

Sabbatical Report 2017

Leadership for Innovation

What does it take to create and lead an Innovative Learning Environment.

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Executive summary

This report describes my findings and reflections about creating and leading a school as an innovative learning environment. Basically it requires a change in role of principals, teachers and students. Principals need to empower teachers and students to understand the importance of this role change and support them to develop the new roles and pedagogy of 21st century teaching and learning.

This report summarises my understanding of an innovative learning environment and leadership for innovation that supports the development of a pedagogy for innovative learning. It also describes the implications and benefits of the change process from traditional schooling to open learning that meets the needs of today's students and the implications of these challenges for change leadership.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore what it takes for a school leader to create and lead the school as an innovative learning environment, with a mix of 'old' and 'new' learning spaces. The findings of this exploration and study will be used to clarify my vision for the school and how to work toward that vision. The learning from this sabbatical will inform the development of a school-based vision document for making the most of technology and the different types of spaces we have in the school, including three flexible spaces, eleven single-celled classrooms, a library and the hall, to provide an innovative learning environment that meets the learning needs of today's students.

The findings from my report will be shared with the staff and Board of Trustees. The findings will be used for staff involvement in the construction of a vision and understanding of the school as an innovative learning environment. This will further inform the strategic direction of the school.

Background and rationale.

Today's New Entrants will be leaving secondary school in the year 2030...13 years from now. When we consider the exponential change that has occurred in Information and Communication Technology in the last 13 years, we have some idea of what might happen in the next 13 years. Machines can do unskilled work much better than people. This transformation is a concern leaving millions of people without work, especially young people around the world. Only the well-educated can possibly thrive in the world that is coming. We need every young person to graduate from school ready for college, career and citizenship, so they are prepared for their future and not our past (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Mark Osborne, 2017, Carol Dweck, 2017).

I believe that we have an urgent responsibility to transform teaching and learning. School leaders and teachers need to be innovative and creative to support students in the development of skills for non-routine, interpersonal and analytic jobs (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). We need to hook students into learning so they will all be able to thrive in their future. 21st century education has to be about developing young people who are adaptable, creative, collaborative, responsive, self directed and capable of being self managing in a world that has fewer hierarchical settings and communities than their parents experienced (Aitken, 2010).

The focus for my sabbatical has risen out of the current school situation where we built a Flexible Learning Space in 2016 for three classes. There are also two other flexible learning spaces in the school and the operable walls are currently closed. Since the beginning of 2015 we have built up the number of digital devices in the school. How can we make the most of this technology and physical environment to provide an innovative learning environment for all students?

The Ministry of Education states on its website that schools need to upgrade learning spaces so they are Flexible Learning Spaces. Most schools were built between the 1950s and 1970s. The way that teachers teach and students learn has been developing since then. We (MOE) want all schools to have vibrant, well connected, innovative learning environments (ILE) that encourage and support many different types of learning. An ILE is the complete physical, social and pedagogical context in which learning can occur. The Ministry of Education is prioritising the creation of modern learning environments that provide flexibility for where learning can take place and can be personalised according to each individual's strengths, abilities, languages and cultures and that ensure quality teaching and learning opportunities are available to every

teacher, child and student, where digital technologies are used to extend the reach and depth of learning experiences, keeping everyone engaged in learning. (education.govt.nz)

While I support the move to changing the environment so that schools can be innovative and well connected learning environments, the challenge as a current school leader is to create a school-wide innovative learning environment within a mix of the 'old' and the 'new' spaces and to support teachers in understanding and developing the new pedagogy for innovative learning.

These learning environments can pose considerable pedagogic challenges for teachers who must balance the ethos of spaces designed to facilitate autonomous and flexible student learning, while simultaneously managing the complexities of shared space and resources and highly variable student responses to learning in open-plan settings. (Saltmarsh et al, 2015).

Successful management of these spaces to meet the needs of today's students has huge implications for teachers and leaders in education. Building an understanding of the new pedagogy for innovative learning is crucial for our whole school. Potentially the teachers in the 'new' flexible learning spaces will develop new pedagogies and the teachers in the conventional classrooms will not. Creating an innovative learning environment in both the 'new' and 'old' spaces is part of our work in the Strategic Plan for the next three years. In the last 30 months we have increased the ratio of digital devices from 1-100 pupils across the school to 1-3 students in the senior school. Ongoing professional learning is crucial to ensure integration of the digital devices to support and enhance teaching and learning.

Transforming a school into an innovative learning environment requires a profound change in the way of teaching, committing to innovative methodologies and a new role of leaders, teachers and students (Ministry of education, Culture and Sport, Spain, 2012). This sabbatical project is an opportunity to develop my understanding of change leadership for an innovative learning environment that is physical, social and virtual: an environment that enables learning and developing learning capacity of teachers and students.

Activities I undertook

- visiting schools, across sectors from primary to secondary, in New Zealand and Canada. These schools ranged from a new secondary school (one-year old), of very modern design, technology and philosophy, through to primary and elementary schools who are creating innovative learning environments within traditional school buildings and primary schools who have upgraded traditional classrooms to be open flexible learning spaces,
- talking with principals and teachers about their beliefs and practices in leading change in teaching so that today's students needs are met.
- gathering student voice through observation and conversations. I believe that the student perspective on how they learn and what supports them best is crucial information for us. I was excited by the clarity of students understanding of what works best for them today as learners.
- meeting with one of the authors of the Ontario vision document "Empowering Modern Learners". This document has been constructed through consultation across the Peel Board to create a document that supports all schools to meet the learning needs of

today's students. It is a new document as of October, 2016.

- attending a curriculum conference at Hastings Intermediate. Principals and teachers shared their experiences of leading and managing change in teaching pedagogy and practice for innovative learning environments.
- reading about and reflecting on what I observed and learned in these different education settings.

The focus of these activities was to explore:

1. descriptions and understandings of an innovative learning environment.
2. leadership to create and lead in an innovative learning environment.

Findings.

In this section an “Innovative Learning Environment” is defined based on my findings and the four key ideas about ‘Leadership for Innovation’ that have emerged are discussed. I see these ideas as a way forward for Nelson Park School to become an even better innovative learning environment.

1. Teacher empowerment to innovate
 2. Student agency for learning
 3. Collaboration
 4. Learning spaces
1. An innovative learning environment needs to be viewed as the whole school. Every space within is a learning place. To quote Aristotle, *The whole is greater than the sum of its parts*. ICT needs to be embedded, seamlessly accessible and every space an activated space. Renaming of schools as ‘learning institutes’ as I saw in Canada is an interesting acknowledgement of the school as a whole learning environment, rather than a site of individual spaces.
 2. As many spaces as possible within an Innovative school need to be activated (open and flexible) to allow for collaboration between teachers, students and teachers with students and to create spaces for different purposes.
 3. It is an environment where deep learning takes place. Pedagogy is the driver and digital accelerates and deepens learning for all. (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Digital devices need to be on hand for students to use. These forces converge to produce deep learning tasks and outcomes (Fullan & Larkworthy, 2014).
 4. An Innovative school requires a curriculum that fits with the new pedagogy and understanding of the process of learning. Within the curriculum all types of learning needs to be planned for and caused through a range of learning methodologies, teaching strategies and approaches. To innovate means to make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas or products. So it could be developing any existing ones. It is about making something better based on the beliefs and rationale of the people in control.
 5. An innovative learning environment is a culture, belief and pedagogy where the learning needs of all 21st century students are met. It is more than a building or a classroom. It is a belief in students as agents of their learning and the pedagogy that supports that belief.
 6. In an innovative learning environment learning and knowledge are created and shared.

Leadership for Innovation

To promote innovation the school leader needs to be a pedagogical leader, who everyone involved, refers to. They need to be a constant source of confidence, motivation and enthusiasm. They need to provide the best possible resources and listen to others. Mostly they need to totally believe in what they are doing so that everyone paddles in the same direction (Ministry of Education, Culture and Education, Spain, 2012). I have concluded from my findings that such a leader needs to; empower teachers to innovate, build student agency for learning, create a collaborative culture and provide a physical and digital environment and resources for innovation. Each of these aspects is discussed.

Teacher empowerment to innovate

Leadership needs to focus on deepening learning through empowering teachers to innovate for improved learning and students to be agents of their own learning. That means we must make time for our teachers to learn and grow. It also means that we need to develop a shared vision, align expectations, and provide pathways to ensure that all teachers have the resources to learn, create, and innovate to meet the needs of today's learner (Couros, 2015). Leading for innovation presents challenges. One of the hardest things for teachers is to let go of the grip of the mental models and patterns of their own student experiences at school. They have come to know what learning is through their own experience. (Aitken, 2010). The new pedagogy looks quite different to traditional schooling and the open, sharing and collaborative culture that supports innovation is risky for teachers. Leaders need to support and encourage (with a sense of urgency) this pedagogical shift. Empowering teachers to innovate for deeper learning builds individual and collective capacity. Ways of doing this that were common in this study were:

- staff meetings for professional learning only
- providing ICT personnel and expertise. I believe that professional learning in ICT needs to be a priority and especially in New Zealand schools to support the successful implementation of the new Digital Technologies Curriculum.
- developing a shared understanding of effective practice i.e. the use of ongoing strategies and practices that continuously inform learning and teaching for 21st Century competencies and the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to learn and be successful in a modern world
- the co-construction and review of a matrix or framework of effective practice that can support and progress the school as an innovative learning environment. Referring to current research to inform the debate of questions such as; "What does really cool teaching and learning look like at our school?" "Have you got time, energy and the mindset to be an effective teacher?" (O'Reilly, 2016)

The 'new pedagogy' is based on a learning partnership between and among students and teachers that taps into the intrinsic motivation of students and teachers alike. It is heavily based in the "real world" of action and problem solving, and it is enabled and greatly accelerated by innovations in digital technology.(F&L 2014). Based on constructivist theory this new pedagogy has within it, direct explicit instruction. Creating an environment of "real world" rich tasks or complex tasks where the learner is initiating, negotiating, choosing, directing and the teacher facilitating, doesn't mean we abandon direct explicit instruction. In this role the teacher moves between direct explicit instruction, modelling or providing scaffolds, nudging, prompting, giving formative feedback or leaving them to their own devices. Sometimes with the whole class,

small groups or individuals. Knowing the approach that is most suited for students and where they are at at different times is crucial, as some students could be 'held up' if included in whole class instruction. Teachers need to know the students and be intentional about the desired learning. Student voice is helpful in providing this information to both the teacher and the student.

In exploring this new pedagogy various roles of the teacher have surfaced.

1. to cause learning

This is a shift from the focus of teaching 'inputs' (as suited the Industrial age) to a deeper understanding of the process of learning and how teachers can influence or cause it (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Teachers give us some information in the first place e.g. the Pride Flag. Some students knew nothing about it, some knew some aspects Teachers here are really cool. They are always inspiring us, they have high expectations of us and we don't want to let them down (student voice)

Neill O'Reilly describes the teacher's role as one of causing learning. He asks 'When you teach the way you teach are you causing learning? (2016)

2. to supervise and monitor

Through formative Assessment, teachers make use of ongoing strategies and practices that continuously inform learning and teaching (Peel District School Board, 2016). Some of the students I spoke to described the teacher's role as one of "supervising and monitoring to make sure we are working on an educational purpose and not just having fun". Part of the monitoring role from the students perspective is to provide guidance along the way.

3. to empower

To empower students is to engage them in the process of learning. e.g. through giving enough information that each individual student can act on, based on what they already know or care about and supporting students to make relevant use of digital technology. Empowering students to be agents of their own learning demands a new pedagogy where learning is integrated, not added on. It is driven by the learner purpose, not teacher purpose. This is a powerful purpose for learning. (Aitken, 2010).

4. to be creative

Teachers need to teach in ways that makes it fun, really creative. They also need to create an environment where learning is heavily based in the "real world" of action and problem solving. The students still need to learn reading, writing and maths and curriculum subjects but they need to learn in a way that gives them the chance to develop key competencies and student agency (Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Aitken, 2010).

Everyone needs to be on the same page and together develop an understanding of an innovative learning environment that meets the needs of all students for living and learning in the 21st century. Fullan and Quinn refer to this as "Focussing Direction", the glue that increases coherence across the school and builds a clear path to improve learning (2016). A good place to start is with what we believe and value about learning. The vision needs to be driven by a

strong, shared moral purpose. Developing an understanding that a quality learning environment has to have three aspects to it: physical, social and virtual. Talking together, sharing ideas, getting student voice are all the things that will actually make the difference to creating much more powerful learning spaces for creating learners for this century not for the goals of the 17th or 18th century.

A learning culture with a growth mindset is developed through the visioning for the school and allows the building of knowledge together as a community (Peel District school Board, 2016). A vision for innovative learning environments can be supported by research and education documents. The Peel District school board in Toronto has recently developed for its schools a vision document called "Empowering Modern learners".

According to the document there are 6 innovative elements that together, will help schools drive their work moving forward. This document is currently being introduced to schools and leaders and teachers are working to integrate it into their school visions and plans. For many schools the elements are already there, so this document is supporting them to build on their current environment and culture.

1. Learning Culture
2. Informative assessment
3. Access to Technology
4. 21st century competencies
5. Learning environments
6. Models of learning

In New Zealand schools we have the freedom to develop our own vision. Starting with a co-constructed vision that is based on beliefs about learning and then leading the way to achieve this will empower teachers to innovate in a supportive environment.

Student Agency for learning

Basically this comes down to handing more control to students and empowering them to be agents and monitors of their own learning and achievement, guided by their teachers. Involving students in the learning and assessment process is a shift in pedagogy, practice and systems for all leaders, teachers and students. It is not the tool, it is the practice, culture and beliefs that will make the difference. One of the challenges facing school leaders and teachers in this shift to involving students in the assessment of their learning is that defining and measuring progress and success of new pedagogies and students achievement of deep learning outcomes needs to change from the traditional practice of predominantly testing and skills and knowledge. With new measures we will get a clearer picture of what deep learning really means in practice and the potential impact for today's students. This approach to assessment and evaluation requires teachers to have deep knowledge of the curriculum, learning progression, each student and 'new pedagogy'. Couros (2015) suggests that the use of e-portfolios and blogs as tools and methods for evaluating progress and learning that is relevant today. At one school I visited the students have portfolios and blogs which they use to share the evidence of their learning and progress with their teachers in regular interviews. There is no formal testing in this school. In this same school the students have copies of the science curriculum which they use to monitor their progress learning and achievement. They know the learning objectives and they manage their learning through meeting these objectives in contexts of their choice. Greater clarity and precision of deep learning concepts, followed by valid new ways to measure deep learning

outcomes, are essential to adopting new pedagogies. We need to know what learning we value and ways to assess this. This is one of the biggest challenges for school leaders today, in making the shift from traditional schooling to that which is more likely to meet the learning needs of today's students.

Empowering students to be agents of their learning is crucial for the development of 21st century competencies such as resilience, problem solving and collaboration. The more you control the kids learning, the less they control it (O'Reilly, 2016).

Some ways to develop student agency from my findings are described below.

1. Rich tasks for inquiry learning.

Giving kids rich and varied and challenging experiences is a way of raising the student's questions that is a much more sophisticated approach than either open inquiry or teacher-led inquiry. Rich tasks developed in topics of students' interest, authentic problems or experiences creates an opportunity for collaborative learning and learning partnerships. One model I read of in a Spanish school is learner driven and collaborative. The topic is chosen by students, they record what they already know, develop a hypothesis to work on, form groups to work on the project together, manage the group with roles and tasks and present findings after a specified time.

2. Project based learning

This involves the setting of an authentic purpose e.g. organising a maths night for parents at school and an Asian festival. Students believe that this is a way to learn literacy and numeracy as well as 'learning to learn' and developing key competencies.

If it's the student talking then it must be important. If students are passionate about it, care about it, they will look into it and then their friends will join in and their friends will join in and so on. When it's student driven you have to problem solve, you have to fix things. (Student voice)

Aitken (2010) calls this 'knowing it in your bones' because you've lived it, you've done it, you know it because you've experienced it.

3. Workshops for student-led learning

Small groups of no more than 12 students for activities that could not be carried out with larger groups, photography, theatre, robotics, television, radio. Each term, students rotate to take part in different activities across the year. Organising workshops across the school with students going to different teachers builds the concept of the 'whole school' as the learning environment, shared and owned by all.

4. Learning through play

Learning through play was being explored in some of the schools I visited. I learned about 'Makerspace Philosophy' which is built upon the foundation of constructivism, hands-on learning through building things. Maker Education is a branch of constructivist philosophy that views learning as a highly personal endeavor requiring the student, rather than the teacher, to initiate the learning process (Kurti, Kurti & Fleming, 2014).

Another approach for providing an environment where students are in charge of the learning process is the “Learning Corners” methodology (Spanish School). This is applied in the classroom through a programme where the children have to complete a series of weekly tasks in different spaces in the room. There is enough time during the week for children to also choose their favourite activities. This provides the scope for developing competencies and capabilities such as self-management, decision making, problem solving and collaboration for any age students.

Collaboration

The purpose of creating a collaborative culture is to build the capacity of everyone to be focussed on a collective purpose (Fullan and Quinn, 2016). Empowerment builds a culture of trust which can strengthen and support the progress towards the shared vision of an innovative learning environment. Working collaboratively is the way of teaching today. (O’Reilly, 2016). Moving to work in this way is where leadership to build a collaborative culture is a key element for creating an innovative learning environment.

Collaborative culture for teacher professional learning.

In creating a collaborative culture, leaders I spoke with talked about different ways of grouping teachers for professional learning and Inquiry; year level groups, curriculum area groups, common passions. At NPS this year we used a strategy to create groups for teachers Passion Projects where teachers recorded their questions or topics of passion and then categorised them to form teacher groups. This worked well, giving choice which is empowering and values the professionalism of teachers. School leaders I met, acknowledged the importance of knowing your teachers well and getting teacher combinations right for collaboration and co-teaching. One Principal discovered it is best to put a teacher who is knowledgeable and passionate about innovative learning with a less knowledgeable and /or passionate teacher. This has been two thirds successful. In one pairing the expert has tempered her new pedagogical approach as the other teacher has said she needs the change process to slow down for her. Similarly in the *Instituto Escuela Jacint Verdaguer* (2010) during the first term of each school year, teachers in the school train new teachers to the school and teachers are paired to work together with an experienced with less experienced and or new teachers.

Collaborative culture for student learning

When teachers collaborate things get better for students (O’Reilly, 2016). Communication and connection within, across and beyond the whole school is vital for developing this new pedagogy and learning partnerships that create an innovative learning environment. Students spoke to me of the value of teachers connecting and communicating with each other through the use of technology. Communication is much easier with technology.

Technology makes it easier for teachers to educate other teachers and educate us because they can go online to find resources. They can create their own presentations online instead of having to just talk or do it some old way that I don't know of (student voice).

Technology also allows the opportunity for collaboration to occur through the sharing of great learning. This can be across the school and even better, beyond the school. Sharing great learning moves the school towards a culture of innovation (Couros, 2015). Learning and

leadership is accelerated through sharing and sharing globally causes local impact. One school I visited was using an ICT tool called a pineapple chart for sharing what's going on in classrooms around teaching practice that teachers want to share. Setting aside time to share on Twitter, reading other posts and creating hashtags are some digital methods for sharing I heard about. Such methods of sharing great learning can cause competitive collaboration which in turn accelerates the growth of individuals and the school as a whole (Couros, 2015).

Activated Learning Spaces

My findings in relation to this have strengthened my belief in the value of activated (open and flexible) learning spaces and student-led learning as in a play-based environment. Open spaces create greater opportunity for collaboration and sharing for learning. In open spaces an environment can be created where the learning process and learning is initiated by the students. Nelson Park School has been developing a play-based environment for some years. Learning about 'MakerSpace' philosophy and the 'Learning Corners' methodology will support further progress in this innovation.

Transform the physical environment

Within the school and classrooms we need to create all sorts of different rich learning spaces where students can go according to what they are working on and learning. According to the Peel District School Board, 2016 in the vision document 'Empowering Modern Learners' dynamic, physical, virtual and inclusive spaces are designed to support learning and well-being (2016). There will be some potential closed off spaces for explicit teaching and some more 'community spaces'. The possibility of closing down the classroom and having the capacity to open it, if explicit teaching for a large group is what you need at the time. It can be as simple as just rearranging the classroom layout. It doesn't have to be massive new designer buildings, however these new buildings do offer greater opportunity for flexible use of space for learning. Judith Aitken(2010) exemplifies an ordinary old traditional classroom where a multilevel platform was created in the corner. It was amazing how quickly the kids chose to move and use that particular environment as a different space.

Create a digital environment

Giving students access to video's and other digital apps that they can use accelerates their learning. Couros (2015) notes that YouTube makes self teaching possible, as well as raising the bar for excellence through sheer visibility. This is supported in some of the student voice I gathered.

Videos online give us visuals, easier to learn and remember stuff this way, more understanding than us just reading about it. You remember more than you do reading a text book. The video gives you the information you need to apply it to your learning, and you can refer back to it whenever you need to (student voice).

A district wide provision of relevant digital learning resources has been hugely successful in the Peel District School Board. The Board has set up a site for all schools called Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) where every student has an account.

The site is controlled so it's easier to find stuff. They give you all of the links that you might need. Teachers put all kinds of resources on, so you can go on and do whatever you like. Having these resources helps to meet deadlines, you don't have to waste time. When internet was first introduced it was like, oh my god. I don't have to flip through text books to find answers I can just google it and now with this, we don't have to google it, the main things that our school has provided for us are all there (student voice).

Providing reliable and equitable access to information, resources and other digital technologies is one of the four key components in the vision document "Empowering Modern learners" (2016). The value of this was acknowledged by students as being;

- technology makes sharing of information easier and accessible to everyone.

without a data projector teachers would have to get some book and show it up and it would be really hard for students at the back and if they have eyesight problems.

Saves paper, teachers don't have to print things out. If you don't have a computer at home, the library is open after school.

I can go on the school calendar and see what's going on. Morning announcements on google slides so teachers can display it for us, better than listening, cos you might miss something because some students are talking or something.

- videos and 'youtube' give students the chance to manage and control their own learning.

Teachers have a lot of videos and you-tubes they can show us e.g. it would have been really hard for me to learn about ordered pairs if I had to look at textbook, but a video gives really good examples step by step, so it's better than a textbook cos you look at an example and you don't know which part they did first so the video is better.(student voice)

- Assignments and the learning within these can be shared among students and the teacher. This can strengthen the learning partnership that Fullan and Quinn (20) describe as the the new pedagogy.

All classes have Google classroom where the assignments are. Teacher invites the whole class so the students can talk to each other online to ask about something, you don't have to call them up.

- Information can be shared across the community, informing parents about the operation of the school and inviting them to be involved with the students learning.

It's a better way for parents to get information, they can just go online. They don't have a login but they can use their kids student login to keep track of their education and find out what's going on around the school.

Conclusion.

During my sabbatical the New Zealand Ministry of Education released the Digital Technologies Curriculum document draft for consultation. School leaders will need to embrace this document and see it as a supporting document for the creation of innovative learning environments for students to develop the necessary competencies, skills and knowledge for their lives. Travelling across the world during this sabbatical has opened my eyes to the huge impact that digital technology is having on everyone on a global scale. The 'go to' place for information and resources is a digital device. Jobs once done by humans are already being done by computers and robots. This was especially noticeable in airports, bus and train stations and banks. Leadership means securing accountability to the vision and the best way to do this is to develop conditions that maximise 'internal accountability. Conditions such as capacity building, using underperformance as an opportunity for growth (not blame) and using 'external accountability to benchmark progress i.e. standards (Fullan and Quinn, 2016), strengthen and support commitment to the vision. Leaders need to stick to the vision through action i.e. they need to be 'essentialists' which is about getting the right things done, not about getting more done in less time. (McKeown,2014). Developing a framework for achieving the vision/intent or a innovative learning curriculum are two systems that can support the essential focus on the vision. Everything refers back to the vision through a framework and or curriculum.

This study has strengthened my resolve to keep moving forward and to continue to build a team with the capacity to innovate for relevant learning for today's students. I conclude that this is urgent and we can't continue to teach students in ways that will not serve them in learning and living for their present and future. Basics are still important to be taught and learned but the way we teach them needs to change to motivate and engage both teachers and students. The way we teach and learn must reflect the technologies, information and people that are available to us, rather than the teacher being the "fount of all knowledge". As a leader I need to support and encourage teachers with relentlessness to innovate and make learning better.

Focussing on deepening learning and building the new pedagogy with a co-created vision and curriculum sets the course for the digital and physical environment to be created alongside as beliefs in innovation deepen. Open physical environments such as the flexible learning spaces we have in our school need to be maximised as they provide greater opportunity for deep learning through partnerships and innovation. Leaders who provide physical and digital resources for this environment alongside the pedagogical leadership will cause deeper and more sustained pedagogy for innovation. As the school leader I must also create a collaborative culture as nothing great can be achieved by individuals.

To be this leader will undoubtedly be challenging. It means to never stop learning, as in the words of Albert Einstein *Once you stop learning, you start dying*. It will mean driving

collaborative reflection, encouraging risk, acknowledging mistakes, moving with ‘essentialism’ in the agreed direction and measuring progress in new ways. Working as a team with the school community and connecting globally with other educationalists will be essential in this role.

For Nelson Park School this is exciting as we are already innovating for learning. With a collaborative culture for professional learning, an inquiry approach into the impacts of teaching on learning, the developing ‘learning through play’ pedagogy and increased use of digital technology for learning we are well on the way. Understanding the value of open spaces for activating learning and maximising the physical environment at school is an exciting way forward.

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