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Randwick Park School
Sabbatical Report
Term Two, 2014

Topic: Researching into establishing an onsite t Yr. 7-8 technology programme

The consultation process involved explaining the option of providing an onsite technology programme to our BOT. Upon gaining their approval a letter was sent advising the current provider of our intention to withdraw from their technology programme. Their Board of Trustees agreed to proceeding with this.

The required Ministry of Education (MOE) documentation was duly completed by both schools and sent to the MOE.

I then set up appointments to visit the principals of four full primary schools currently delivering their own technology programmes.

The visits included spending time with each of the Principals, and in some cases the Deputy Principal and Technology Teachers in their respective classrooms. They shared the journey they had undertaken thus far to arrive at the current stages they are now at. Each explained how they operated their particular programmes.

Three out of the four schools visited worked with the whole class at one time with a teacher aide.
One school split their class and they were doing soft materials and robotics
One school offered technology from Yr. 2 up.
I was also interested in learning how this time was accounted for.

One school did not use this as CRT, while the students were at technology the class teacher released the team leader to undertake their leadership responsibilities. Their CRT was music and languages.

Another school used this time for team meetings
All schools were very receptive to sharing what they were doing and the process they had worked through to get to their respective current stages.
My focus was on the actual organization of the technology programme within the school so I did not inquire into how the actual programmes offered integrated within school wide themes.

I asked about: the support and PD available for the technology teacher? How you find an experienced, effective technology teacher? From the responses I received I deduced there appeared to be a lack of training programmes and/or organisations offering professional develop in this area of the NZ Curriculum.

One of the schools confirmed that there are courses offered at the various teacher training facilities and that graduating teachers will have had the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge in this area.

I also learnt through discussion with two of the technology teachers that they have developed an informal network of support and professional development for themselves. They meet once or twice a term and will often have a guest presenter. They share teaching ideas and resources. They willingly offered the opportunity for whomever takes on the role at our school to join their cluster. I was impressed with their generosity in volunteering information on where to purchase the resources (including the necessary hardware), where to set up accounts, the best places to purchase items, quantities of tools necessary and lists of the amounts of items required when working with a given number of students. This level of support and collaboration is fantastic and will save us a huge amount of research time.

We took one teachers' offer to come out to our school and give advice on how to set up the room to ensure the most practical and flexible use of the available space including the use of furniture. At the same time I enlisted a builder to come along and be part of the initial discussions to gauge some idea of the cost involved in outfitting the room with all the necessary structures, wiring and plumbing.

After visiting the schools I had time to reflect on the different styles of programme delivery I had observed and consider what a possible model for Randwick Park could look like at.

Prior to my Sabbatical I had been fortunate in accompanying six on my colleagues to Reggio Emilia in Italy to take part in their 2014 Study Tour. This was a wonderful experience made even better by the fact that I was with colleagues from the same association. I was grateful for the financial support I received from both the Manurewa Principal's and the Auckland Primary Principal's Associations along with my Board of Trustees.

Hence I had quite a bite to think about. I wanted to see how I could work the Reggio Emilia philosophy into the Inquiry model is evolving at Randwick Park and see how this might underpin how we delivered technology.

I also spent time reading and reflecting on the international research undertaken by Jude Black, Principal of Green Bay Primary School, Auckland on Design Technology. I see this as being a guide that we will use alongside NZC and the supporting documentation in ensuring coverage.

On a recent visit to Stonefields School in Auckland I was impressed with the model they have adopted from Google where students (they refer to them as learners) can use 20% of their week working on what they refer to as "Break Throughs". A learner or group of learners come up with a project they want to research. They prepare a submission outlining the process they will follow, the timeframe, the resources required and the expected outcomes.

They are interviewed by staff members on the validity of the project and negotiate any refining that might need to be considered. Time is invested in the planning stages.

When surveyed on how they find their learning at Stonefields: strengths and weaknesses, the 20% of the week Break Through time is overwhelmingly the most popular time(s) of the week. This concept links directly with the Reggio Emilia approach.

What did I do? I did a lot of walking and a lot of thinking, trying to envisage what linking the three might look like.

I submitted our Randwick Park application to the MOE. It outlined how we planned to deliver the technology programme, the value of having this onsite, saving down time travelling to and from our previous provider and giving us the ability to create a seamless programme by having technology integrated into current learning. Photos were provided of the spaces we had available along with evidence of support from the Board of Trustees.

Where to from here for Randwick Park School and Technology for 2015?
We will continue working with MOE resourcing resubmitting the programme outline until it is approved.

The technology teacher from one of the schools visited came and worked with us advising on the design, furniture and fittings. She also supported us in developing a draft two year over-view.

We used this as an initial guide. I then worked with one of my Associate Principals in creating a unit plan template that integrated with our current planning format. From here we developed two sample unit plans to submit to MOE resourcing as had been requested. To date our application has been declined, citing the need for further information to be included in specific units of work and assessment processes.

Once we receive approval and our 2015 provisional staffing reflects this, we will advertise for a Technology Specialist and begin working with them on ensuring that the physical modifications to our buildings suit the long term vision for technology at Randwick Park School. Protocols for health and safety and room usage will be developed.

In the initial years we will focus on ensuring that we are delivering an effective programme for our Yr.7-8 tamariki. Once we feel that we have achieved this we will begin including lower year levels into this programme.

It is an exciting project that will continue to evolve. We anticipate completing the construction in stages and as funds become available over the next two years.

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of the principals and technology staff visited during my sabbatical. The following schools shared their time and expertise: Beachlands Primary School, Marina View Primary School, Churchill Park School and Ellerslie Primary School.

We would like to thank the technology lead teacher at Ellerslie Primary School who generously gave her documentation and sample unit plans to get us started. She has also offered ongoing guidance which is going to be of tremendous assistance once we reach the purchasing stages for the hardware and practical resources required.

We hope that in the future we will be able to share knowledge that we have gained through this experience with colleagues setting out on a similar venture.

Our thanks is also extended to NZEI and MOE for the opportunity to have this reflective and refreshing ten weeks professional development.