

Council of Directors of Education

Innovation Funding Report – 2016

Participant: W.R. (Rusty) Hick, Director of Education

Conference attended: European Conference on Classroom Technology

Organized by the International Academic Forum (IAFOR)

(Brighton, England. June 29 – July 4, 2016)

Although the conference was in Europe, over forty countries from all over the world were represented. As a result I attended sessions about Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the U.S., as well as several European countries. The sessions were mixed with K – 12 and higher education, with more colleges/universities than K – 12 systems represented.

Overall, it became clear that Ontario is very much at the forefront of incorporating learning technology into our classrooms. The session from a system principal in Singapore, which consistently is among the highest achieving jurisdictions in the world, emphasized ‘ICT enabled classrooms’, with the ‘5 e’s’ ; engage, explore, explain, elaborate, evolve .....it is very much an inquiry based approach with technology furthering and enabling the inquiry. Emphasizing the “big ideas” was clear as was, somewhat surprisingly, a student-centred approach.

With regard to the applicability of what was learned at the conference to our context here in Ontario is that it is clear that there is no magic answer or silver bullet to the use of instructional/learning technologies, what we are doing in so many ways, is indeed at the forefront, and we need to continue to encourage critical thinking by students and staff regarding the use and value of various technologies as well as experimentation with those technologies.