGTs experiences on practicum were an important factor in how confident and prepared they felt.

What does this mean?

Assessment, and the use of assessment information to plan and evaluate practice, was an area that needed strengthening for NGTs in both early learning services and schools. Leaders and NGTs expressed concerns about inadequate preparation in this area.

There is a need for balance and alignment between theory and practice. Both leaders and NGTs told us the balance and alignment between theories learnt and the application of these in practice needed to be strengthened.

Strengthening the alignment between NGTs' learning on practicum and in lectures would better support their confidence in their preparation. NGTs reported that when theory and practicum aligned, practicum was a useful way to develop their understandings.

The variation in NGTs confidence and preparedness as they enter the workforce means that they need different types and levels of support as they work towards full certification. This support is especially important in relation to assessment for learning, responding to diverse learners and working collaboratively with parents and whānau.

ITE providers, associate teachers, school and service leaders, and NGTs need clarity about their roles and expectations to help better prepare NGTs to enter the workforce.

Our findings reinforce the need for review and strengthening of programmes of teacher education, through the work of the Education Council and government agencies.

ERO made recommendations for ITE providers, the Education Council and the Ministry of Education.

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