Sabbatical Report – Term 2, 2017

> **Professional learning to improve my knowledge, skills and practice in utilising e-learning in daily teaching.**

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- Thank you to Maria Dacre, my Principal Appraiser from KP Consultancy for her hospitality and for pointing me in the right direction including organising my visits to include some top performing schools in the Manawatu District.

Purpose:

How effectively and by what means does e-learning compliment the teaching and learning?

Rationale and Background:

Tuturumuri School is a small country school located in South Wairarapa. The school is resourced with a laptop for each student. More and more schools are moving away from laptops to include other devices. I feel that the students here would benefit from using a

range of different devices to better prepare them for the future. It has been some years since e-learning technologies have been upgraded.

My motivation in selecting this sabbatical topic was my own interest into how schools are using e-learning to enhance teaching practice and to raise student achievement. I was keen to know what specific programmes were being used and what the students identified as useful. The school has excellent broadband so this was not a barrier to us. The students use student agency in that they plan their day and reflect on their achievements and next learning steps but this is not done electronically. Our current laptops were mostly old and slow – passed their use by date. Instead of simply replacing these, I wanted to get out into schools to see what was currently in use, what worked well and how it was used to support student achievement.

Links to Strategic Plan 2017-2019

1.6 E-portfolios are introduced and used to share student progress with families and across schools which will further develop into being more student led with increased ownership of how it is presented and what is shared.

5.1 Investigate costs and choices of more modern devices including Ipads.

Focus Questions:

1. What range of uses are there?
2. What is the level of engagement of the students?
3. How is it used across the levels?
4. How is student agency supported by e-learning?
5. What devices could benefit my students?

Activities Undertaken – Methodology:

There were four components to my sabbatical inquiry:

- Professional reading
- Reflection on effective e-learning practice in schools visited
- Reflection on conversations with staff and students
- Review and reflection on ICT practices at Tuturumuri School

Findings and Implications:

Findings: Across the schools visited there was a range of different uses but the main focus was for Student Agency where students could access and plan their timetables. This was done in a variety of ways but included Must Do's and Can Do's. The students in one school were able to access the school's bank of achievement objectives related to their level and include evidence online through either adding a link, photo or short video. Evidence collected needed to be provided at least three times and this was added to by the classroom teacher before they could move on. The students I spoke to could clearly articulate their level of learning, what they were working on and where they needed to go next in each core

subject. Students had access to ipads, tablets and laptops but could bring their own device from home if they wished. The level of engagement was incredible and I observed students working on different things and they were highly focused.

The ability of the students to plan their own learning each day increased as they progressed up the Year levels. It was quite structured in the junior classes and was done independently at the senior end.

Principals shared their own use of different aspects of e-learning including the use of google-docs as a way to organise documents efficiently, to connect with staff, monitor appraisals etc and to allow ease of students sharing work with teachers and home. Blogs were used in some school where the students could access and share their learning including video clips to explain their thinking and new strategies used.

E-learning for Careers Education for Years 7 & 8 could be easily accessed from the Careers NZ website www.nzcareers.co.nz This also comes with a teacher manual.

I was introduced to Chromecast which enabled work to be shared from a device to the big screen TV at the click of a button and purchased one on the trip home.

The colleagues I spoke to were genuinely excited to share different websites that they accessed to assist the students in different ways e.g Skoolbo www.skoolbo.co.nz and CSI Literacy www.csi.literacy.com

Other useful sites:

www.studyladder.com

www.nz.ixl.com/maths

This is a NZ maths site for 5 – 13 year olds. There are many parts to the website from basic counting to multiplication tables. E.g For Year 5 – Number Sense, Time, Measurement, Addition, Subtraction, Money, Geometry, Logical Reasoning, Multiplication, Division, Fractions and Mixed Numbers, Decimals, Probability and Statistics, Data Charts and Graphs, Mixed Operations are all covered.

When asked about the benefits of e-learning as a powerful tool to support learning, students and management commented that:

- There was greater confidence and risk-taking
- Levels of motivation were high.
- Greater student ownership. They enjoy talking about what they are doing and what they have achieved or need to achieve. They gain satisfaction from being able to share their work with their peers, teachers and their families.
- They are able to reflect and monitor their own progress and achievement through providing evidence.
- They know what evidence they need and have the knowledge and access to different ways to collate and share it.

- Feedback from the students and the wider community is positive.

Implications:

Conversations come back to finances but my supportive board are keen to provide additional resources that are proven to be used successfully and purposely in other schools for our students. I think our next step should be to have an e-learning strategic plan to ensure that we effectively implement e-learning and stay future focused. This would also ensure close tracking of progress to meet set goals and targets.

Staff need to be willing to try new things and new ways of doing things and to be provided with relevant professional development to be able to do so. Neglecting to support teachers could mean that a valuable resource is not fully utilised.

Students generally have an affinity with digital learning and educators require the strategy and confidence to harness this potential.

Conclusion:

To be in line with the school's direction and to keep up with the play in this ever-changing area, the school will acquire new devices to implement into the daily programme including the trialling of different websites, proven by other schools to be beneficial to student learning and achievement. I learned so much and the more you delve in especially online, there are endless things to try.

There was a wide range amongst the schools I visited and the stages they are at as to how devices are used. How effective and engaged a school is with digital technologies is reflective of the expertise of the staff in the school and I was affirmed that we are certainly not being left behind and have established achievable next learning steps to head towards where we want to be.

References:

www.elearning.tki.org.nz

Enabling eLearning – Research and readings

eLearning Infusion – Agency – teaching jargon destined for overuse?

Top 10 E-Learning Best Practices for Beginners

Karl Fisch http://thefischbowl.blogspot.com