

INNOVATION

School ReDesign



“Do not go where the path may lead.
Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Always be a first rate version of yourself
and not a second rate version of someone else.”
-Judy Garland

INNOVATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The work of redesigning a school or creating a new school for that matter always revolves around understanding – deeply – the students that will inhabit that place of learning. Most importantly, Innovation means "restoration, renewal," from Late Latin *innovationem* or from past participle stem of *innovare* "to change; to renew". It is a word of action.

School Innovation ReDesign work is always guided by five features:



INNOVATION SCHOOL REDESIGN: ESSENTIALS

- **CHOICE** matters. No choice for students can be a limiting factor. Students learn differently, a variety of learning designs matter. School ReDesign is often about the pedagogical choices available to students.
- **COLLABORATION** is at the heart of innovation. Katzenbach and Smith also provide tips on how to achieve optimal collaboration in a team setting.
 - Small numbers of people – typically less than 12.
 - Common purpose for working
 - Experience and complementary skills
 - Shared work reaching towards a shared vision.
 - Mutual accountability amongst all members.¹
- **COMMUNICATION** matters. Pay attention to the five C's of effective communication.
 - Clarity: Sharing what matters, speaking clear about ideas.
 - Completeness: Have we thought and discussed completely?
 - Conciseness: Saying less, says more.
 - Concreteness: How practical and worthy is this for the students?
 - Correctness: What is our data? Where is our evidence?

¹ Katzenbach, Jon R., and Douglas K. Smith. *The Wisdom of Teams*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2003.

- **COMMUNITY** in a school design will sustain that school design. Community theory establishes four essential components.²
 - Membership (which requires boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging/identification, personal investment, common symbol system)
 - Influence by members on the group and by the group on the members
 - Integration and fulfillment of needs
 - Shared emotional connection.

Building upon the school as a community, dedicated educators and community leaders can create an innovative pedagogical menu of opportunity for its students and families.

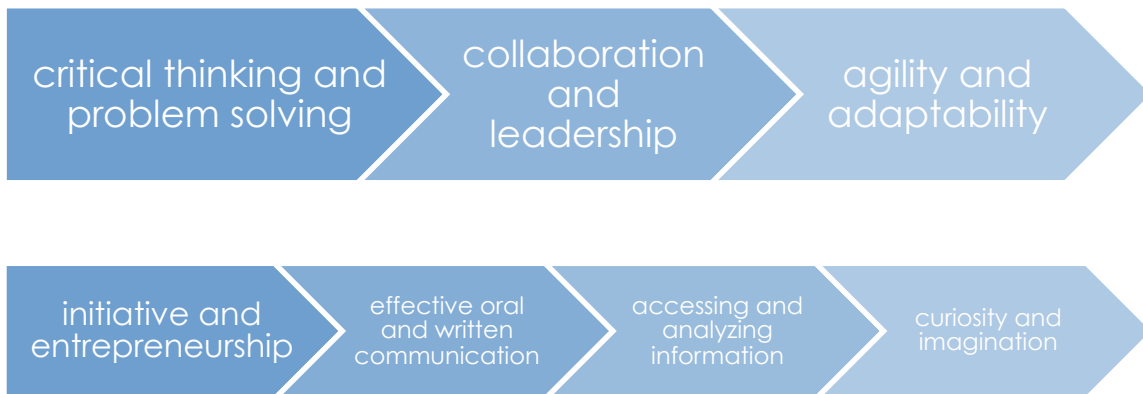
- **COURAGE** is the engine of change. Courage is that yearning forward to tackle challenges and that passion unrestrained to grow a school design to tackle those challenges. There are abundant educational visionaries and practitioners of courage that we can draw upon in this inherently challenging work of creating innovative schools.
- Size matters to the scale and complexity of the school as an accessible community. If a large school of 1,500 students, look to create smaller academies or programs within – a campus of smaller school choices. Teaming efficacy for educators is most effective between 15 and 30 educators; and for students between 100 and 300 students.
- A new school does not mean a new building. A wing of a current building can become an amazing school. A multi-school campus can centralize food service, specials, and transportation and still have two or more distinctive schools.
- Magnet schools, Innovative Schools, University Lab Schools, and Charter Schools have all developed pedagogies and programs that can be implemented in current high schools. The work is reimaging one's school in place and visioning forward.

² McMillan, D.W., & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6-23.

INNOVATION SCHOOL REDESIGN: THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS

Tony Wagner in his book, *The Global Achievement Gap*, discussed that “students need to master seven survival skills to thrive in the new world of work. And these skills are the same ones that will enable students to become productive citizens who contribute to solving some of the most pressing issues we face in the 21st century.”

They continue to be an excellent list of what redesign conversations should strive as essential outcomes beyond the important content standards that make up every school.



INNOVATION SCHOOL REDESIGN: THE IMPORTANCE OF COURAGE

*"Courage is the most important of all virtues, because without it we can't practice any other virtue with consistency."
-Maya Angelou*

*"The uplift of a fearless heart will help us over barriers. No one ever overcomes difficulties by going at them in a hesitant, doubtful way."
-Laura Ingalls Wilde*

*"Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example."
-Mark Twain*

*"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow."
-Mary Anne Radmacher*

*"The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving."
-Oliver Wendell Holmes*

AN EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION

Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit." -Aristotle

One example of innovation in practice is the development of a new pedagogical model called the **Interdisciplinary Learning Collaborative**. Developed by James Lewicki and an innovate team of schools in 2009, it grew to ten redesigned or new high schools over the subsequent four years.

It serves as an example of what the work of innovation can bring education. A visual overview can be viewed [here](#).

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE (ILC)

The following are the seven design elements of the ILC pedagogy:

- Integrated curriculum where assorted elective standards are woven into the range of core academic Science, English, Math, and Social Studies standards to create a reinvented interdisciplinary methodology for learning.
- Dedicated time for collaborative teacher planning; and a significant commitment to team teaching.
- Flexible scheduling to implement a wide range of learning infrastructure.
- Interdisciplinary learning designs of seminars, workshops, modules, symposiums, internships and foundation courses that is responsive and responsible to the student as individual learner in a collaborative context with ongoing community engagement realities.
- Interdisciplinary management teams (IMT's) where each teacher coaches a multi-age group of students for four years: small group dynamics, team management, problem solving, and communication skills development.
- Collaborative Community Business/Industry/Recreation/Non-Profit/Natural Resource Partners as places to learn and learn from.
- Development of a collaborative small school culture — respectful and responsive to the voices and choices inherent in a generative learning community — founded on the above design elements of the interdisciplinary learning collaborative.

High School of Health Sciences, Kettle Moraine, Wisconsin

- World Leading Learner School
<https://www.americaachievesednetworks.org/worldleading-learners>
- Medical College Partnership
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBGud6g-N_A
- School Website
<https://www.kmsd.edu/hs2>

KM Perform, Kettle Moraine, Wisconsin

- Twice named to the "Top 100 Innovative Schools to Visit" Tom Vander Ark
www.gettingsmart.com
- An outstanding newsletter of its learning:
<https://www.smores.com/tsr2n>
- School Website
<https://www.kmsd.edu/kmperform>

Northern Lakes Regional Academy, Rice Lake, Wisconsin

- STEAM (Science, Tinkering, Engineering, Aesthetics, & Math) Academy
<https://nlra.ricelake.k12.wi.us/>
- Outstanding Seminars and Workshops
<https://nlra.ricelake.k12.wi.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=9492922>
- School Website
<https://nlra.ricelake.k12.wi.us/>

Clark Street Community School, Middleton, Wisconsin

- Simply – one of the best!
<http://www.clarkstreetcommunityschool.com/academics>
- Youth Engagement from Clark Street's school leader Jill Gurtner and colleagues
http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/81b797_2f3da580b2914015b31edee79da4a1ae.pdf
- School Website

<http://www.clarkstreetcommunityschool.com/>

Wausau Engineering and Global Leadership, Wausau, Wisconsin

- 90-Minute Seminars & Engineering Workshops
<http://wausauegl.org/curriculum/teacher-led/>
- School Website
<http://wausauegl.org/>

Little Chute Career Pathways Academy, Little Chute, Wisconsin

- Learning rooted in seminars, workshops, job shadowing and internships:
<https://www.lccpa.littlechute.k12.wi.us/academiccourses.cfm>
- School Website
<https://www.lccpa.littlechute.k12.wi.us/index.cfm>

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES - always central to the innovation

Essential Questions that help to guide a high school student's effort.

Empirical Reasoning - *How do I prove it?*

This goal is to think like a scientist: to use empirical evidence and a logical process to make decisions and to evaluate hypotheses. It does not reflect specific science content material, but instead can incorporate ideas from physics to sociology to art theory.

- What idea do I want to test? (Essential question)
- What has other research shown?
- What is my hypothesis?
- How can I test it?
- What information (data) do I need to collect?
- How will I collect the information?
- What will I use as a control in my research?
- How good is my information?
- What are the results of my research?
- What error do I have? How good is my information?
- What conclusions can I draw from my research?
- How will I present my results?

Social Reasoning - *What are others' perspectives on this?*

This goal is to think like an historian or anthropologist: to see diverse perspectives, to understand social issues, to explore ethics, and to look at issues historically.

- How do diverse communities view this?
- How does this issue affect different communities?
- Who cares about this? To whom is it important?
- What is the history of this? How has this issue changed over time?
- Who benefits and who is harmed through this issue?
- What do people believe about this?
- What social systems are in place around this?
- What are the ethical questions behind this?
- What do I think should be done about this?
- What can I do?

Habits of Mind, Work, Wellness, & Service - *What do I bring to this process?*

This goal is to be the best you can be: to demonstrate respect, responsibility, organization, leadership, and to reflect on your abilities and strive for improvement.

- What is the history of this? How has this issue changed over time?
- Who benefits and who is harmed through this issue?
- What do people believe about this?
- What social systems are in place around this?
- What are the ethical questions behind this?
- What do I think should be done about this?
- What can I do?
- How can I demonstrate respect?
- How can I empathize more with others?
- How can I look out for my health and well being?
- How can I communicate honestly about this?
- How can I be responsible for this?
- How can I persevere at this?
- How can I better organize my work?
- How can I better manage my time?
- How can I be more self-aware?
- How can I take on more of a leadership role?
- How can I work cooperatively with others?
- How can I enhance my community through this?

Communication - *How do I take in and express ideas?*

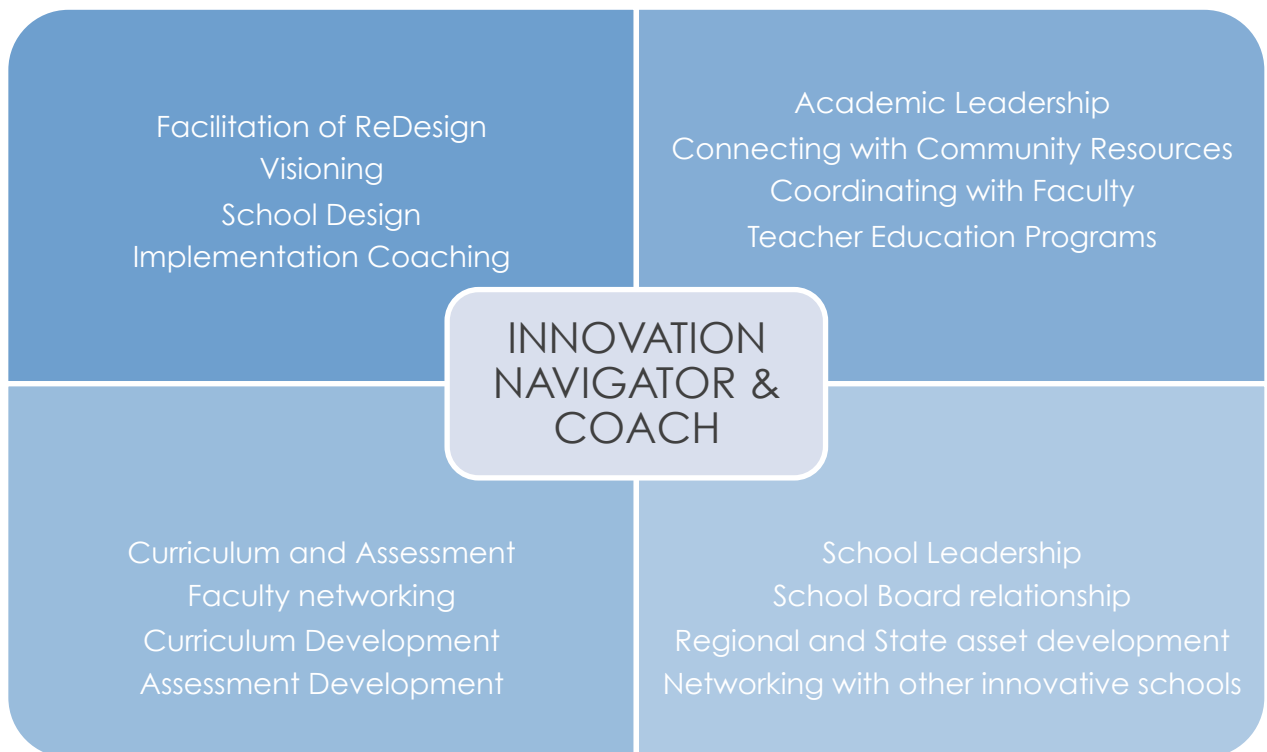
This goal is to be a great communicator: to understand your audience, to write, read, speak and listen well, to use technology and artistic expression to communicate, and to be exposed to another language.

- How can I write about it?
- What is the main idea I want to get across (thesis)?
- Who is my audience?
- What can I read about it?
- Who can I listen to about it?
- How can I speak about it?
- How can technology help me to express it?
- How can I express it creatively?
- How can I express it in another language?

INNOVATION & LEADERSHIP

A Navigator/Coach is important for the ReDesign conversation, planning, design, and eventual implementation. This leadership can come from within the school community and/or from expertise from outside it.

What seems best is a blend of both - leadership and facilitation - anchored in the district and high school, but joined by experience of having been down the innovative path before.



To discuss aspects of Innovation and School ReDesign feel free to contact James Lewicki at jameslewicki@earthlink.net or visit his website at www.jameslewicki.org