



In Search of Innovation: Shifting the Mindset about Professional Learning for Educators¹

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There is much to learn from observing the characteristics of innovators we have known and the ideas they put in motion to make extraordinary things happen.

Innovation in classrooms today mainly centres around opportunities to learn and apply 21st Century Skills which generally have been packaged in contemporary learning experiences and applied in contemporary learning environments. There is encouragement for teachers to ensure that students have a hunger to 'learn as if they could never have enough of learning and as if they might miss something' (Confucius, 551 -479), but at the same time to pursue high levels of academic achievement against national standards for both the students and themselves.

Professional learning and capacity building to ensure achievement of standards and the learning of 21st Century Skills for educators however has become packaged modules unwrapped for the masses to ensure a standards approach to knowledge and implementation. The potential to innovate, to actually know and practice 21st Century Skills as educators is seen to be a lower priority to that of achieving prescribed standards.

This paper documents a story of innovation, the development and implementation of a world first professional learning world and network that in its early implementation phase has already responded to issues of access to professional learning and development through its anywhere, anytime approach providing opportunities for educators to refine 21st century skills and to create, collaborate, innovate, share and transform their professional practice with the support of peer coaches (in Second World) and learning partners (online) with tools and resources that are new to the professional learning and development space.

This innovation has challenged those at a systems level about 'how we do things around here' and created discomfort as the status quo has been challenged on what and how professional learning should be designed and delivered for educators.

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