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Learning Futures: Can we redesign schools into relevance?
By Valerie Hannon
Valerie Hannon, a Board Director of the Innovation Unit, in England, asks ‘What can be the response of educators who are convinced by the need for change, but who are often locked in to systems that seem impermeable and deeply resilient?’ She argues it is possible for educators working within the system to engage with transformational innovation, finding spaces for new approaches and creating a critical mass of great next practice, in work which may prove vital for helping transform whole systems at scale. She explores examples from the UK’s Learning Futures project and discusses the implications for practitioners and system leaders.


Inquiring learning environments: New mindsets required
By Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser
The authors work with schools in British Columbia’s Networks of Inquiry and Innovation, and with graduates in programs designed to create new mindsets about learning and leadership. They discuss the OECD’s research study, Innovative Learning Environments, and identify the mindsets of leaders that are required to shift systems from a preoccupation on sorting to a deep focus on learning. Offering examples of the approach to inquiry and innovation that informs the work of schools in British Columbia, they invite readers to think about how disciplined approaches to inquiry could lead to innovative designs and radically improved outcomes in their own settings.


Autonomous school leadership, school improvement and the role of professional associations: The importance of ‘telling the story’
By Allan Shaw
Allan Shaw, who was CEO of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia (AHISA), describes how research with members of his association, exploring their experience of autonomous school leadership, places an emphasis on ‘narrative’. In continuing work, educators tell their own stories, through interviews or in written form, and consistent themes and principles have been incorporated in an association model. He argues that professional associations such as AHISA are uniquely well-placed to play an important role in school improvement, and that gathering and sharing narratives from individual school leaders in their own contexts can help inform thinking and practice in a range of school settings.

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