People expect information and communication technology (ICT) to provide high quality learning and teaching, thereby equipping young people for the knowledge society. But there are practical requirements to be met if such benefits are to be achieved. Learning to Change: ICT in Schools, a new publication from the OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), addresses these requirements in detail.

Installing the technology is just the first step. Not only do schools have to change in order to accommodate ICT: the very process of learning has to change if “digital literacy” is to become a reality for all. ICT, if properly used, can offer a learning environment better matched to the needs and interests of individual learners in the modern world. This, however, requires a far-reaching review of teaching policies and methods. Rather than simply deploying ICT to do traditional things in different ways, innovation and change are called for at all levels of the school environment.

As a first step, schools have an urgent need for plentiful software and digital materials of quality. Both teachers and students must become discerning and knowledgeable ICT users. The school environment must be fully equipped and the management must be supportive of ICT, making available expert assistance and advice to the teachers in their rapidly changing and extended professional role. New patterns of curriculum and student assessment will be needed, that are compatible with ICT-enriched learning. Aspects of school organisation such as the structure and length of the working day, must be revised if the full educational potential of ICT is to be delivered.

This is the demanding learning to change agenda highlighted in this report. It is illuminated by the views of students, who used ICT enthusiastically in their own learning and shared their experiences in an OECD international network. It looks at the vast educational possibilities offered by the Internet, bringing together the school, the home and the wider community in new and unparalleled opportunities for effective partnership. It examines how ICT, which is the subject of teacher professional development, can largely be the means for its delivery.

Learning to Change: ICT in Schools is directed to the educational policy-making communities at both national and local levels. It identifies the underlying principles to be addressed and offers numerous examples of promising practice, whereby ICT effectively deployed can transform the learning environment.

Journalists may obtain a copy of the report from the OECD’s Media Relations Division (requests by fax: 33 1 45 24 80 03 or news.contact@oecd.org).

For further information on the report, journalists are invited to contact Edwyn James, OECD/CERI (tel. 33 1 45 24 76 03 - fax. 33 1 45 24 90 98 or edwyn.james@oecd.org).

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