

[anne knock](#)

CULTURE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SPACE AND DESIGN FOR LEARNING



# Paradigm shift: from solo-teacher to teaching team

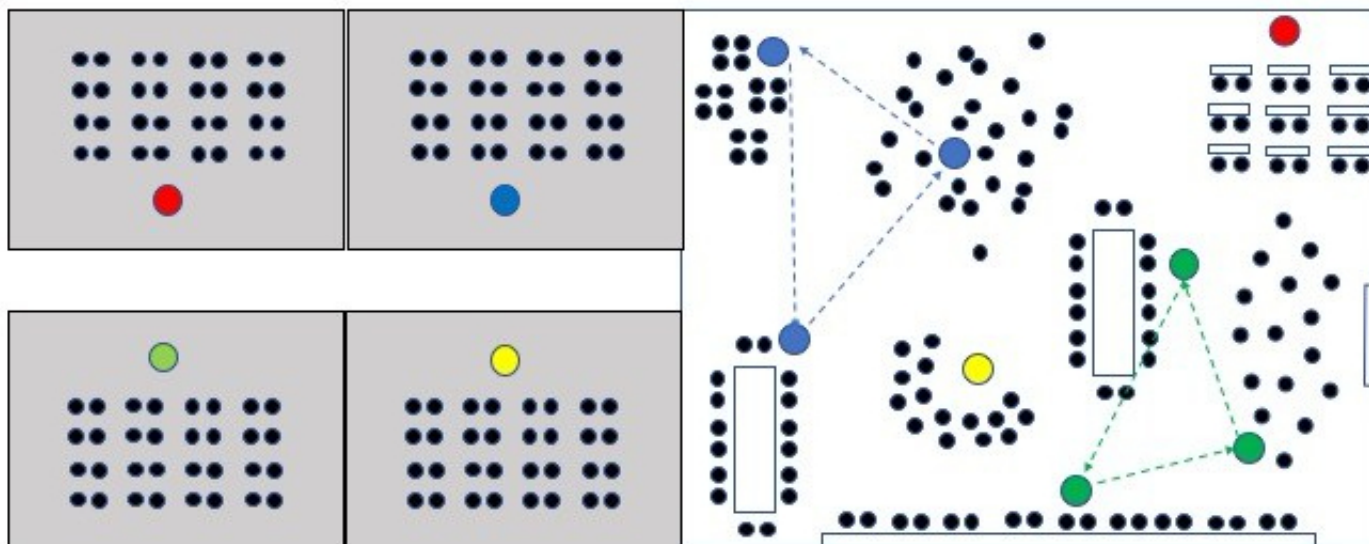


BY ANNE KNOCK

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My professional focus is the future of learning and learning environments. I see that the design of the spaces where learning occurs, plays a significant part in providing the context for the education our students need today. The innovative learning environment (ILE) enables an array of opportunities for student learning, supporting a variety of learning modes and pedagogical approaches. It gives teachers the opportunities to work to their strengths, to share practice and collaborate. But the effectiveness of the learning and teaching in an ILE, I believe, is dependent on how teachers work together as a team and how the culture is shaped by the leadership.



## Shifting the paradigm from solo teachers to teaching team

Where there are multiple classes in shared spaces, maximising the opportunities afforded is dependent on the collective values held and the connectedness of the teachers co-located. If teachers and students are operating as discreet classes in an open learning environment, then the walls may as well be in place, with cupboards and bookshelves used to create makeshift walls.



easier for teachers to just stay on their own, the stages of team development can be difficult, but the advantages are worth it, for the teachers themselves, as well as their students.

Then there's the second part of that quote, "de-privatisation of practice challenged long-held beliefs and understanding of privacy in teaching". This requires addressing prevailing mindsets that may exist around privatisation of practice, and fundamental beliefs underpinning teacher pedagogy. The predominant mental model of what it is to be a teacher has long been one class, one teacher in a four-sided box. Look at the way media portrays school and teaching, newspaper articles online about education are usually accompanied by stock images that show the solo-teacher paradigm, thereby reinforcing the community's own long-held beliefs about school.

*"principals also need to adjust their leadership practices to be more conducive to innovation, collaboration, reflection, diversity, and professionalism"* (Ross & Cozzens, 2016).

Supporting a team approach to teaching is not only reliant on the teachers, but also the school leadership. Ideally, when teachers embrace a team approach that is characterised by sharing, collaboration, transparency and openness, the school culture holds corresponding values, attitudes and practices which are articulated, and modelled by the school leadership. This means that the leadership of the school operates as a team, and perhaps the principal or head teacher may need to take drastic steps, such as relinquishing their own private office,

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*This post is based on a presentation at the University of Melbourne/LEaRN symposium:  
Talking Spaces 8*

## Refs

Fisher, S. G., Hunter, T. A., & Macrosson, W. D. K. (1997). Team or group? Managers' perceptions of the differences. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*(3-4), 232.

Ross, D. J., & Cozzens, J. A. (2016). The Principalship: Essential Core Competencies for Instructional Leadership and Its Impact on School Climate. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(9), 162-176

Saltmarsh, Chapman & Drew (2013), Issues of teacher professional learning within 'non-traditional' classroom environments. *Improving Schools* 16(3), p.220



The key point is not whether Commonwealth ideas are any good, it is whether they are likely to result in change for the better in the classroom. Supplied

by Julie Sonnemann and Peter Goss

Australia has serious problems in school education, but heavy-handed Commonwealth intervention is not the answer.

From: The Australian Financial Review 18 Feb 2018

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## About [Anne Knock](#)

What does it take to inspire, empower and equip leaders for world where change is the only constant? I am an educational consultant and PhD candidate with the ILETC Project at Melbourne University. I facilitate workshops and regularly speak in the areas of: People, Place and Pedagogy in the new paradigm Facilitating change Challenging current practice Learning space design Equipping leaders to navigate change International education context I am passionate about rethinking school and learning to inspire and equip young people for an exciting future. To contact Anne and find out more about the work of SCIL or make contact visit: [scil.com.au](http://scil.com.au)

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