

## City Rise Cluster Milestone Reflections – Milestone 4

As mentioned in our previous Milestone reflection, the cluster's focus is on the development of a blended learning approach based on the effective pedagogical principles laid out in the New Zealand Curriculum document. As identified in the Curriculum document:

Students learn best when teachers:

- Create a supportive learning environment
- Encourage reflective thought and action
- Enhance the relevance of new learning
- Facilitate shared learning
- Make connections to prior learning and experience
- Provide sufficient opportunities to learn
- Inquire into the teaching-learning relationship

Evidence of a number of these areas being developed across the cluster is widespread (see E-Learning evidence for goal one). All schools have invested heavily in infrastructure and professional development for the staff over the last two years of the contract and this is starting to show dividends in various areas. Going into the third year of the contract, there is a strong desire for whole cluster, departmental 'jumbo days' (to quote from the Ministry) where teachers can share best practise ideas, tips, skills and knowledge. The particular focus for these days would be around the pedagogical principles outlined above. How can teaching be improved using various e-learning strategies? What are the pitfalls that can impede these strategies and how can they be managed in a sustainable, effective way? Already schools are trialling and developing learning communities, giving students opportunities to share their learning as well as providing online resources utilising a variety of tools. These tools include applications like:

- LMSs (Moodle and KnowledgeNet)
- E-portfolio systems (eg Mahara)
- Collaborative applications (Google docs and Google sites)

One of the key drivers in the use of this wide variety of applications is ease of access by the students and the community where applicable. To this end, several schools in the cluster are looking at ways that they can tie all of these applications (and any other applications) into a single, easy to find location.

Another major focus is to increase the communication and buy-in of the parents, caregivers and the wider community. This will require a more concerted effort from all staff to develop units of work using e-learning strategies where appropriate and communicate these developments to the students, parents and / or caregivers.

Finally how each of the schools can maintain the momentum in the development of e-learning in the school once the contract is completed will need to be a major focus.