

## Knowledge management

Organisations, including schools are faced with three fundamental knowledge management challenges:

1. retaining the knowledge of outgoing educators;
2. orienteering new educators to a knowledge sharing culture; and
3. maintaining a knowledge sharing culture.

Here are some key questions to ask about your school's knowledge management:

- How well are in-service staff development programs adjusted to continually changing needs?
- How effectively do teachers share their accumulated wisdom, experiences and skills?
- How common is it for teachers to mentor younger, or less experienced teachers?
- Are there strong specialist networks within and across schools, sharing knowledge and experience?
- Are there continuing experiments and explorations to find better ways of teaching and running schools?
- Are we effectively learning from the different models and approaches to education?
- Is the community effectively involved in helping the school to be relevant to community needs?
- Are we effectively using the whole range of skills and knowledge of our staff? Do we even know what these are?
- Are we effectively using the whole range of skills and knowledge of our students?

(Southon, 1999)

You will find that most of these activities are not new. Knowledge management is not so much about adding new tasks to an existing workload, it is more a way of seeing them all linked together and supporting each other in a more holistic and integrated way.

Knowledge management is about everyone in the school being more conscious of the importance of knowledge, the contribution that it makes to the success of the school as an organisation, and what needs to be done to ensure that it is used effectively, and how each person contributes to the bigger picture.

Bill Communications (2000) identifies five types of technologies designed to support knowledge management in organisations:

Technology	Example
1. applications for capturing information;	word processor, spreadsheet , web page, email, school admin programmes, EMIS programmes
2. applications for cataloguing and storing information;	spreadsheet, database , school administration
3. applications for transforming information;	spreadsheet, mindmapping, online thinking tools
4. applications for disseminating information; and	presentation, publications, email, web pages

Each of these types of applications can be found in schools.

Hay, Lyn and Eustace, Ken. (2000). *Groupware as a knowledge management tool: Possibilities for schools*  
[Online]

Southon,G. (1999). Knowledge management: A conversation. *Orana*, Nov, 44-48.

Close Window