Where did it begin?

In 2013, Barrie, Pauline, Eric O’Brien, Matt Bagley and I went to visit Pt England School to investigate their journey with Chromebooks.

Students were engaged, focussed on their learning, could articulate their goals and were able to learn according to their learning styles.

They Year 7 and 8’s had a huge open space in which to work. Some were composing music, others were researching, designing storyboards, working with the teachers, doing art…..all the learning we have here BUT they could choose where to work - on couches, on the floor, at high tables, low tables.

They also had all three classes working within the huge space. Students in different groups, working at the level that suits them best, following their learning pathways, and having all the teachers assisting them with their learning.

This was a whole syndicate of motivated learning.
This was motivating:

So what did we do?

- Firstly we suggested we cut a big hole in the wall, turned the corridor into a learning space and built out in the front of the classes.

- We investigated furniture for a Modern Learning Environments. (2013 Administration Folder)

- Pauline and I went to a Technology Symposium in July holidays at Hobsonville Point. These are Primary and Secondary Schools built with MLE - this further added to the way Education was moving.
Further Investigation:

- Pauline, several Yr 7 students and I visited Waiau Pa School
- The Board purchased Chromebooks to trial.

- In August 2013 Pauline and I visited Clevedon School and The Gardens School to look at MLE and the use of 1-1 Devices

- Chromebooks and conventional desks didn’t go together, so in Term 3 2013 students designed the room using what furniture we could scrounge and creating areas that they felt they could work in. (2013 Administration Folder Powerpoint)

- We began the research journey into Modern Learning Environments and Student Driven Curriculums
August 2013: Visit to Clevedon School and The Gardens School
Room 3's Journey:

Students discussing, planning and setting up an environment that they feel more comfortable working in. (2013)

Students tend to spend time collaborating and sharing information and their learning. They question and show critical thinking when trying to find a solution to a problem.
2014: Introduction of Chromebooks

With the full introduction of Chromebooks and the capacity with which students embraced them and used them to pursue their learning meant that changes in the way we educated was needed. [Teaching the 21st Century Learner](#)

Students had the world at their fingertips and could access answers / information faster than ever before. They were able to follow their own interests, researching, learning at their own pace. This meant they could review and go over information if they were unsure.

We continued research into Personalised Learning.
Modern Learning Environments:

During Syndicate Meetings we looked at research and latest thinking on MLE.

Further investigation meant we needed to get out and look at MLE.

Paul, Pauline and I went with advisors on a ‘bus tour’ of schools in West Auckland, looking at Personalised Learning and MLE.

Pauline and I visited Harrisville School/ Waipipi who had adopted the MLE approach with conventional/remodelled classrooms.

Dianne, Eunice and I visited Stonefields to view a MLE in action.....this was inspiring!
Stonefields School:
Personalised Learning:

We know that this is the ultimate way to engage students and facilitate their learning.

We need to first scaffold this process and assist them to understand the steps they need to go through. This learning can be undertaken by themselves, with a partner or as part of a small group. This is our ultimate goal.....we are on the road!
“What we know about learning has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. MRI scanning that allows us to see inside the brain as learning occurs, and landmark studies such as John Hattie’s Visible Learning (Hattie, 2008) mean that we now have a much better idea of how learning occurs.

As a result of these developments and others, we know that quality learning is a combination of the following elements:

- **Personalised learning**: no two individuals learn in the same way, nor do they bring the same prior knowledge to a learning experience. The way we learn is as unique as our fingerprint.

- **Socially constructed learning** (Johnson, 1981): the collaboration, peer-tutoring and reciprocal teaching that occurs when students work together results in a deeper understanding of the material being covered.

- **Differentiated learning** (Bloom, 1974): the prior knowledge we all bring to a task means individuals require different levels of challenge, pace, content and context.

- **Learning that is initiated by students themselves** (Ramey & Ramey, 2004): typically when a student initiates a learning experience or exploration, they learn more.

- **Learning that is connected to the physical world and authentic contexts**: children learn through interaction with others and the physical world (Malone & Tranter, 2003). Learning about pond ecosystems is more powerful if students visit a pond in addition to learning about them in a classroom or textbook.

Most of New Zealand’s school buildings were built in a time when direct instruction was considered the only pedagogy that resulted in effective learning. “Factory-style’ learning (where all students learn the same things, at the same time, in lock-step fashion) has largely disappeared from our classes. However the actual classrooms largely remain as they were originally designed, and still retain the suggestion of factory-style learning.”
“Modern learning environments that align better with what we know about the brain and student learning can facilitate traditional pedagogies such as direct instruction if needed, but they typically offer students and teachers much more:

- **Flexibility**: the ability to combine two classes into one for team-teaching, split a class into small groups and spread them over a wider area or combine different classes studying complementary learning areas.

- **Openness**: modern learning environments traditionally have fewer walls, more glass and often use the idea of a learning common (or hub) which is a central teaching and learning space that can be shared by several classes. They provide opportunities to observe and learn from the teaching of others and be observed in return. They also provide access to what students in other learning areas and level are learning, so that teaching and learning can be complemented and enhanced.

- **Access to resources (including technology)**: typically a learning common is surrounded by breakout spaces allowing a range of different activities, such as reading, group work, project space, wet areas, reflection, and presenting. There is often a mixture of wireless and wired technology offering access as and when students need it, within the flow of their learning.

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**Learning environments to support student learning**

Many of the modern learning environments being built today effectively promote and support a range of pedagogies including delivering, applying, creating, communicating and decision-making. Often they are centred around a student ‘home base’ where a lot of the teaching and learning occurs but these bases also allow access to other learning spaces. Not all classes will need all spaces all of the time, but students should have access to them should the need arise.

Modern learning environments support strengths-based teaching. For example, two classes collaborating on a science project that requires them to publish what they’ve learnt in the form of an educational poster will achieve much better results if both classes have access to one teacher who has considerable skill in graphic design and one teacher who has excellent knowledge of science and scientific inquiry”. CORE ED 2014
Where to next?

After being at Harrisville where they had modernised the Library and turned it into a MLE, it was suggested that the opportunity for us to adopt was prime. The upgrade of the info centre as a leaky building meant it could become a MLE. This took some research as to what areas worked best.

CORE ED

We have adopted the common theme of: ‘Watering Hole’ where students gather, discuss, suggest and sort out ideas. ‘Cave’ a space for students who want to work by themselves, have some quiet alone time. ‘Campfire’ where sharing takes place, sharing of ideas, sharing of work, solving of problems. ‘Mountain Top’ where great things are shouted from, celebrations are held, and it will also be the film studio. ‘Sandpit’ where ‘hands on ‘ experimentation takes place, creative juices run, technology and science is to the fore.

Collaborative teaching is important - working together, talking, shaping, being flexible....the ultimate way to teach.
Why Have We Started Already?

We want the transition to be as easy as possible:

We are already:

- Working syndicate wide groups
- Using personalised learning across different subjects:
  - Puppets
  - A Walk Through The Ages
  - Maths Algebra
- Working together with all learners - ‘It takes a village to raise a child’
- Talking, planning, restructuring, planning, refining and talking more
- Sharing common expectations and goals for learners - we all know where their next learning steps are
- Using personalised learning and scaffolding for all learners
- Putting into practice routines that will be used in the MLE.....and we cannot wait to get there!