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# Innovative Learning Environments

## Strategies, tips, and links

### How to use this kete

This kete contains a range of ideas, strategies, tips and resources. These are tried and tested in the classroom, as this kete has been developed using information shared by teachers.

We have sorted their contributions into categories for simple navigation. This is not a “to do” list, but we hope there will be some suggestions that might:

- resonate with you
- help you solve a problem
- inspire you to try something different.

Browse the suggestions and feel free to contribute your own ideas.

Email us at [growwaitaha@gmail.com](mailto:growwaitaha@gmail.com) and we'll add to this kete.

### Collaborative teaching — top tips for working with co-teachers

- Develop professional relationships with teaching colleagues through the use of MATES (mutually agreed team expectations).
- Ensure that new staff members, teacher aides, and relievers are part of the MATES agreement.
- Check how people like to be communicated with, for example, face to face, through emails, in meetings.
- Accept that people will be at different stages in transitioning to collaborative teaching.



Explore this story about [Shirley Primary](#) and how they developed their MATES agreements to enhance collaboration.

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- Coordinate playground duty timetables so that a collaborative teaching team can be off duty at the same time to meet if needed.
- Consider the use of [Google Classroom](#), group [Messenger](#), joint email, or [Seesaw](#) to communicate messages to teaching staff.
- A large whiteboard in a shared space could be used to record notes about student and staff absences, events, meetings, etc.
- Consider allocating families to the same homeroom teacher, that way the homeroom teacher gets to know the family well and the parent can talk to one teacher about an issue if they prefer.
- Notices and messages to students can be distributed by homeroom teachers.
- End of day gatherings could be held in homerooms for administration purposes.



This [group of videos](#) features students and teachers from Canterbury schools sharing their experiences of collaborative teaching and learning. They discuss their first steps with co-teaching and how to work together to keep learners at the centre.

## Styles of collaborative teaching

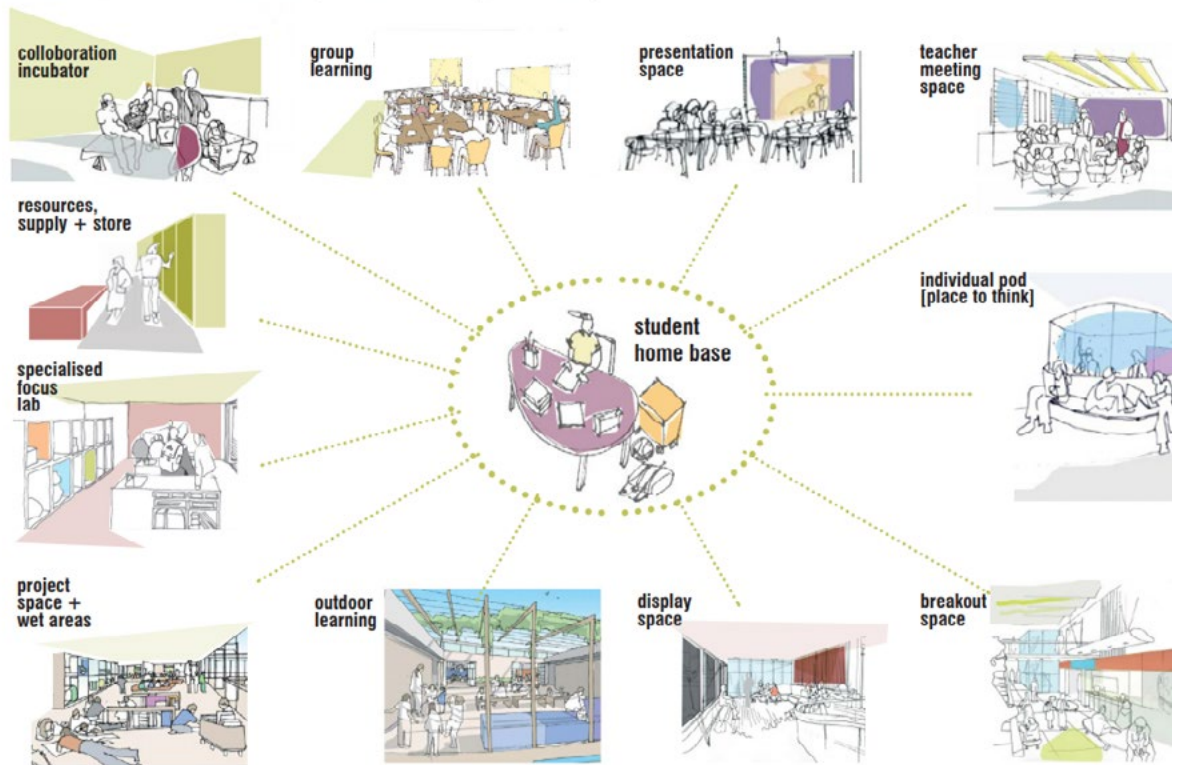
- Learning coach model – In a group of three, two teachers are teaching and the third is the learning coach or the social coach. The coach can also observe other teachers.
- Lead, observe, assist – One teacher presents new content while the co-leader observes students and assists any who may be off-task or struggling with concepts.
- Teach and reteach – The lead teacher presents new material and activities while the co-instructor reviews previous information and skills for retention purposes.
- Simultaneous teaching – The class is divided into two smaller groups and both teachers present the same material at the same time.
- Instructional stations – Students rotate between several stations to receive new instruction or work on activities monitored by teachers.
- Supplemental teaching – While one teacher instructs the majority of learners, the other takes a small group aside to work on different instructional goals related to readiness or literacy skills.
- Co-teaching rotation – Both teachers present new information rotating between presentation and support roles during the lesson.
- Students as teachers - students can run workshop sessions for other students.

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## Designing learning spaces

### learning settings

... possible learning settings for various modes and group sizes. These multi-modal learning settings should be collocated and clustered to allow students to move around the various learning environments to suit the particular learning task



source: Dr. Kenn Fisher

Explore [Linking pedagogy to space](#) for ideas about designing spaces to enhance learning.

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## Managing programmes of work

- When one teacher is taking guided group sessions, other teachers could be leading literacy themed activities, maths problem solving, or supervising students who are working from a task board or menu.
- One teacher can take the same groupings for a period of time, then switch with the other teacher. That way everyone gets to know the students and high expectations can be developed.
- Group students flexibly. At times there may be mixed ability groups, social groups, ability groups, collaborative groups in operation.
- Use [Google Classroom](#) or [Hapara](#) to support independence with learning activities.
- Provide ways for students to create and share their own content. eg. 'prove it' activities for maths objectives and encourage students to record their learning evidence on a platform like Seesaw
- QR codes can be used to support students to access further learning.
- [Daily Five](#) can be a useful literacy framework.

## Team planning

### Google Sheets

Google Sheets are useful for year and term planning along with assessment data and collaborative team organisation. Cells can be merged, linked out to additional content, and hidden if not always required. Multiple tabs can be created

within the one sheet to reduce your number of files. You can easily manipulate data.

The image shows a screenshot of a Google Sheet used for team planning. It features a grid with multiple columns representing different groups or subjects and rows representing time slots or activities. The cells are color-coded in various shades like yellow, blue, green, and orange. There are several tabs visible at the bottom of the sheet, indicating a multi-tabbed document. The overall layout is dense and organized for collaborative planning.

### Google Slides

Some teachers use Google Slides for planning. Slides can be useful if you wish to present your planning in a visually appealing format for students. A slide deck for each week or each curriculum area can support students' self management skills. Slides can be easily embedded into a Google Site for quick, easy, and ongoing access.

### Google Sites

Sites enables you to combine your planning and communication of learning with students as a one stop shop for the classroom. Think of it as your own website. You can organise your planning and students' learning across a range of website pages and embed items such as docs, sheets, and slides.



Explore some of the [Manaiaikalani Schools google sites](#) to see team planning examples. Many of the sites also feature google slide decks for planning and student learning.

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### Google Classroom/ Hapara/ Apple Classroom

These platforms allow you to easily share messages, links and activities with students.

#### Strategies and tips:

- At team planning meetings have laminated photos of the students to place along continuums for grouping.
- Ensure you dedicate time to planning as a team.

### Transitions

- Play music to signal the start of a transition with the expectation that when the song finishes everyone will be settled. Alternatively, you could say a karakia or sing waiata at transition times.
- Stagger transitions so that only some students move at a time.
- Appoint student leaders to guide group transitions.
- [Magazine racks](#) can be used as portable stationary holders to enable students to have their books and tools wherever they are working.
- Take photos of students transitioning and following routines and create photo stories and posters as visual reminders of how to work in your ILE.
- Critically look at your timetable to minimise transitions. Sometimes small adjustments can improve the workflow of the school day.
- Think about food breaks. Some schools have an 'eat when you're hungry' policy and other specific breaks. Many schools now have a 'play first, eat next' approach to settle students back into the classroom for the afternoon session.

### Noise level

- Set expectations around noise levels with your students.
- Regularly monitor noise levels – you could download a phone app to read the decibel rating.
- Have designated spaces for noisy work.
- Timetable noisy activities to happen at the same time and quiet activities to happen at the same time.
- Seat ESOL learners closer to the teacher so they have more chance of hearing the consonant sounds (which are the sounds that create meaning and the first sounds to be lost in an noisy environment).
- Build a culture of quiet.
- As part of the MATES agreement include an expectation around noise and how to approach your colleagues if their noise is disruptive.
- Use a variety of soft furnishings to absorb sound.
- Avoid covering sound absorbing walls with hard materials.
- Use acoustic curtains.
- Avoid hand dryers (or use low noise hand dryers) in toilets close to ILEs as this contributes to ambient noise.
- Cover partitions in noise absorbing materials.

#### Links:

[Designing Quality Learning Spaces – Acoustics](#) (PDF)

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## Parent conferences

- Student led conferences enable students to showcase their learning and skills to their whānau.
- Work with students prior to the conferences to identify the achievements, next steps, and work samples that they can discuss.
- Support students in this process by having work/information that they have to share and then having a list of work/information that they can choose to share.
- Consider having three or more families in the space at the same time, with students leading the conferences and roving teachers available to facilitate and prompt.
- A recommended timeframe for student led conferences is 30 minutes. This provides sufficient time for the students to share their learning and for parents to talk with the teacher/s.
- If the students have different teachers for core subjects such as reading, writing, and maths, consider using an online booking system so that parents can book in a 5-10 minutes slot to talk with each teacher.
- If students are grouped in home rooms in your ILE you could assign the students' home room teacher as the point of contact for parents.

## Resources

### [Effective Learning in Classrooms \(PDF\)](#)

This book addresses classrooms and learning. Chapter 7 is about collaborative learning.

### [The OECD Handbook for Innovative Learning Environments \(publication\)](#)

This handbook offers practical help around innovative schools and systems. Chapter 2 presents a framework which combines the seven learning principles with three fundamental arenas of innovation.

### [Planning Innovative Learning Environments \(website\)](#)

This Inclusive Education guide helps you plan and develop innovative learning environments that are inclusive of all learners.

### [ILE and Collaborative Teaching \(PDF\)](#)

This publication provides an interesting overview of what collaboration is and what is required for it to be effective.

### [Collaboration to Improve Learner Outcomes \(PDF\)](#)

This publication is designed to support Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako by bringing together research findings about effective collaboration in education communities.

### [Knowing every child through index card rosters \(video\)](#)

By regularly reviewing students' behaviour and learning as a team, teachers can ensure that every student is seen, supported, and celebrated.

### [Clever classrooms \(website\)](#)

This website presents research which indicates learning improves 16% over a year in a well-designed classroom.

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