Learning Design Principles in Future-Focused Schools

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Introduction

After 4 1/2 years as Foundation Principal of Hobsonville Point Secondary School I embarked on a 5 week visit of schools in the USA as part of my 10-week sabbatical. Typically, you apply for a sabbatical about a year ahead of when you actually take it and it's no surprise that the planned focus might change in that time. As well, it takes time to confirm schools to visit so the final selection can affect the focus.

I initially planned to investigate good practice in project-based and inquiry learning, senior pathways programmes with a strong internship focus, and the development of a dispositional curriculum.

During my sabbatical I attempted to visit schools that would challenge my thinking and provide direction for further development and innovation for our school. In choosing the schools I consulted with Grant Lichtman, an internationally recognised thinker on innovative schooling, colleagues who had visited schools for the same reason as me, and searched lists such as "100 Most Innovative Schools". I confirmed visits to the following schools:

- Design.Tech High School (San Francisco). Like us, they opened in 2014 and their first cohort graduates in 2018. The vision for their school closely matches ours so I was very keen to see how they had brought that to life.
- Nueva High School (San Francisco). In 2013 I visited Nueva Elementary School and their learning design model had a big impact on my thinking. They were about to open their secondary school so I was keen to see how they have adapted their learning design to accommodate senior students and their programmes. Their first students graduate this year so are at a similar stage in their journey.
- High Tech High Port Loma (San Diego)
- High Tech High Chula Vista (San Diego). Ever since viewing the film *Most Likely to Succeed* when we screened it at Hobsonville Point Secondary School I have

been keen to see their model in action. Visits by the Senior Leadership Team from Rototuna Senior High School and one of our middle leaders, Danielle, and conversations with Grant Lichtman heightened my desire to visit.

- [Science Leadership Academy](#) (Philadelphia). I have been a keen Twitter follower of Chris Lehmann over the last few years and Grant Lichtman wrote in very glowing terms of this school in his recent book [#EdJourney](#). It has been operating for 11 years.

- [NYC iSchool](#) (New York). I wanted to visit this school after reading the following statement on their web site as I wanted to explore how they have carried out the merging of these sometimes conflicting pressures.
  - The iSchool model is successfully merging the pedagogical ideal of meaningful and relevant learning experiences that teach big ideas and valuable skills, with the realities of accountability, college preparation, and adolescent development.   Most importantly, though, the iSchool model is rooted in a willingness to ask "why?" and "what if?" - to question what has always been, and to shift our focus from what's easiest and most efficient for adults or the system, to build an experience for each student that is personalized and that provides the range of experiences that will truly equip them with the academic foundation required for success in higher education and the critical 21st century skills required for success in life.

After having confirmed the schools I decided to settle on three key questions to explore at each school:

- **What principles guide the design of learning at the school?**

- **Why are these principles decided upon?**
- **How do these principles play out in practice?**

I believed a concentration on the defining principles would be of greater benefit to me as principles are more transferable across different education contexts than actual schooling models or practices.

My Understanding of Future-Focused Schooling

I am often challenged as to why there is a need for a major transformation of secondary schooling. Many still believe the current model is the best and that with some tweaking it can continue to serve our young people well. I have the view that the world is vastly different from when the current model was designed and rapid change fuelled by the technological and knowledge revolutions will continue. The problems and issues that the world is facing now and will face in the future are complex and require new ways of thinking and working.

I believe schools have a vital role to play in helping young people explore the new ways of thinking and working. All of the schools I visited spoke of the need for transformation in education. Leaders in these schools all believed the traditional model was beset with stressed students, over-worked staff, university dropouts, conflicted parents, subject siloization and conveyor belt schooling. Julie Abraham, from DesignTech School, used the analogy of students as cyclists biking faster and faster, competing with the rest of the field, but getting no nearer the finishing line.

My own inquiries and experiences over the last 5 years in leading the establishment of Hobsonville Point Secondary School have led me to a set of principles that need to be evident in learning and learning design so that learning is both engaging and relevant.

Principle One:
Learning Needs To Be Connected
Learning is about making connections between what is known and what is being learned. When we teach subjects in silos we reduce dramatically the likelihood of forming links with other subjects; links which can deepen our understanding and increase the likelihood of relevance for the learner. When students can draw on a range of disciplines, including the related knowledge and skills that each learning area possesses, they are more likely to deepen their understanding of a particular concept.

This principle is clearly present in the OECD's publication, The Nature of Learning, in which it synthesized research to create a set of principles to guide the development of future-focused learning environments. One principle, *Building Horizontal Connections,* calls upon learning environments to build connections "across areas of knowledge and subjects as well as to the community and the wider world." (OECD, The Nature of Learning: Practitioners' Guide, 2012, p.7)

Principle Two:
Learning Needs To Be Co-constructed
For students to be engaged in learning they have to feel a connection. The last thing they need is to feel they are part of a mass production line, learning the same material at the same time and pace as everyone else and having the learning context determined, usually by a teacher, without any input from them. For learning to be relevant and engaging for our diverse learners we must invite them into the conversation that determines the learning contexts. This does not mean we as teachers abdicate responsibility for ensuring coverage of important concepts, skills and knowledge.

The recently published Core Education: 2017 Ten Trends identifies this principle as Learner Agency which "is about [learners] having the power, combined with choices, to take meaningful action and see the results of your decisions."

Principle Three:
Learning Needs To Be Collaborative
Having the ability to work in teams of diverse people and to have well-developed interpersonal skills are vital. These are the key skills students require now to be effective in the workforce. It must be the norm in schools to have students learning in teams and growing their interpersonal skills.

Core Education: 2017 Ten Trends calls upon schools to create the notion of collaboration, whether it be student-student, teacher-teacher, school-school or school-wider community in order to prepare students for a more complex world, to ensure sustainability in the face of the demands of teaching and to build collective teacher efficacy.

At Hobsonville Point Secondary School we have embedded these ideas of **connectedness, co-construction** and **collaboration** in our three principles of **personalised learning, powerful partnerships** and **deep challenge and inquiry.**

The purpose of my school visits was to find out if the principles that drove the design of learning in other innovative, future-focused schools were similar.

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What I Discovered From My Visits

Please access a fuller blog post for each of the schools:

- [DesignTech High School](#)
- [Nueva High School](#)
- [High Tech High Point Loma](#)
- [High Tech High Chula Vista](#)
- [Science Leadership Academy](#)
- [NYC iSchool](#)

I'll attempt to provide some observations by referring to my three key questions.

Key Question One:
What Principles Guide The Design of Learning?

1. **Learning should be personalised**
   - "At DesignTech, we believe that students are most successful when their education is personalised to their needs, and they are asked to use their knowledge to improve the world around them."
   - "High Tech High teachers practice a learner-centred, inclusive approach that supports and challenges each student. Students pursue their passions through projects, and reflect on their learning."

2. **Learning should be authentic**
   - "At Nueva, *Learn by Doing, Learn by Caring* permeates everything we do. Nueva teachers craft curricula that enable students to bring classroom learning to life by designing original experiments, running simulations, and solving real-world problems."
   - "The NYC iSchool program is designed to offer students opportunities to engage in meaningful work that has relevance to them and the world."
   - "[At High Tech High] students engage in work that matters to them, to their teachers, and to the world outside of school."

3. **Learning should be connected**
   - "High Tech High school projects integrate hands and minds and incorporate inquiry across multiple disciplines, leading to the creation of meaningful and beautiful work."
   - "With a focus on developing collaborative and cross-disciplinary thinking, the d.tech curriculum is designed to engage students in finding and developing their passions."

4. **Learning and design of learning should involve collaboration (between teachers and with students).**
    ○ "High Tech High teachers collaborate to design curriculum and projects … while seeking student experience and voice. With students as design partners, staff function as reflective practitioners."
5. **Learning should address dispositional development.**
    ○ "We [d.tech] also believe that students must learn not only academic skills such as literacy and mathematics, but the transferable success skills of collaboration and persistence."
    ○ "[Nueva High School] gives students essential tools that enable them to: develop ability to self-regulate, managing their attention, focus and learning; take risks that enhance their growth, both personally and academically; overcome setbacks, both big and small; develop supportive relationships and embrace diversity; collaborate successfully."

Key Question Two:
Why Are These Principles Decided Upon?

Davion from The Nueva High School shared with me that universities had been telling them too many students arrive without being able to write competently, having mental health issues (anxiety around schooling) and little resilience and self-regulation.

The need to address issues of student anxiety is supported by PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students' Well-Being which identified that "anxiety about schoolwork is one of the sources of stress most often cited by school-age children and adolescents. On average across OECD countries, students who reported the highest levels of anxiety also reported a level of life satisfaction that is … lower than students who reported the lowest levels of anxiety." This points to the importance of designing learning that does not contribute to higher levels of anxiety about learning.

Isora Bailey from NYC iSchool was adamant that high school could no longer be about learning a defined set of concepts - that high school for the 21st century needed to emphasise the learning process and thinking skills.

At Nueva, as at all schools, there is a recognition that the rapidly changing world requires a different curriculum:
"Our inquiry-based curriculum develops students who are resilient, thoughtful leaders and collaborators with robust problem-solving skills, and the creativity required for success in a rapidly changing global environment."

Chris, at The Science Leadership Academy, was of the view that deeper learning required subjects to be viewed as lenses and not as silos. Students saw learning as more relevant when it was connected across learning disciplines.

Key Question Three:
How Do These Principles Play Out In Practice?
All schools saw a type of project-based learning, with learning connected across a high interest project, as the best vehicle to bring all of their learning design principles to fruition. All believed this led to more engagement and deeper learning.

A range of practices that were driven by **personalisation** was evident across all schools. The most common approach was to give students choice. At DesignTech High School 2 full days were dedicated to students selecting appropriate Labs. Teachers could use the LMS to direct students to compulsory Labs or students could select the Design Garage (Maker Space), Office Hours (individual or small group access to a teacher), Independent Work or Fitness).

At NYC iSchool students from all grade levels can take whatever 'Elective' which was appropriate to their interest, resulting in Grade 9 - 12 students in the same class.

All schools gave opportunities for students to use multiple ways to evidence learning. There were very few times when all students in a programme had to produce the exact same assessment.

The [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) framework can support schools and teachers to design respectful, inclusive environments where everyone is learning and achieving. Such a framework places the student at the centre of learning design and supports the drive to personalisation.

Authenticity was achieved in each school in similar ways. They all ran programmes that were centred around high-interest projects which involved learning by doing. Students work on real-world problems and pose and/or tackle big questions. All schools required students to have some form of public presentation of much of their work and most schools ran an internship programme with whole school or certain year levels out of school.

The **connectedness** nature of learning was apparent in a number of ways. At High Tech High, because the same group of students had the same teachers for all of their subjects, the teachers would collaborate and support students to complete their projects across two subjects. Examples are described [in this blog post](#).

At DesignTech they suspend their timetable for two weeks 4 times per year. During this time, known as d.lab, students opt to work on a solution to a real world problem, drawing on a range of subject disciplines. In this way the school was able to provide opportunities for students to see the connections between different learning areas and how these connections contribute to problem-solving.

During 2 days a week at Nueva High School students opt into a range of labs where they have opportunities to pursue their passions in a multi-disciplinary project.

These schools saw the importance of student learning and understanding being deepened by connecting subject areas rather than leaving them as silos.

The common feature across all schools was that student inquiry and a rigorous process of project-based learning underpinned the learning model. This was shown in the schools I visited by:

- At NYC iSchool their Challenge-based Modules (1 per term) had students focusing on real world challenges so they could build their understanding of big ideas and broad global concepts. It was their view that this allowed for the development and application of 21st century skills.
- At the Science Leadership Academy all courses had students involved in inquiry learning and completing projects that they co-construct with each other and their teachers. This school followed Wiggins Model of Understanding by Design.
- At High Tech High project-based learning was at the core of all learning programmes. Here they followed the Stanford model (Empathise, Define, Ideate, Test).
- Inquiry-based and project-based learning was also at the centre at Nueva High School. Following rigorous design thinking processes students become active participants in learning, identifying solutions where they can make changes for the better while developing the personal and collaborative tools to take action.
- At DesignTech students used a project-based learning approach, supported by design thinking, to work on local and global challenges, research real problems and develop authentic solutions.

My Elevator Statement

Learning that is personalised, authentic, and connected locally and globally prepares students for their lives in the 21st century. It is centred on co-constructed high-interest projects, drawing on a range of specialist subjects, with opportunities for hands-on

application and partnering with the community. There is a genuine outcome from the learning and students are partners in designing the learning.

Other Observations
- A clear set of principles needs to drive learning design and learning decisions.
- Maker Spaces are key spaces in schools.
- To promote **Learner Agency** build in time in weekly schedule where students have responsibility to make good decisions and self-regulate. Do not water this down to the lowest common denominator as the majority of students will miss out because of the few who cannot self-regulate.
- A learning design model with a common language of learning is vital in providing frameworks and rigour, but students (and staff - as all are learners) must be scaffolded through to be comfortable within that framework.
- Students do not need an adult in front of them supervising their learning at all times. Some learning can be a blend of teacher and on-line learning (Language learning at NYC iSchool) or of teacher and un-supervised sessions. Requiring students to take responsibility for their learning in such a way helps to prepare them for life after school where such responsibility is a necessity.
- Restorative practices that develop trust and responsibility and require empathy and self-regulation support the development of vital 21st century dispositions.
- Internships and externships provide wonderful opportunities for authenticity in student learning.

Implications:
What Could Existing Schools Do To Reflect The 5 Key Principles?
- Explore models of Project-based learning. In **Future Directions in New Zealand schooling: The case for transformation** (Centre for Strategic Education, 2017), McIntosh argues that project-based learning is a model that meets the requirements needed to transform teaching and learning (p.14). A clear model that all staff understand and commit to and through which students are scaffolded is essential to provide rigour and prevent low quality experiences and outcomes. The following links could be a good place to start:
    - [Best brief introduction to current thinking I've seen for a while](#)
    - [Buck Institute for Education](#) is very useful not only with the 'why' but awesome for the 'how?' - great, easy to use tools
    - [Wiggins' model of Understanding by Design](#) used by the Science Leadership Academy
    - [The Stanford Model driven by Design Thinking](#) and used at High Tech High, Nueva High School and DesignTech.

- Make every effort to provide opportunities for learning to be connected across subjects. Even with a traditional, single-subject timetable it's not difficult to change mindsets and school practices to enable students to establish connections.
    - Schools could start by determining common themes that could drive learning contexts across the whole school or particular year levels. This would, at least, allow all subjects to connect to the common theme.
    - Meeting structures could be turned on their head and regular meetings for the common teachers of each class to discuss how learning could be connected across more than one subject. Students could work on high-interest projects which they have had a say in creating in classes timetabled for 2 or 3 of their subjects. Completing one piece of work, drawing on several subjects and being supported by several teachers will not only result in a quality outcome and deeper learning, but reduce workload for students and for teachers. Perhaps Departments could be required to find times to run their meetings when necessary, rather than having them scheduled.
- Teachers in all classes could share with their students the responsibility of determining the context in which learning could take place. Teachers would still take responsibility for developing the important learning/achievement objectives but invite students to be design partners in determining the context.
    - Rather than informing a class that they are studying Migration and that they would do this by learning about Victorian English people and their migration to and settling in New Zealand, a Social Studies teacher could explore with students the concept of Migration and establish its worthiness of study. They could then invite students to suggest which example of migration from across history, or in the present, they (individuals, small groups) they would like to explore to increase their understanding of this concept. Teachers and students would design activities together which allowed the important learning objectives to be met.
- Wherever possible, provide multiple opportunities for students to provide evidence of their learning (UDL).
    - If all students have to write an essay to show their understanding of an important science concept, then those who are poor essay writers will not do well, despite perhaps having a high level of understanding of the science concept. As long as the learning objectives can be met allow students to show their understanding, whether it be by essay, piece of art, spoken word.
- Include some contact or experience with the community or expertise from beyond the school in all planning of learning programmes.

- ○ At the very least, this could be a guest speaker/facilitator but can include off-site visits, individual/small group mentor relationships, on-line communication and connection with expertise, or a client relationship.
- Encourage the public exhibition and discussion of student work.
  - ○ At the very least, this could be presenting findings back to the class with high expectations of how to make a quality presentation and how to provide quality feedback but can include presenting to students from outside the class or at another school, parents, and mentors and clients who have been involved in the learning.
  - ○ Think about where these presentations should take place. The school might be appropriate but so might a community space (library, parks, malls), a conference or place of work.

What Are The Implications for Hobsonville Point Secondary School?
Affirmation

While my thinking was challenged in many ways, I cannot escape the conclusion that our school is at the leading edge of innovation. What was most pleasing was that the principles that we had decided on to drive learning design - **Innovate by Personalising Learning, Engage through Powerful Partnerships, Inspire With Deep Challenge and Inquiry** - were very similar to the common principles I saw in the schools I visited - **Personalisation, Authenticity, Connection, Inquiry.**

Our school is still very early in its development journey and we are certainly disrupting the conventional schooling model. The affirmations I received do provide the confidence to continue to build on our foundations and to persist with our approach to learning design.

Earlier in this report I published a draft Elevator Statement in an attempt to capture the essence of what I found was common across the innovative schools that I visited. This is what I came up with:

> *Learning that is personalised, authentic, and connected locally and globally prepares students for their lives in the 21st century. It is centred on co-constructed high-interest projects, drawing on a range of specialist subjects, with opportunities for hands-on application and partnering with the community. There is a genuine outcome from the learning and students are partners in designing the learning.*

After writing this I revisited the Elevator Statement that we wrote in December 2014 in an attempt to capture the particular essence of our school:

> *The HPSS model of learning truly engages learners by drawing on their interests and has deep challenge and inquiry at its centre at a time when our country and world need people who are engaged learners, able to work in teams of diverse people, solve complex problems and who enhance their own well-being by contributing strongly to the betterment of their communities.*

While there are many similarities, I like, in the more recent iteration, the more overt statement of connected learning ("drawing on a range of specialist subjects"), the partnering with the community, rather than "contributing to the betterment of the community", and the identification that "students are partners in designing the learning".

A further area of affirmation was for the work we are doing in **developing a dispositional curriculum** in our attempt to bring life to the 'front end' of the New Zealand Curriculum document. All schools had a form of Learning Advisory (ours is known as Learning Hubs) but none had the same allocation of time or the planning scaffolds and rigour that we are working on developing. Any investigation of the way to best prepare young people for their rapidly changing world identifies the importance of certain dispositions

As well, while I saw **processes of learning design**, time did not allow me to delve deeply into each school's model. I did come away proud of our model. The way our Learning Design Model drives Learning Objectives linked to each Learning Area's key concepts, skills and content and draws on student voice to determine learning contexts which all determines the framework for identifying progression is sound and rigorous.

Teaching as Inquiry is second-nature in New Zealand schools as it drives teachers to continually inquire into our practice and to be continually asking about our impact on student learning. My main focus during my visits was on cross-curricular, inquiry learning, and I did not come across a similar emphasis on teaching as inquiry during my visits, which is not to say it was not there. School leaders I met with were impressed with our model of critical friend and spirals of inquiry.

Implications for Hobsonville Point Secondary School
- Work collaboratively with a range of groups to design an amended Elevator Statement that captures the essence of what sets Hobsonville Point Secondary School apart.

- ○ Use this work as a platform to work with BOT to revisit Charter
  - ● Continue the ground-breaking work on developing the dispositional curriculum so it is very clearly part of the learning "we do around here", and is embedded in our culture.
  - ● Keep our Learning Design Model at the centre of teacher and student collaborative design processes and activities.
  - ● Ensure the teaching as inquiry processes are resourced so that they continue to be central to teacher development and growth.
    - ○ Recommend that 'Wednesdays with Maurie' (weekly morning sessions with staff led by the principal to explore our vision in practice) go on a 1:2 cycle with Teaching as Inquiry (1 with Maurie, next 2 on Inquiry)

Areas for Hobsonville Point Secondary School to Develop Further
Student Self-Regulation
I have been critical of conventional secondary schools which complain that their students are not independent, self-regulated learners but give them no opportunity to be so. In most schools, up until the age of 18 students are closely regulated by external factors: timetable, bells, rules, teachers. While such factors can make schools more 'manageable' and lead to great academic results, they do not promote self-regulation and, quite possibly, contribute to our high university drop-out rate.

I have always wanted our school to be one in which students were given daily opportunities to self-regulate. A simple representation of this is by having no bells. Another layer has been our Floor Time (originally MyTime) programme. It originally allowed students to opt into up to 3 workshops a week to "do whatever I need to do know, where I need to do it and with whom I need to do it." It has now become a more regulated time on our timetable with less self-regulation.

My visits have reinforced my view that we need to look for more ways for students to self-regulate. I have reflected that too often we may not 'loosen the leash' and provide opportunities for self-regulation because not all students will cope so we end up tightening things to accommodate those students. I'd like to flip that and provide more self-regulation opportunities but have arrangements to accommodate those who are unable to manage.

Following are two examples I have been thinking about and want to explore with my staff:

- ● Learning Hub time be voluntary for Year 13s (and possibly Year 12s.)

- ○ I think a large group would still attend and another large group would make excellent use of their time to continue their learning. A small group would waste the opportunity.
  - ○ With the Year 13s (and possibly Year 12s) this would give an opportunity for the senior Hub students (Year 11 or 12) to have a formalised leadership role in the Hub.
  - ○ This has the advantage of providing more time in a senior student's timetable to determine how to use their time best to progress their learning.
  - ○ It would also give more opportunity for Learning Coaches to concentrate on developing our Foundation students and preparing them for self-regulation.
  - ○ I can't think of a worst case scenario if this was implemented that would keep me awake at night.
- ● Non-staffed class time for Year 13 students.
  - ○ If a student had 3 blocks of time allocated in a week to a subject/module only 2 of these would be staffed. Direct teaching and support would occur in the staffed blocks and students would continue through the programme, independently, in the non-staffed block. Many programmes delivered at NYC iSchool were delivered in this 'blended' approach.
  - ○ The added advantage would be that students could determine how they would use their 5 non-staffed blocks (assuming they were doing 5 subjects/modules) at any given time. Because of workload demands they might use 2 (or more) unstaffed blocks to work on one subject in one week.
    - ■ This provides further opportunity for self-regulation and moves closer to how they have to manage their time at university.

Students as Partners in Learning Design

There is no doubt that when I saw students engaged as true partners in the design of their learning, engagement levels were at their highest. This was sometimes at the level of choosing project topics but moved through the continuum to include planning a full project inquiry, with teacher support, determining the learning context and the product of or evidence of learning. I saw many examples of deeper than expected learning and all schools had excellent attainment levels in statewide assessment/testing.

At Hobsonville Point Secondary School we attempt to involve students in co-designing their learning. Before each semester's module planning we get students to explore their understanding of the overarching concepts (Identity, Space and Place, Citizenship, Systems and How Things Work, Relationships, Cultural Diversity, Innovations and

Transformations) and then to suggest contexts for learning (eg How Did The Universe Begin? How Serious is Climate Change? Why Are There Refugees?). Teachers then collaborate to plan modules to offer students. As well, within each module students have a part to play in designing their learning.

I am finding myself asking how we could both embed and extend this concept further. What does a school look like when students are authentic partners in learning and schooling in general?

At this stage my plans are to:
- Carry out a stocktake of the current situation of "Students as Partners in Learning Design".
  - Explore the concept with the Learning Habitat and gather their views of the current situation
  - Gather some staff voice via 'Wednesdays With Maurie'
- Explore further areas of opportunity to have students as authentic partners.
  - Begin with Learning Habitat and then cast to wider student group.

Some opportunities I have been thinking about include:
- Ambassadors to host touring groups
- Involvement in staff appointments
- Formalise student involvement in feedback to staff re their teaching
- Involvement in restorative practice processes so that impact of behaviours and outcomes on wider student body is taken into account

Parents as Partners
A neat outcome of increasing the strength of partnership with students will be in supporting us to bring parents and the wider community on board. All schools I visited spoke of the challenge of 'parental push-back' in relation to their attempts to transform secondary education. This occurred in all schools, despite their vision and models of learning being well-known before families enrolled their children (in fact, most, if not all, of these schools were over-subscribed and had waiting lists).

In discussing this issue at each school the responses were similar. Julie Abraham, at Design Tech, captured the common message with "being unalterably clear on what we are about" and having the courage to stay true to the vision. I have often spoken of the need for a school leader to have a clear moral purpose and the courage to see that carried out. This was a common message from the schools I visited.

I am of the view that the most powerful and effective ambassadors of any school are its students. Because they are immersed in the daily life of a school and continually breathe the air of the culture of the place they know what a school is about and if it is the right place for them. Because I see our students interacting with our many visitors and I hear them talking about the school and their learning I know most of them are fully on board. More than one student has told me that their parents "now understand" and that while earlier on there was a risk that they would be removed by their parents they feel the relief of that increased understanding.

By increasing the opportunities for authentic partnership with our students, I believe they will be even more powerful and effective ambassadors for our school in their own families and the wider community.

Currently we have many practices in place to partner with parents. They include:
- Start the year with Individual Education Meetings (IEMs) and repeat throughout the year
- Waitangi Whanau Celebration in collaboration with Hobsonville Point Primary School
- Fortnightly Newsletter, Facebook updates and School App communications
- Hub Coach communication home
- Parent workshops/conference
- Morning Tea With Maurie

Later this year I plan to focus my collection of parent voice on the effectiveness of the current parent partnership opportunities and ask what else we could do to make it more effective.

Conclusion
Secondary schools need to emphasise the learning process, thinking skills, creativity and dispositional development rather than solely learning a defined set of concepts.

- Learning should be personalised
- Learning should be authentic
- Learning should be connected
- Learning and design of learning should involve collaboration
- Learning should address dispositional development

The common approach across all schools was that student inquiry and a rigorous process of project-based learning underpinned their learning model. All models of learning connected learning areas across a high-interest project.

As well, all models included elements of student choice whether that be choice in context, choice of inquiry process or choice of how to evidence learning.

> *Learning that is personalised, authentic, and connected locally and globally prepares students for their lives in the 21st century. It is centred on co-constructed high-interest projects, drawing on a range of specialist subjects, with opportunities for hands-on application and partnering with the community. There is a genuine outcome from the learning and students are partners in designing the learning.*

Thank you to the Hobsonville Point Schools Board of Trustees for supporting my sabbatical. As well, it would not have been possible without the knowledge that the competence and abilities of the members of my Senior Leadership Team and others who acted up meant that being absent for a term would not have a detrimental impact when we are still establishing our new and innovative school.