

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) Survey

Primary Schools Report



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Ministry of Education
July 2007

Front cover photo: Balclutha Primary School

'To explore the environment, to a child gain esteem before his or her peers, to see the tired, hungry child full and laughing, to see the quiet child have the solution to the problem, to see the adult helpers realise that not everybody has the same chances, to spend 24 hours with different people...for these reasons ... I would push EOTC in my classroom.'

...Teacher

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) survey was to provide a national picture EOTC and an evidence base to inform policy, practice, and the actions required to improve the quality of EOTC programmes.

The survey was emailed to all primary and secondary principals. This report focuses on key results for primary schools only. Twenty per cent of primary school principals (413) responded to the survey, and these schools were reflective of the sector.

The key **conclusions** from this survey are that EOTC:

- is a key component of primary school life for NZ kids
- strongly supports learning outcomes in all essential learning areas
- is important in achieving four of the five draft key competencies in the *Draft NZ Curriculum*
- achieves other learning outcomes such as improved self confidence, safety knowledge and skills and problem solving
- is an effective pedagogical tool
- programmes are self-reviewed by 90 per cent of schools, but less than five per cent seek external feedback
- staff experience, training and qualifications has scope to grow.

The main **barriers** to effective EOTC are:

- curriculum pressures,
- compliance, and
- fear of liability.

The main **enablers** of quality EOTC are:

- when the school's safety management systems are consistent with EOTC guidelines,
- a belief that EOTC is an effective means of teaching and learning, and
- that EOTC is valued by teachers for curriculum delivery and enrichment.

Key areas for further development

Ministry of Education

- Identify pathways and support for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead.
- Support schools to implement effective EOTC safety management systems that meet legislative and current, accepted practice requirements, reducing their risk of liability.
- Conduct research on the quality of delivery of EOTC and how EOTC contributes to presence, engagement and achievement in NZ schools.

Primary schools

- Support staff to gain relevant EOTC experience, training and qualifications.
- Arrange external feedback on EOTC programmes to ensure they keep up with current, accepted practice.
- Reduce the likelihood of liability by ensuring that safety management systems are consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* guidelines.

Introduction

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) is a generic term used extensively in New Zealand schools to describe curriculum-based learning that extends beyond the four walls of the classroom. This ranges from a museum or marae visit to a sports trip, outdoor education camp or a rocky shore field trip. The term 'outdoor education' is widely used to refer to adventure education and outdoor pursuits.

The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with its EOTC Sector Reference Group, conducted the survey to provide:

- a national picture of what's happening in EOTC in New Zealand, including the benefits, barriers and enablers of EOTC schools; and
- an evidence base to inform EOTC policy and practice and to determine the actions required to improve the quality of EOTC programmes in NZ schools.

The survey was emailed to all primary and secondary school principals in October 2006 by the New Zealand Principals' Federation and the Secondary Principals' Council (both EOTC Reference Group members).

The sample

A total of 413 primary schools (approximately 20% of primary schools in New Zealand) responded to the EOTC survey. While a representative sampling method was not used for this survey, the sample of primary schools that responded had similar characteristics to the national profile of New Zealand primary schools in regard to school type, size, decile and location. This means we can have some confidence that the results indicate what might be found in a representative study of New Zealand primary schools.

However, since the respondents self-selected to take part in the survey, there may be a bias towards schools that have a positive view of and belief in EOTC.

Results and discussion

Students

Students participate in EOTC at every year level

Figure 1 shows that students from all year levels participate in EOTC. However, this was

not the case in every school surveyed. The highest average EOTC participation was in years 7 and 8, (98% approximately), closely followed by years 5 and 6 (90% approximately), with the lowest participation in years 1 to 4 (80% approximately).

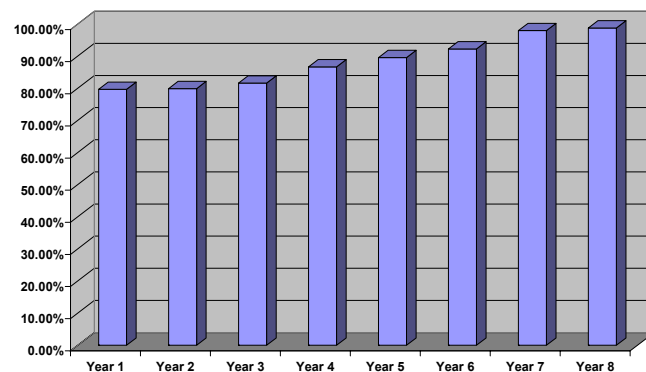


Figure 1 Year level participation in EOTC

Figure 2 shows that slightly fewer (approximately 10%) years 1-6 students participated in EOTC in decile 4-6 schools compared with decile 1-3 and decile 7-10 schools. Further research is required to determine the reasons for this.

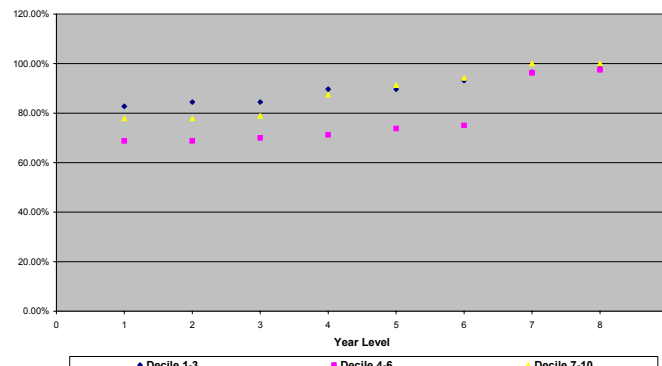


Figure 2 Year level participation in EOTC by decile

EOTC Programmes

EOTC supports learning in the essential learning areas

Figure 3 shows that EOTC was used to support teaching and learning in all eight essential learning areas. However, not all schools used EOTC to support all learning areas.

- Over 90 per cent of schools used EOTC to support teaching and learning in Health and Physical Well-being, Science & Social Sciences.

- Over 70 per cent used EOTC to support English, Technology and The Arts.
- 55 per cent used EOTC to support teaching and learning in Mathematics.
- 35 per cent used EOTC to support the learning of Languages.

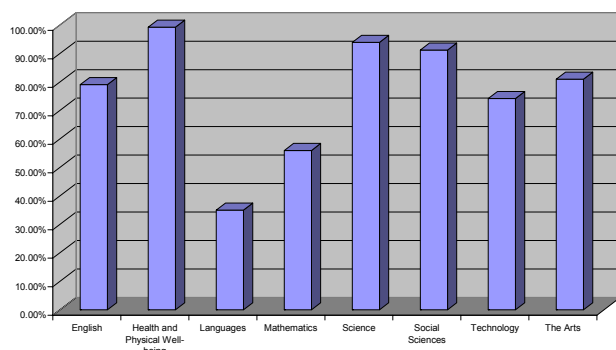


Figure 3 EOTC supports essential learning areas

The lower use of EOTC to support the learning of languages is probably due to the fact that primary schools are not required to implement programmes in this learning area. Those that do, probably offer Te Reo Maori.

EOTC supports the achievement of key competencies

The survey examined how important EOTC is for students in achieving the five key competencies in the *Draft New Zealand Curriculum* (2006).

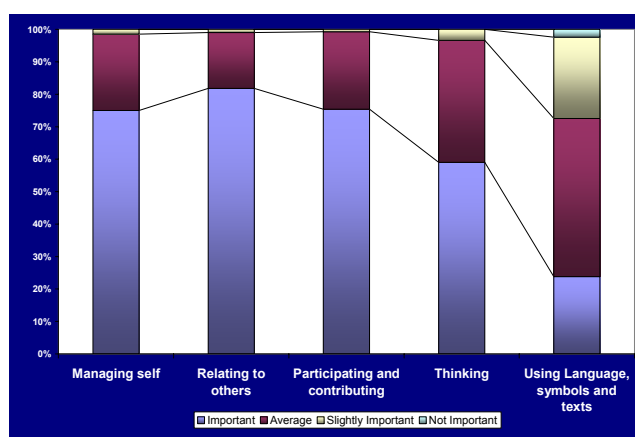


Figure 4 EOTC supports key competencies

Figure 4 shows that almost all schools (96 - 99%) felt that EOTC was important in achieving four of the five key competencies: managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing, and thinking. Fewer (70%) saw EOTC as important in achieving the key competency of using language, symbols and texts.

EOTC achieves other learning outcomes

Figure 5 shows over 98 per cent of schools

reported that EOTC is important in helping students achieve outcomes such as improved self confidence, safety knowledge and skills, and problem solving. Over 80 per cent reported that EOTC is important in helping students achieve subject knowledge and understandings, physical fitness, and cultural and ethnic understandings.

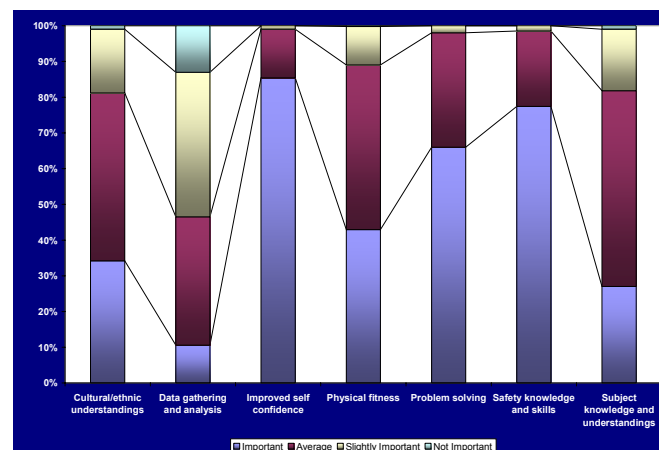


Figure 5 EOTC achieves other learning outcomes

These findings are consistent with Boyes' and Zink's (2005) findings. Less than half (46%) of the respondents saw EOTC as an important tool for developing students' data gathering and analysis skills.

What enables effective EOTC?

Respondents reported that many factors enable effective EOTC to occur in their schools. Principals could choose multiple factors from the 13 options provided. Figure 6 shows the five main 'enablers' that emerged:

- community support for EOTC;
- the belief that EOTC was an effective means of teaching and learning;
- the value teachers place on EOTC for curriculum delivery and enrichment;
- school's safety management being consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* (2002) guidelines; &
- access to EOTC local venues and locations.

Other frequently reported 'enablers' were: resourcing decisions in the school that supported EOTC; well-trained and qualified school staff; well-trained and qualified providers (eg, outdoor instructors); and access to transportation.

These results also show that community support and access to local venues is lacking for a small number of schools. There is still work to be done to assist these schools gain community support for EOTC, and to find suitable local venues for quality EOTC programmes.

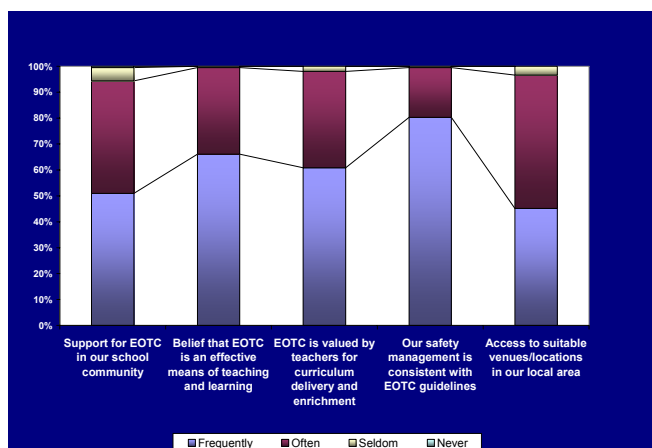


Figure 6 Enablers of effective EOTC

What are the barriers to quality EOTC?

Schools reported a range of barriers that get in the way of quality EOTC. Principals could choose multiple factors from the 14 options provided. Figure 7 shows the six factors that emerged as barriers to quality EOTC frequently or often. Curriculum pressures, compliance issues and fear of liability are the three main barriers to quality EOTC occurring. These were identified by approximately 40 per cent of schools.

Curriculum pressures were one of the reasons the ministry embarked on the curriculum stock-take and subsequent curriculum review project (Ministry of Education 2002b). The ministry has also identified that it needs to move toward a system characterised increasingly by high trust and low compliance (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Schools' fear of liability always escalates when the media relentlessly report on outdoor recreation incidents. Even when an incident has not occurred in a school, media reporting can have a negative affect on schools' confidence to run EOTC activities (Haddock & Sword, 2004). To counter such affects, the Ministry of Education could work with the media so they are aware of their impact on EOTC when they report incidents the way they do.

A further three barriers to quality EOTC were reported by approximately 20 per cent of schools: resourcing decisions do not support EOTC; a lack of suitably trained and qualified staff; and a lack of suitably qualified local providers.

Further research is required to determine the extent to which these and other factors affect the quality of EOTC in schools.

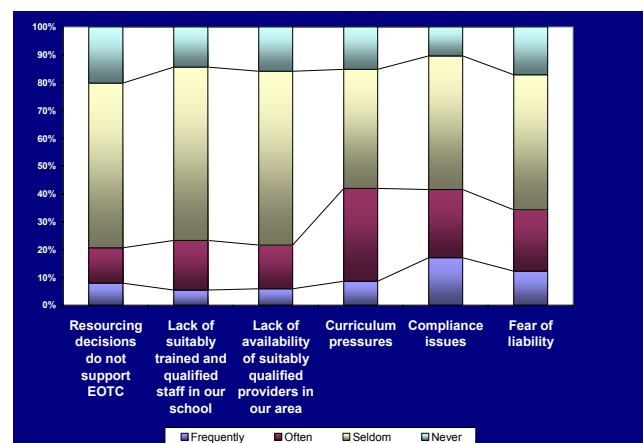


Figure 7 Barriers to quality EOTC

Schools do review their EOTC programmes

The majority (90%) of schools surveyed are self-reviewing their EOTC programmes. However, only a few are seeking external feedback from their peers in similar schools (5%) or from an independent auditor (2%) such as a member of the register of outdoor safety auditors (ROSA).

Independent external feedback is a valuable way of keeping up with current, accepted practices in EOTC and fostering a culture of safety and quality in EOTC programmes. To keep costs down, a school can enter into a reciprocal arrangement with a similar school in their area to review each other's programmes.

Personnel

Who delivers EOTC?

Not surprisingly, Figure 8 shows that teachers teach and supervise most EOTC programmes in primary schools. In addition, adult volunteers such as parents and tertiary students assist with 80 per cent of EOTC programmes. Support staff assist with 60 per cent of programmes. Contracted staff, such as outdoor instructors, support 30 per cent of programmes. A small number of senior students (less than 10%) assist with primary schools' EOTC programmes.

Due to the nature of EOTC experiences, a greater number of supervisors are usually required than for in-classroom learning experiences. An added advantage is that EOTC provides parents and whanau with opportunities to be involved in their child/ren's education. This can help build strong partnerships between home and schools, a key component of personalising learning (Ministry of Education, 2007).

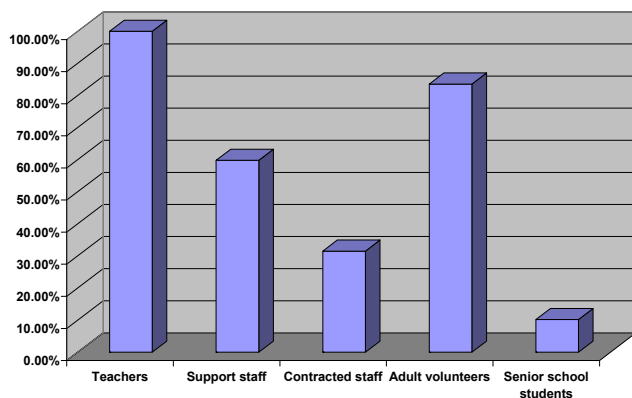


Figure 8 Team involved in EOTC

Staff expertise (experience, training and qualifications)

An important factor in EOTC safety and quality is having appropriate ratios of competent supervisors to students. Ensuring that supervisors are competent for the job is also key.

Competence includes experience, training and qualifications. Some competencies are relevant to all EOTC activities, for example, first aid and risk management skills. Other competencies are specific to certain activities, for example ropes course training or bush skills. Teachers and other supervisors need competencies that are relevant to the EOTC activities they are responsible for leading or supporting.

Staff EOTC Experience

Schools reported that one or more of their staff had experience in a wide range of EOTC activities. Figure 9 shows that over 90 per cent of the schools surveyed had one or more staff with experience in overnight camps, and sport. A similar number had one or more staff with experience in visits to local venues such as parks, libraries, museums and zoos. Approximately 95 per cent reported that one or more staff had experience in first aid and approximately 85 per cent in risk management. Over 50 per cent had one or more staff with experience in environmental studies, science/biology field trips, orienteering and tramping.

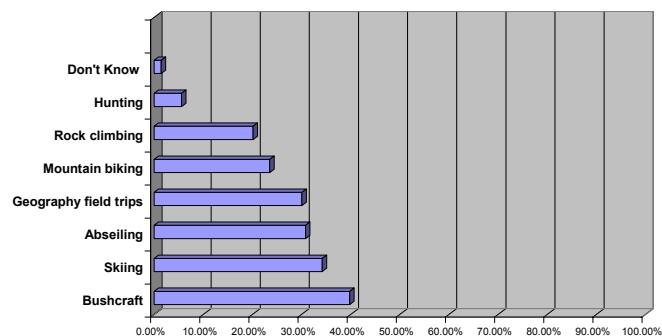


Figure 9 Staff experience

Outdoor Training

Schools reported a range of outdoor training that one or more of their staff had completed or would like to do. Figure 10 shows that between 60 and 85 per cent reported one or more staff had completed outdoor training in *Safety and EOTC* professional development (84%), risk management (82%), school camp organisation (74%) or curriculum based EOTC (63%). Up to 71 per cent of schools reported one or more of their staff would like to do outdoor training, in particular: ropes course (71%); adventure based learning (70%); environmental sustainability (57%); curriculum-based EOTC (37%); school camp organisation (26%); and risk management (18%).

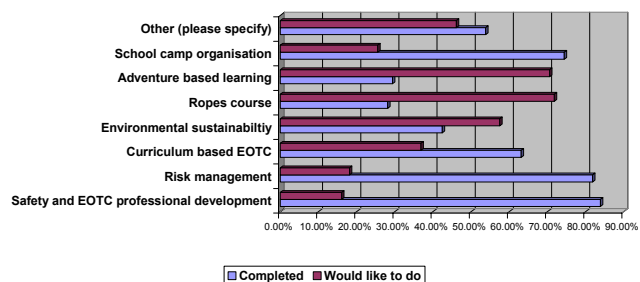


Figure 10 Outdoor training

Relevant Outdoor Qualifications

Schools reported a range of outdoor qualifications that one or more of their staff had completed or would like to have. Figure 11 shows that over 90 per cent of respondents reported that one or more of their staff had completed a first aid qualification and 25 per cent reported one or more staff had an outdoor first aid qualification.

A few schools (less than 5%) reported that one or more staff had completed other outdoor qualifications such as the outdoor leader award, the bush award or the flat water kayak award. However between 15 and 25 per cent of schools indicated that one or more of their staff would like to have the following qualifications/awards which are offered by various providers: Outdoor Leader; Outdoor First Aid; Bush 1; Flat Water Kayak; Kayak 1; Sea Kayak 1; Rock 1; or Sport climbing. Not only intermediate schools but contributing and full primary schools reported staff would like to complete such awards.

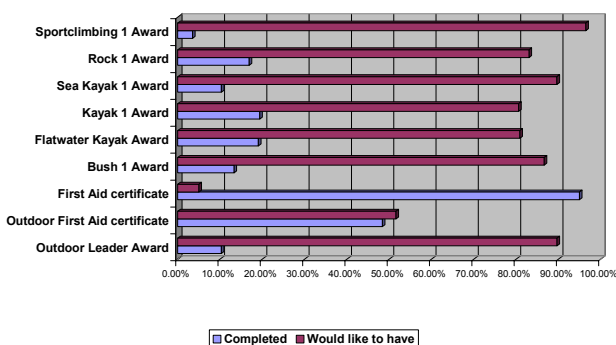


Figure 11 Outdoor qualifications

Conclusions

EOTC is very much a part of school life in New Zealand schools with large numbers of students participating in EOTC experiences throughout their primary years (1-8). However, years 1-6 students in deciles 4-6 schools had fewer EOTC opportunities than their deciles 1-3 and deciles 7-10 counterparts.

EOTC strongly supports student learning in all eight essential learning areas (English, Health and Physical Well-being, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Technology and The Arts). This survey affirms EOTC as a valuable cross-curricular endeavour. Every EOTC activity provides opportunities for integrated learning across several different learning areas. For example,

in preparing a hangi:

... the intermediate school kids had to use maths to work out how many food baskets would be needed, the most efficient method of stacking the foil packs – and how costs could be partially covered (sales of extras to school staff). And they learned about a Maori tradition and forms of earth ovens... the kids in technology made the wire baskets in the workshop (Hutt News, 17 April 2007).

The schools surveyed felt EOTC was also important in achieving four of the five key competencies in the Draft NZ Curriculum (2006): managing self; relating to others; participating and contributing; and thinking. The nature of EOTC experiences provides many opportunities for students to develop the key competencies in real-life situations. These key competencies cut across all essential learning areas and are important for life-long learning. Alton-Lee (2002) identified the need for students to:

... have sufficient and appropriate opportunities to support their learning...

Particularly strong impacts on students are evident in a range of out-of-school applications, authentic activities and outdoor education and adventure programmes.

... For opportunity to learn to be sufficient to facilitate long-term learning students need curriculum-appropriate opportunities to practice and apply their new learning. Opportunities for authentic applications through links to real-life contexts in or out-of-school can have significant and sustained impacts on student knowledge, attitudes, self-esteem, independence and confidence (pp 60-61).

The survey results substantiated much of Alton-Lees' findings. Schools reported that EOTC was important in helping students achieve outcomes such as improved self confidence, safety knowledge and skills, subject knowledge and understandings, problem solving, physical fitness and cultural and ethnic understandings. These findings contribute to the Minister of Education's priorities of effective teaching, foundations and knowledge, and healthy and confident kids.

The survey showed strong evidence of EOTC being used as an effective pedagogical tool. It also identified factors in the school environment that enable EOTC to be used as such a tool. It appears that EOTC is strongly supported and valued in the schools surveyed. It also appears that most schools are up-to-speed in their safety management practices and have ready access to EOTC venues in their local areas. These results

also show that community support and access to local venues is lacking for a small number of schools. There is still work to be done to assist these schools to gain community support for EOTC, and to find suitable local venues for quality EOTC programmes.

In contrast, the main barriers to quality EOTC occurring in the schools surveyed were curriculum pressures, compliance issues and fear of liability. These barriers have previously been identified by the Ministry of Education and sector groups as a general hindrance to effective school management (Haddock & Sword, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2002b). Also of concern is the 20 per cent of schools that identified a lack of suitably trained and qualified staff in their schools and providers in their areas.

The National Foundation for Educational Research and King's College London (Rickinson *et al*, 2004) reviewed the research on outdoor learning. This international review of literature included New Zealand research. The findings included the following key messages for education policy and practice.

Policy makers need to consider ways to:

- *tackle barriers that stand in the way of provision of effective outdoor learning for all students*
- *support research, development and training so that good practice can be understood, disseminated and supported*

The review raises questions for policy makers, including:

- *to what extent are there policies in place that promote high quality outdoor education as an entitlement for all students at both primary and secondary schools?*
- *to what extent do curriculum and assessment policies fully support outdoor education?*
- *in what ways can the expertise and confidence of new and experienced teachers be improved through pre-service, in-service and leadership training?*

Staff expertise is paramount to safety and quality learning through EOTC. Schools reported their staff had experience in a wide range of EOTC activities. However there were low levels of training and qualifications in many outdoor activities. Even so, most schools had one or more staff with training in first aid, risk management and school camp organisation and most schools had also attended the Ministry's *Safety and EOTC* professional development. As well, most schools reported that one or more of their staff would like to do

training and gain qualifications in various outdoor activities relevant to their work. Strengthening staff training and qualifications in EOTC is likely to have a positive effect on schools' confidence that they are meeting current, accepted practice and legal requirements. This may subsequently reduce their fear of something going wrong during an EOTC activity and any subsequent liability.

Key areas for further development

Ministry of Education:

- Identify clear pathways for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead in their schools.
- Provide support for teachers to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead in their schools.
- Move towards a relationship with schools that is increasingly characterised by high trust and low compliance.
- Provide professional leadership guidance to support schools to implement effective EOTC safety management systems that are consistent with the *Safety and EOTC* guidelines.
- Work with the media to establish a protocol for reporting on EOTC incidents.
- Conduct research on the quality of delivery of EOTC and how EOTC contributes to presence, engagement and achievement in NZ schools.
- Repeat the EOTC survey 3 yearly to monitor the national picture of EOTC and provide an evidence base to inform policy, practice and actions to improve the quality of EOTC programmes.

Primary schools:

- Support teaching your staff to gain experience, training and qualifications relevant to the EOTC activities they lead.
- Have good EOTC safety management systems in place and ensure these are reflected in your practices - to reduce the likelihood of liability.
- Arrange external feedback to check that your EOTC programme meets current accepted practice. Consider reciprocal peer review with a similar local school.
- Continue to encourage teachers to use EOTC to achieve learning across the eight essential learning areas, and the five draft key

competencies.

- Continue to manage curriculum pressures to enable quality teaching and learning through EOTC.
- Continue to build support for EOTC in your school community through involving parents/whanau in EOTC programmes and identifying local venues and resources to include in your EOTC programme.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many people and groups who contributed to this research:

- The 404 principals, 5 deputy principals, 2 EOTC co-ordinators and 2 outdoor education heads of department who took the time to complete this survey. Your insights and knowledge have provided valuable data for schools and the Ministry of Education to better understand the current strengths, challenges and needs for providing quality EOTC programmes in New Zealand schools.
- The Ministry's EOTC Reference Group developed and distributed the survey and reviewed draft reports. Members include:
 - NZ Principals Federation, Pat Newman and Bill Sutton
 - NZ Principals Council, Don McLeod
 - Secondary Principals Association of NZ, Linda Tame
 - Education Outdoors NZ, Arthur Sutherland
 - Teacher, Fiona McDonald
 - NZ School Trustees Association, Ron Mulligan
 - Outdoors NZ, Laura Adams
 - SPARC, Lawrie Stewart
 - Water Safety NZ, Alex Brunt
 - NZ Mountain Safety Council, Chris Tews
 - Department of Conservation, Pam Crisp
- Nick McIntosh created graphs for the project.
- Anne Tuffin reviewed various draft reports.

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EOTC at Balclutha School (Decile 4)

Junior classes

Trips within safe walking distance of the school, farm visits and trips to places of 'technology' eg, cheese factory, local garage, tyre fitters, museums, radio stations, river.

Year 5

Use of local aquatic facilities eg, yachting, kayaking - all using qualified personnel and appropriate ratios of supervisor to child.

Year 6

Four night overnight stay at regional camp under teacher direction. Abseiling, kayaking, orienteering, initiatives, one night under canvas, local interest areas eg, wetland.

Year 7

Four night stay at regional camp with aquatic theme. Water skiing, biscuiting, kayaking, tramping, swimming, gold mining, wineries, local interest eg, Clyde Dam.

Year 8

Four night stay at local outdoor centre near beach. Group work, initiatives, yachting, archery, rifle shooting, sports, kayaking, tramping.

Whole school EOTC

Visits to local facilities eg, swimming pool, sports grounds, parks, beaches (Beach Education every two years). Visits to local resources eg, gold mining, native bush reserves, glow worm caves.

Trips ensure accessibility for children with special needs including appropriate staffing and wheelchair access.



'To have the TIME to experiment with ideas to achieve the goals from Project Adventure: confidence, group dynamics, physical coordination, joy (fun) in being with others and awareness of the environment. It all spins off into the classroom.'

Teacher



PMI Feedback on EOTC experiences

P (Positives)

- You are outside the classroom
- You learn more about how the children adapt in different situations
- Children and teachers are challenged in different activities
- Fosters independence and self reliance/motivation in children
- Gives children the chance to experience places and activities that they would never be given the opportunity to do because of their home life.
- Teachers learn to work as a team with colleagues and parents
- Builds trust between the student and teachers
- Students learn that teachers are human and can have fun too!
- Children and teachers learn to push themselves mentally and physically to meet challenges presented through activities.
- We get to explore great sites and places
- Teachers learn to manage better in changing/stressful situations
- Plan better - think ahead and work in with others
- Children become a team - show compassion, concern, respect, responsibility for classmates
- Having experienced staff to mentor and take the inexperienced through the ropes.

M (Minus)

- Can be stressful
- No sleep
- Scary when it is your first time
- Lots of responsibility

I (Interesting)

- I learnt that children's table manners are interesting
- Some children really grew in maturity
- I was able to challenge myself on tramps and in activities - which gave the kids a buzz knowing it was as hard for me as it was for them.
- All the encouragement and support that children give when someone is trying their best.

Teacher

I enjoyed the biscuiting. Emily got me on it. I also enjoyed getting crystals from Crystal Mountain.
Student



'EOTC is as kiwi as vegemite and jandals! In year 12 my daughter had to write an essay on what it was like to be a kiwi. Her topic was "Being a kiwi is going on a school camp." I worked in rural schools through her primary schooling and took an active part as a parent during secondary schooling. We watched whales in Kaikoura, mountain biked in Hanmer, camped by lakes on the windiest night of the year, roller skated in Invercargill, tramped in Mt Aspiring National Park, kayaked the Clutha, skied mountains in the winter and lakes in the summer, caught fish in the sea and shot rabbits in the hills. I watched her solve problems, develop friendships, eat badly cooked food and laugh at misadventures. We live in God's backyard and we made use of it through EOTC'

Parent /Principal



What I liked on camp was when we were going on all those hikes. We saw heaps of rabbits running into their burrows. I liked the old clay huts and it was like we were back when it was happening. Hope we do it again. **Student**

EOTC at Thorndon School (Decile 10)

Every class in the school, from New Entrants to Year 8 is involved in EOTC and not a week goes past without at least one of these classes being engaged in some activity which takes the children away from the classroom and the school.

Thorndon is located close to the centre of Wellington and we have made a conscious decision to use the city as a resource as much as possible.



As a result **all classes** involve themselves in a range of activities from regular trips to parks, galleries, museums and libraries, to the full scale adventure camp experience which may involve activities as diverse as a week on a marae or tramping the Abel Tasman or the Queen Charlotte Walkway, or an exchange with a rural school.

Year 3/4 will generally have a noho marae at school as part of their learning about Tikanga Maori.

Year 5/6 will usually have a 1 or 2 night stay at the zoo or at a city marae.

The senior classes will usually spend a week away, alternating experiences such as a marae stay, an exchange with a rural school or an outdoors adventure based experience.