

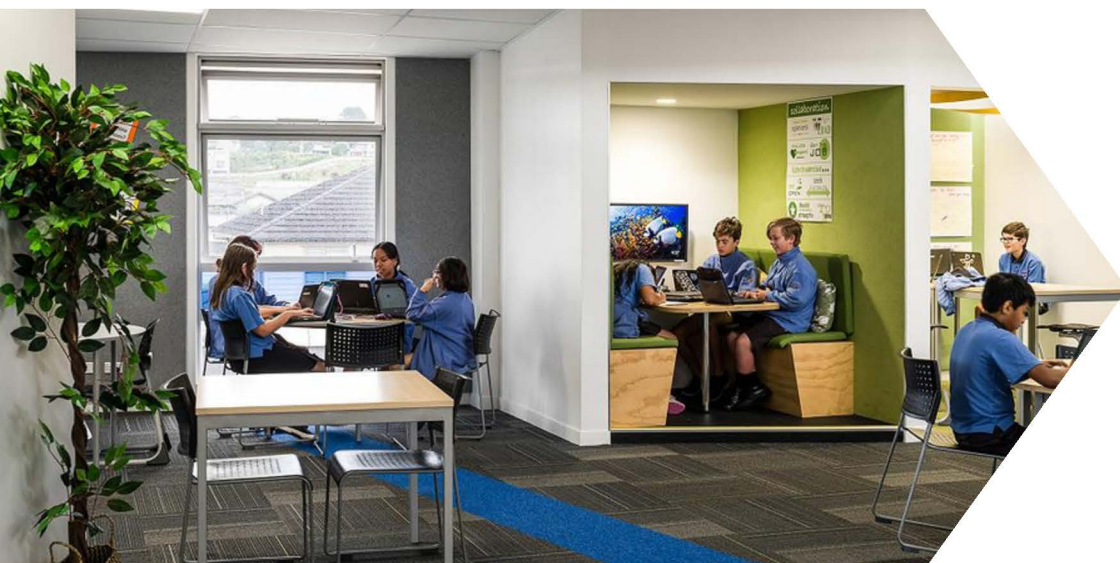


PART B



Synthesis of themes from stories of school improvement

INTRODUCTION



This section draws together insights from eight school improvement stories shared through the NZAI Collaborative Improvement Community. Each of the case studies presented in Part A describes a distinct initiative undertaken in a particular context. While the focus of each school varied, thematic analysis of the schools' presentations at the NZAI conference (2025), and in one case a formal evaluation report, revealed common patterns in how improvement was framed and enacted.

The purpose of this synthesis is not to present a single model of school improvement. Rather, it seeks to identify recurring themes in the conditions and practical approaches that support structured, inquiry-driven change. Our aim is to surface insights that may inform and encourage others.

The eight case studies span primary, secondary, specialist, urban, and rural settings. Across these diverse contexts, five recurring themes were evident. While no two schools approached improvement in exactly the same way, the similarities in their thinking and processes are striking. The stories demonstrate that sustained improvement is rarely accidental. It is intentional, evidence-informed, and shaped by strong leadership, collaborative routines, and clarity of purpose.

The themes that follow highlight shared patterns across the stories and draw out practical insights for schools considering their own improvement journeys. The intention is not replication, but reflection.

Theme 1: Clarity of purpose and shared language

Across the eight stories, improvement began with clarity. Leaders invested time in defining what mattered, why it mattered, and what it would look like in practice. In several schools this meant revisiting foundational beliefs about teaching and learning. In others, it involved reviewing and investigating long-standing practices and asking to what extent they were contributing to improvement.

This work often started with noticing incoherence. Schools described environments where data was collected but not well used, plans were written but not owned, and assessment was treated as an event rather than a tool for learning. One leader reflected that despite “incredible data,” there was no alignment or shared language around learning. Another questioned whether their extensive reporting efforts were genuinely making a difference to student achievement. These moments of reflection prompted a return to purpose.

Across contexts, leaders asked fundamental questions: What does effective practice mean in our setting? What do we value? How will we know if we are making a difference?

Making clarity visible

In several case studies, clarity was strengthened through visible frameworks. These included belief statements, practice models, annual plans aligned to strategic priorities, and simple prompts that guided professional conversations.

At Sandspit Road, staff co-constructed a belief statement about learner agency and then articulated the principles and practices that would bring that belief to life. At Rototuna, the call to action centred on deep learning through formative assessment. At Central Auckland Specialist School refreshed Signature Practices provided a shared description of high-quality teaching and therapeutic practice. Stonefields School asked how they could measure what they valued, particularly in areas not traditionally measured.

This shared language reduced fragmentation by aligning classrooms, teams, and leadership around common expectations. It strengthened accountability by clarifying what was being monitored and why. Importantly, it anchored improvements in moral purpose. Several leaders emphasised that if assessment or reporting practices were not connected to student outcomes, they lost their meaning.

Clarity did not emerge by chance, it was built through deliberate conversation, visible frameworks and alignment between belief and action.

Sustaining coherence over time

Clarity also appeared to support sustainability. Where schools had invested time in co-constructing belief statements, defining effective practice, and aligning plans, improvement work was more likely to be visible and sustained over time.

However, this work was not without challenge. Developing shared language required time and repeated discussion. Assumptions had to be surfaced and challenged. In some contexts, leaders discovered that some of their core practices, for example administering assessments, varied widely and required explicit clarification about purpose and process. There was also a risk of framework overload if clarity efforts generated too many models rather than coherence.

Overall, the stories suggest that sustained improvement is strengthened when schools are explicit about their purpose and intentional about building shared language. Coherence did not emerge automatically. It was built through deliberate conversations, visible artefacts, and monitored alignment between belief, strategy, and action.

Why this appears to matter

Across contexts, clarity of purpose appeared to function as a stabiliser. Where beliefs, expectations, and priorities were explicit, schools were better able to align initiatives, avoid distraction, and focus on what mattered most. Shared language reduced ambiguity in professional conversations and strengthened consistency across classrooms.

Clarity also supported sustainability. When improvement work was anchored in clearly articulated principles rather than enthusiasm, it was more likely to endure. In this sense, clarity was not simply a starting point. It was an ongoing discipline that protected coherence over time.





Questions for schools to discuss

- How clearly can we articulate what we are trying to improve and why it matters?
- Do we have a shared language that describes effective practice in our context?
- Are our strategic priorities visible and consistently referenced in daily work?
- How often do we revisit and refine our belief statements and guiding principles?
- How do we know that we have alignment between belief, strategy and action?



Theme 2: Evidence-informed improvement

Across all stories, improvement was positioned as evidence-informed and was driven by deliberate engagement with research, theory, and established frameworks. Schools drew on recognised research and models to guide the design and direction of their improvement efforts, including work on assessment for learning, the science of learning, data-informed decision-making, improvement and leadership frameworks, and culturally responsive teaching practices.

While the focus of improvement varied, the underlying pattern was similar. Leaders and teachers asked: What does the evidence say? What does research suggest? What are we noticing in our own data? What should we do next?

Research-informed improvement was visible in three ways: the use of external frameworks to shape coherence; the embedding of Assessment for Learning principles, and the development of shared capability to interpret and apply research in context.

Research as a coherence builder

Many schools were explicit about the research and frameworks that shaped their improvement journeys. Dylan Wiliam, Michael Absolum, John Hattie, James Nottingham, Julia Atkin, Victoria Bernhardt, Michael Fullan, Jacqui Patuawa, Viviane Robinson, and ERO's improvement evaluation approaches were referenced across the stories. These were not cited superficially; they provided conceptual anchors.

Several leaders described frameworks as offering "something to hang our hats on". In an educational landscape characterised by new initiatives and competing demands, research functioned as a stabilising influence. It helped schools clarify what they valued, why it mattered, and how it should look in practice.

Importantly, research was not just slotted in. Schools interpreted and aligned it to their own context. Frameworks were adapted, integrated, and translated into locally meaningful language. Evidence was selected because it reinforced clarity, coherence, and learner-centred improvement.

Assessment for Learning as a pedagogical anchor

Assessment for Learning (AfL) was a particularly strong pedagogical feature across the case studies. Even where it was not named as the central initiative, its principles were visible: clarity of learning intentions, transparent success criteria, timely feedback, responsiveness to evidence, and a focus on acceleration rather than remediation.

In several schools, leaders were explicit that new approaches, such as structured literacy or science of learning strategies, needed to be aligned with these principles. As strategic planning, reporting redesign, and leadership structures evolved, formative practice remained central to classroom teaching. AfL provided continuity within change.

Interpreting and applying research in context

Research-informed improvement required more than referencing theory. Schools needed the capability to interpret and apply them. Several stories highlighted the importance of developing shared understandings across the staff and professional learning was designed to support this. Schools invested in:

- assessment literacy professional learning
- moderation processes
- dedicated time for collaborative reflection
- alignment of assessment tools to clear purposes
- strategic resourcing to support coherent implementation.

These investments strengthened the connection between research principles and classroom practice. Research was not treated as theory alone, but translated into instructional design, assessment choices, and strategic planning decisions.

Evidence was used to inform direction rather than simply validate existing practice.

Why this appears to matter

A research-informed approach appeared to strengthen coherence across initiatives. It aligned pedagogy and assessment, clarified strategic priorities, and supported more consistent expectations across classrooms.

Across diverse school contexts this approach was not presented as an academic exercise. It was described as a way of thinking about improvement that connects research, classroom practice, and organisational decision making. By grounding change in recognised principles, schools strengthened the likelihood that improvement efforts would endure beyond individual leaders or short-term cycles.





Questions for schools to discuss

- What research or frameworks are currently shaping our improvement work?
- Are these aligned or competing?
- How deeply do staff understand the principles behind the frameworks we are using?
- Where do we need to strengthen assessment or research literacy to support better application?



Theme 3: Inquiry as routine professional practice

In all of the case studies, inquiry was not described as an isolated project or compliance requirement. It was established as a routine way of working. Schools embedded structured cycles of noticing, analysing, acting, and reviewing into the everyday life of the organisation.

In some contexts, this was highly visible through formal structures such as Professional Learning Groups (PLGs), Teaching and Learning Communities (TLCs), strategic teams, or improvement dashboards. In others, it was evident in the language leaders used: What are we noticing? Why might this be happening? What will we do next? How will we know if it made a difference?

Structured collaborative routines

Several schools described deliberately designed collaborative routines that created space for collective inquiry. Te Papapa School ran three-weekly PLG cycles focused on learners at risk of not achieving. Teachers brought evidence of student progress, identified next steps, committed to teacher actions, and returned to report on impact. In some cases, this was strengthened through video-based reflection, where teachers shared short clips of practice and engaged in structured discussion. Initially described as “scary”, this process became powerful as relational trust grew.

Rototuna Senior High School described Teaching and Learning Communities that met regularly across departments. These included structured feedback sessions, shared case studies, journaling commitments, and accountability through peer presentations. Teachers were expected to trial strategies and articulate what happened and why.

Strategic teams provided another recurring structure. Rather than improvement being owned by a single leader, responsibility was distributed across teams with defined focus areas. These teams gathered feedback, refined initiatives, monitored impact, and reported back to the wider staff.

Across these examples, inquiry was sustained because it was scheduled, scaffolded, and expected.

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From models to mindset

Schools referenced a range of inquiry and evaluation frameworks: EROs improvement evaluation approach, Teaching as Inquiry, and internally developed cycles. However, the stories suggest that the value was less in selecting a particular model and more in consistency applying a small number of core questions.

Common prompts included:

- What are we seeing?
- Why might this be happening?
- What will we do?
- What evidence will tell us if it worked?
- What next?

In one school, this questioning process was explicitly embedded in both classroom practice and strategic planning. Another school described using annual reports as formative tools for organisational learning. This saw reporting become a mechanism for reflection and refinement, rather than a retrospective summary or compliance task.

Monitoring for impact

Inquiry routines were accompanied by deliberate monitoring processes. These included:

- Peer and leadership observations with agreed focus questions
- Practice analysis conversations
- Moderation processes
- End-of-year strategic team reviews
- Real-time dashboards tracking valued outcomes
- Case study presentations within teacher groups

Several leaders described moving beyond simply analysing summative data towards building ongoing feedback loops. Rather than waiting for end-of-year results, schools sought timely evidence that could inform immediate adjustments.

One leader noted that simply giving data to a mathematically confident staff member did not generate improvement. Organisational change required shared interpretation, dialogue, and cultural work. Data sharing was able to generate rich conversations about practice and impact.



Whole-school ownership

A recurring pattern across stories was the importance of collective ownership for improvement. Inquiry was framed as something done 'with' teachers, not 'to' them. Strategic initiatives were co-constructed. Teachers presented their own impact stories. In some cases, student and whānau voice were integrated into sensemaking processes.

Leaders spoke explicitly about the importance of moving from compliance and accountability towards professional growth. Cultural shifts were described as slow and deliberate. Relational trust was repeatedly named as a prerequisite for inquiry routines to function effectively.

Why this appears to matter

Across diverse school settings, where inquiry was embedded successfully as a routine way of working it appeared to strengthen sustainability. Improvement became less dependent on individual leaders or short-term initiatives and more embedded in organisational habits.

Where inquiry was successfully established, schools described:

- greater openness to examining practice
- clearer alignment between classroom teaching and strategic priorities
- stronger collective ownership of improvement
- more timely and informed next steps.

Rather than improvement being a series of projects, these schools were gradually becoming improving organisations. Inquiry was not an event; it was part of how the school thought and acted.





Questions for schools to discuss

- What structured routines exist in our school for collective inquiry?
- Are these routines regular and scaffolded?
- How do we ensure inquiry is developmental rather than judgemental?
- Do our monitoring processes lead to timely adjustments?
- Is ownership of improvement shared across the school?



Theme 4: Evidence that supports action

Across the eight stories, schools were not only implementing change; they were increasingly asking how they would know whether that change was making a difference. This focus on impact moved evaluation beyond compliance reporting and toward sensemaking about outcomes for learners, teachers, and systems. Where this theme was most visible, evaluation was not an end-of-year task. It was embedded within the ongoing work of improvement.

Structured sensemaking and using evidence

Several schools described a shift from collecting extensive data to using it deliberately. Leaders reflected that while information had long been gathered, it was not always connected to clear decisions. The turning point came when evidence was reframed as a tool for action rather than documentation.

At Sandspit School, leaders tracked shifts in e-asTTle data, not only to increase achievement, but to lift the median beyond national benchmarks. They introduced effect sizes to distinguish between expected and accelerated progress and disaggregated data by year level, ethnicity, and gender to understand equity patterns. Schools also compared patterns in their data over time. Evidence was analysed to inform instructional decisions, not simply to report trends.

Weston School described moving beyond entering results into systems toward examining patterns: Which students shifted? Why? What contributed to the movement? At Silverstream School, practical tools such as Venn diagrams were introduced to surface patterns across learning areas and contextual factors, strengthening collaborative analysis of learners. The conversation shifted from recording to analysing.

Multiple forms of impact

Impact was conceptualised broadly across the stories. While achievement data remained important, it was not the only lens. Data about student engagement and regulation, teacher practice shifts, and systems coherence and consistency was also gathered to provide evidence of improvement.

At Rototuna Senior High School, teachers gathered student voice, classroom observation data, and learner agency surveys along with achievement measures. Teachers tracked whether greater clarity about learning intentions improved students' ability to articulate next steps. Stonefields' improvement dashboard aimed to provide 'real-time' insight into valued outcomes. Leaders asked how to measure what they valued, including engagement and clarity for whānau. When survey data revealed gaps, it prompted redesign.

The Central Auckland Specialist School evaluation provides an explicit example of impact evaluation across multiple domains. Behaviour incident data was analysed year-on-year and disaggregated by activity type, revealing reductions in incidents during transitions and group activities. These patterns were triangulated with data from peer teacher observations and leadership reflections.

Capturing early indicators of change

Across the stories, evidence of impact was often visible first in shifts in teacher practice and professional understanding. Leaders described changes in how teachers planned lessons, interpreted assessment information, articulated learning intentions, and responded to student progress. These shifts were treated as meaningful evidence within improvement cycles.

Several schools were explicit that improvements in learner outcomes depend on changes in adult practice and, as a result, they monitored key indicators. In some cases, video analysis, moderation processes, or structured inquiry meetings provided visible markers of strengthened instructional practice.

This reflects a developmental understanding of improvement. Learner achievement shifts may take time to emerge, particularly where the focus is on deepening pedagogy or embedding new systems. These indicators were understood as foundational steps within a broader theory of change. Improvement can be seen as a sequence: strengthened professional practice contributes to improved learner experience, which in turn supports progress and achievement over time.

Building evaluative capability and confidence

Making impact visible required capability. Several stories acknowledged that increasing data literacy was a key part of creating change in their school. Schools invested in building shared understanding of what effect sizes meant and how to interpret trends. At Central Auckland Specialist School, rubric-based evaluative judgements were co-constructed and supported by multiple sources of evidence. This approach strengthened transparency and reliability of findings.

Schools also described the importance of being able to acknowledge when something was 'not shifting'. In these contexts, lack of impact was treated as information rather than failure.

Why this appears to matter

Making impact visible strengthened both accountability and sustainability. Leaders could communicate progress clearly to boards and communities. At the same time, several tensions were evident. Leaders noted the risk of overwhelming stakeholders with excessive data. Stonefields School described the need to 'chunk' information into manageable forms for whānau. Others cautioned against slipping back into compliance-oriented reporting disconnected from practice.

Overall, the stories suggest that improvement deepens when schools deliberately make impact visible and treat evaluation as an ongoing dialogue between strategy, classroom practice, and learner outcomes.

Impact was not treated as an end-of-year verdict, but as ongoing feedback for decision making.



Questions for schools to discuss

- How clearly can we demonstrate the impact of our improvement work?
- Are we disaggregating data in ways that surface equity and acceleration?
- What changes in teacher practice would we expect to see if our improvement strategy is working?
- Do we revisit and refine our impact measures over time?
- How well do we communicate evidence of impact to staff, board, students, and whānau?



Theme 5: Adult learning, culture, and partnership

In all of the eight stories, sustained improvement was consistently linked to shifts in adult learning and professional culture. While each school focused on different improvement priorities, leaders repeatedly emphasised that meaningful change depended on changes in adult thinking, behaviour, and relationships. School improvement was strongly framed as something that was built with and through teachers.

Adult learning as the engine of improvement

Several stories positioned professional training as the central mechanism of change. Teacher Learning Circles, Professional Learning Groups, walkthrough and observation processes, moderation meetings, and leadership forums were described as spaces where practice was examined and strengthened.

In many schools, improvement was framed explicitly as strengthening instructional practice. Leaders described shifts in how teachers planned, clarified learning intentions, interpreted assessment information, and responded to student needs.

Importantly, adult learning was ongoing and cumulative. Rather than attending one-off workshops, teachers engaged in iterative cycles of trialling, observing, reflecting, and refining. Professional growth was embedded in daily work.

Several schools also drew on external professional learning providers or facilitation support to strengthen their improvement efforts. External expertise provided structure and specialist knowledge, particularly in areas such as assessment literacy, evaluative thinking, and instructional practice. In most cases, this support was not positioned as a substitute for internal capability, but as a catalyst. Over time, schools sought to internalise the learning so that improvement routines became embedded and increasingly self-sustaining.

Safe and professional environments

A recurring feature across stories was the deliberate development of trust. Leaders described the importance of creating environments where teachers felt safe to surface uncertainty and share challenges. In several schools, peer observation and inquiry conversations were initially approached with caution. Over time, as relational trust strengthened, these forums became spaces for professional honesty rather than performance management.

Evidence and data were positioned as tools for collective learning rather than judgement. Where this cultural foundation was strong, defensiveness reduced and professional dialogue deepened.

Across the stories, sustained improvement was closely linked to deliberate investment in adult learning.

Distributed leadership

Across contexts, leadership of improvement was increasingly distributed. Middle leaders, within-school leads, and team facilitators were positioned as key drivers of professional learning. Leaders described investing deliberately in growing middle-leader capability so that improvement was not reliant on a small number of individuals.

In several schools, middle leaders engaged in professional learning focused on leading adult learning. This reflected a recognition that improving instruction requires capability not only in teaching practice, but in facilitating professional growth in others. Investing in leadership development strengthened the quality of coaching conversations, inquiry facilitation, and collaborative dialogue, further embedding improvement beyond senior leadership.

This strengthened collective efficacy. The language of “we” was evident across stories. Teachers in these schools increasingly saw themselves as influencing outcomes through their practice.

Partnership with students and whānau

Improvement culture extended beyond staff. Several schools described deliberate efforts to strengthen partnership with students and whānau. At Silverstream School, reporting shifted from a twice-yearly event to an ongoing, collaborative Personalised Education Plan co-constructed with whānau. The use of colour coding to identify different voices reinforced transparency and shared ownership. Reporting became a shared conversation about progress rather than a transactional exchange of information.

Other schools embedded regular gathering of student voice, learner surveys, or termly check-ins as part of their improvement processes. Students were positioned as active participants in their own learning journeys. These partnership practices strengthened coherence and continuity.

Why this appears to matter

Across the stories, adult learning and relational culture were repeatedly described as key conditions that enabled improvements. Clarity of purpose, research-informed design, inquiry routines, and impact evaluation all depended on professional trust and shared ownership. Where trust was low or change was seen to be imposed, improvement stalled. Where relational culture was strong, schools were more able to navigate tension, sustain momentum, and adapt over time.

Investment in adult learning strengthened sustainability and distributed ownership. Partnership with whānau further strengthened shared understanding of progress and made improvement efforts visible beyond the school. When schools clarified reporting, simplified dashboards, or gathered survey feedback, it ensured that changes were understood and meaningful for whānau.

The stories suggest that improvement is not sustained by frameworks alone. It is sustained by people and their willingness to learn, to collaborate, and to remain collectively committed for better outcomes for learners.



Questions for schools to discuss

- How intentionally do we position adult learning as the core mechanism of improvement?
- Do our professional forums cultivate a sense of safety for honest dialogue?
- In our context how distributed is leadership of improvement?
- In what ways are students and whānau genuine partners in conversations about progress?
- What aspects of our school culture enable, or constrain improvement in our setting?





The eight case studies present grounded accounts of schools working deliberately to improve outcomes for their learners. They illustrate that improvement is neither accidental nor formulaic. It emerges when clarity of purpose, research-informed thinking, structured inquiry, deliberate evaluation, and sustained adult learning work in alignment.

While each school acted within its own context, the recurring patterns across the stories suggest that coherence, capability, and collective ownership are central to sustained progress. These themes do not prescribe a single approach. Rather, they offer practical insights into how schools can design and sustain improvement that translates into stronger teaching and improved learner outcomes.

While the stories in this report describe the work of eight schools, their value ultimately lies in how others respond to the ideas that they raise. Schools may wish to consider how the practices described in these stories relate to their own improvement work and where small next steps might strengthen inquiry, evaluative thinking, or the purposeful use of evidence to guide teaching and learning.

The stories in this report show that improvement journeys often begin with noticing where change may be needed and asking purposeful questions about practice, evidence, and outcomes for learners.

Where to from here for the Collaborative Improvement Community?

The stories in this report demonstrate the value of making school improvement work visible and learning from it collectively. The Collaborative Improvement Community was established with this purpose in mind: to create opportunities for schools to share their improvement journeys, learn from one another, and strengthen improvement capability across the sector.

This report represents the first step in that work. Over the coming years the Collaborative Improvement Community aims to continue gathering and sharing stories of school improvement, building a richer picture of how schools across Aotearoa are addressing challenges and strengthening practice.

Future work will include expanding the number and diversity of school stories, strengthening cross story analysis, and exploring opportunities to connect with other networks and organisations interested in supporting school improvement.

Schools and leaders who are interested in contributing to this growing body of knowledge are encouraged to engage with the Collaborative Improvement Community as it develops.



These resources align with the themes from the improvement stories and offer practical guidance for your next leadership conversations or self-review. All are freely accessible:

1. Clarity of purpose and shared language

ERO School improvement Framework	Self-review tool with domains on leadership, curriculum, and learner outcomes. Includes templates for judgement and evidence synthesis.	https://www.ero.govt.nz/how-ero-reviews/how-ero-reviews-schoolskura-english-medium/te-ara-huarau-the-new-approach-to-evaluation/school-improvement-framework
ERO: Quality Evidence Guidance	What counts as robust evidence for school self-review using the school improvement framework.	www.ero.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media-documents/2024-07/SIF%20-%20Evidence%20guidance%20for%20schools.pdf
Ministry of Education: Self-Review and why it matters	Guidance using self-review as a strategic process of inquiry.	https://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Managing-your-school/Ongoing-school-self-review/Self-review-and-why-it-matters
Ministry of Education: A theory of change	Guidance on why and how to develop a theory of change to support the effectiveness of change initiatives.	https://evaluationhub.education.govt.nz/theory-of-change/a-theory-of-change/
Evaluation Associates: Assessment for learning capabilities matrix	This evaluative matrix, based on Michael Absolum's six assessment for learning capabilities helps schools identify strengths and next steps by describing what effective assessment practice looks like for teachers and students.	https://www.evaluate.co.nz/resources/assessment-for-learning-resources/assessment-for-learning-matrix

2. Evidence-informed improvement

ERO & MOE: Effective school evaluation how to do and use internal evaluation for improvement	A guide focuses on effective internal evaluation – what it involves and how to go about it. Includes case studies that exemplify the use of inquiry processes and evaluative thinking.	https://www.evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/effective-school-evaluation-how-to-do-and-use-internal-evaluation-for-improvement
Evaluation Associates blog: Stop fixing, start solving: how Collaborative Complex Problem Solving drives real change	This blog describes the Collaborative Complex Problem Solving approach, a five-stage collaborative inquiry process for addressing complex educational challenge and improving student outcomes.	https://www.evaluate.co.nz/blog/how-collaborative-complex-problem-solving-drives-real-change
Evaluation Associates blog: Unlocking the power of evaluation to increase school effectiveness	This blog shares steps to build internal evaluative capability and practices within schools.	https://www.evaluate.co.nz/blog/unlocking-the-power-of-evaluation-to-increase-school-effectiveness
ERO: Internal evaluation as a catalyst for change	Shows how schools have used internal evaluation findings to decide “what next: and improve outcomes, with concrete examples.	https://www.evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/internal-evaluation-as-a-catalyst-for-change
The Education Hub: The principles of culturally responsive teaching	Research synthesis on culturally responsive teaching principles with actionable classroom strategies to raise achievement.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/what-is-culturally-responsive-teaching/
Evaluation Associates blog: Māori achieving success as Māori	This article examines how schools can partner with Māori communities to define and support “success as Māori” beyond academic achievement.	https://www.evaluate.co.nz/blog/maori-achieving-success-as-maori
Educational Leaders: Evidence-based leadership	This John Hattie video (+text) focuses on using student achievement data and research on “what works” as the basis for leadership decision making, and for building a culture of evaluative thinking.	https://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Pedagogical-leadership/Evidence-based-leadership
Donohoo, J., Hattie, J., & Eells, R. (2018). The power of collective efficacy. Educational Leadership, 75(6), 40-44.	Discusses the transformative impact of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement and school culture, offering evidence-based strategies for school leaders to foster collaboration, high expectations, and a focus on student learning outcomes.	https://educacion.udd.cl/files/2021/01/The-Power-of-Collective-Efficacy_Hattie.pdf

NZAI: Assessment to improve learning: principles, practices, and proof	NZ-developed framework that sets out AfL principles, associated classroom practices, and “proofs” that practices are working. Essentially a coherence tool for assessment, pedagogy, and curriculum. Includes supplementary docs focused on secondary settings.	https://www.nzai.org.nz/knowledge-centre/assessment-ppp/
Victoria State Government: High impact teaching strategies – excellence in teaching and learning	The high impact teaching strategies (HITS) are 10 key strategies recognised by the Victorian Department of Education and Training as some of the most reliable teaching strategies for delivery outcomes.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/support/high-impact-teaching-strategies.pdf
Koh, G. A., Askill-Williams, H., & Barr, S. (2023). Sustaining school improvement initiatives: advice from educational leaders. <i>School Effectiveness and School Improvement</i> , 34 (3), 298–330.	This article analyses interviews with educational leaders to explore the organisational conditions and leadership practices that support the long-term sustainability of school improvement initiatives.	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09243453.2023.2190130#abstract

3. Inquiry as routine

Educational Leaders: Spiral of Inquiry	New Zealand stories and protocols for embedding inquiry in leadership and teaching teams.	https://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Evidence-based-leadership/The-spiral-of-inquiry
Educational Leaders: Developing a school-wide inquiry	The principal at Newmarket Primary School shares key messages about building inquiry approaches into school practices.	https://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Professional-information/Leadership-capability-framework/Evaluating-practices-in-relation-to-outcomes/Developing-school-wide-inquiry
The Education Hub: How to undertake teaching as inquiry	An article outlining the what, why, and how of teaching as inquiry.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/how-to-undertake-teaching-as-inquiry/

4. Evidence that supports action

ERO Implementing Curriculum Changes: Good Practice Guide	ERO report with tips for implementing change with a specific focus on the English/Maths refresh.	https://www.evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/a-new-chapter-how-well-are-the-changes-to-english-and-maths-going-good-practice-guide
MOE: Using evidence for learning	A practical NZC resource on gathering, analysing, and using assessment information so that it becomes evidence for improvement rather than just reporting.	https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/using-evidence-for-learning/5637159578.p
The Education Hub: Using data for inquiry and improvement	This article provides guidance on collecting, interpreting, and using multiple forms of schools data to inform teaching decisions and support improvement.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/using-data-for-inquiry-and-improvement/
Ministry of Education: What is evaluative thinking?	Guidance and tools to support increased capability and practices in evaluative thinking (i.e., a disciplined approach to inquiry and reflective practice).	https://evaluationhub.education.govt.nz/evaluative-thinking/

5. Adult learning, culture, and partnership

NZ RTLB: Professional learning groups	Guidance for school-wide professional learning groups as a tool for sustainable systems change, including planning templates and facilitation tips used by RTLBs to support iterative teacher learning cycles.	https://www.nzrtlb.net.nz/explore-plg
The Education Hub: Professional learning communities	Research synthesis on professional learning communities as ongoing, collaborative teacher development, with evidence on building routines for examining practice and improving outcomes.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/category/school-resources/professional-learning-communities/
ERO	Examples of high-impact PLD that embeds learning in daily work, including external facilitation and internal capability building.	https://www.evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/school-leaders-good-practice-professional-learning-and-development

MOE: Engaging with whānau and the community	Information and examples of ways schools can engage with their communities using digital technologies. This page includes tips for getting started, tools to use, and real-life examples from NZ schools.	https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/engaging-with-wh-nau-and-the-community/5637169429.p
The Education Hub: from family involvement to partnership	An article reporting the research on family involvement and home-school partnerships.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/from-family-involvement-to-partnership/
The Education Hub: Leading Improvement in a Time of Change	Webinar with practical strategies for NZ school leaders.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/leading-improvement/
The Education Hub: Leading through change: Building trust, courage, and clarity in schools	Webinar (+text), Dr Jacqui Patuawa and Karen Spencer from Evaluation Associates focused on the challenges and opportunities of educational leadership in times of change. Drawing on the work of Chris Argyris and Viviane Robinson, they discuss how leadership can move beyond compliance and reaction to embrace purposeful, inquiry-based improvement.	https://theeducationhub.org.nz/leading-through-change-building-trust-courage-and-clarity-in-schools/
Grow Waitaha: Leading sustainable change	This study provides important considerations, best practices, and potential pitfalls for leading change efforts and sustaining those changes, particularly in the context of educational institutions. These insights are based on interviews with 17 school leaders and also draws on relevant literature about change management.	https://www.growwaitaha.co.nz/media/1415/180504-leading-sustainable-change-ff-sf.pdf
NZCER: Strengthening schools' supportive systems – the role of assessment and reporting	This study analyses national survey data to examine how school culture, assessment practices and reporting to whānau interact to strengthen systems that support student attendance, wellbeing, and behaviour.	https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/strengthening-schools-supportive-systems-role-assessment-and-reporting

