**Big Picture Question:**

**How can we use Innovative Learning approaches in the Kavanagh College environment**

**INTRODUCTION**

Kavanagh College has a traditional physical environment. It is unlikely that much of this will change in the near future. I was particularly interested in looking at what I could take back pedagogically without major physical changes in the environment. I was concerned this physical environment may prevent or inhibit making major innovative changes to our teaching and learning. Without the trigger of the physical nature of an modern learning environment, how easy would it be to implement innovative learning approaches?

**OBSERVATIONS**

Taking into account previous research,professional development and considering our unique environment, I have narrowed my observations from the e-learning tour in the following key areas:

**Collaborative Planning and Delivery/Integrated Studies**

Traditionally schools have a constructive curriculum where each subject works in isolation, working with a segment of the students learning. Students have little power to make change. One college put this question –“What might happen if teachers and students had some influence and control over this in a collaborative manner?”

The four schools dealt with this in a variety of ways. All had integrated studies during some, or all of what has traditionally been “Core Subjects” into one extended slot of time.

* Year level focus which is embedded in all modules
* Year level split in two so each half does the same subject/HUB/ study at the same time – this gives you flexibility in grouping and in context
* Time for collaboration and shared planning regularly eg one afterschool each week and 1/2 days per term
* Only one staff briefing before school and one at interval Friday – time for Integrated Studies/HUBS/CORE leaders and faculty leaders to meet
* HUBS combinations differed: 5 HUBS (Humanities and science combined) CORE (including all of our traditional core subjects), PODS - theme based for 6 weeks
* Integrated Studies – provides opportunity for depth
* Importance of relationships between team members
* Importance of a motivated leader who has trust and training to lead the Integrated Studies curriculum
* Be flexible and imaginative around curriculum integration
* 100min blocks/day

**Requires:**

* Acknowledgement of massive change for teachers
* Parents need to be included in the journey
* Collaborative planning and delivery is the accepted norm so embedded in “what we do and why we do it”
* Staff wanting to change and work together – critical point
* Time essential for effective Collaboration, timetabled in school time
* Junior School timetabled first
* Permission to think differently and be flexible
* Permission to try things outside the box

**Authentic Learning/Learning Anytime Anywhere**

Many of the schools spoke of authentic learning. This is the need for learning to be in context and to be related to what students were passionate about. The collaborative studies idea lends itself to learning in context. Within this base of learning the concept of learning Anywhere Anytime can be embedded. This concept isnt new to Kavanagh College. We have had a system that has allowed this flexibility with our Senior School. Unfortuantely many didn’t have the skills and habits to allow them to work well under these conditions. With development of skills at a junior level this may well be able to be reintroduced.

* Early years time of greatest growth for students in all 4 areas of development, time for skills and habits to be developed
* Student Centred - control lies with the students to foster engagement, ownership and agency over their learning
* Some choice in what and when they complete work, not all students need to attend the same classes/tutorials
* Action –based learning perhaps thru a Passion Project – one/two periods/one day – For all schools who ran this project, Friday doesn’t look like a normal day
* Sharing of content and skills to cover in the Collaboative Studies curriculum
* Focus on Inquiry Learning and Problem Solving

**Relationships – developing positive relationships by meeting student needs**

Time and time again relationships were talked about: between teachers, teacher sand students, school and community.

* Mentoring mentor teachers with aprox 15 students, meet daily and longer one day a week. Focus is on well-being. Staffed by all in the school including ancillary staff – get one day off per term no questions asked
* Critical –the combination of teachers working together collaboratively
* First three days TOD – focus is to learn about their learners
* Year Focus for a year level to encourage belonging
* Academic Dean team and Dean support mentoring process
* Academic Dean Team – use study leave time to complete work
* Real time reporting for community
* Senior School - two semesters – first half is all internals and then a choice again of what you would like to do in the second semester – options include more internals, externals, work, based on vocational pathway

**REFLECTION**

**Things we need to consider:**

* Shift in teachers mind set is more crucial than a physical shift in environment
* Mind shift from teaching as something we do to the children, to trusting students to make good decisions about their learning and ownership of this learning
* Change is hard work – staff need to be open to challenge the way we think about learning
* How do our teachers see themselves as agency of change?
* Workload issue with collaborative planning and delivery
* Contributing Schools – acknowledge the journey that has already been made (31 contributing schools)

**NEXT STEP**

1. Priority: Innovative Learning Pedagogy requires a change in teacher mindset.
* We have talked in PD a lot about the 21st century learner and how the requirements for our students in this age is different. The jobs and lifestyle they will be moving into will change dramatically in the next 10 years.
* Our new Year 7’s will be graduating in 2023 . What are we doing now that is preparing them for this world? PD is required around innovative pedagogy in the classroom and school wide
1. Should the Focus be on Year 7-10.
* Explicit teaching of skills to acquire knowledge and teaching skills to explore a theme?
* We should explore collaborative learning at Year 7 and 8 but real focus will be on Year 9.
1. Teachers need to be given the confidence they can make the change.
* We need to make steps towards changes with the intention of starting in 2018.
* This requires taking small steps and acknowledging that staff move at different paces. We need to provide PD prior to making these changes.

4. Develop Inquiry learning throughout the curriculum

* Implementing an Inquiry learning/ Project Slot once a week.
* Starting with Year 7-10 for oneperiod per week
* Impact on the curriculum? Subject silos?