

# Creating the Best Conditions for Learning

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Farmers need to think carefully about the conditions for growing if their crops are to flourish. Places for learning need to think carefully about the conditions for learning if their students are to flourish.

I say 'places for learning' over 'schools' and 'learning institutions' or even 'places of learning' because we need to rethink and challenge norms and pre-existing assumptions if we are to try to address the needs of our students right now today. The currency we are going to give our students today to interact with a fast changing world is very different from the currency we gave our students before.

I've been lucky enough to spend time over the last six summers or so on my sister-in-laws' farm. <http://www.wmgcoop.com/?p=profiles&offset=3>. A beautiful setting with wonderful organic produce. Visiting a farm at one of the busiest times of the year requires the visitor to help and so I have been involved as a worker, helping nurture the produce. Whilst farming is by no means an area of expertise I can boast, I do know that the right conditions are crucial for the produce to flourish. A careful balance of knowledge, experience as well as a reliance on weather conditions, water sun etc.

Education is no different. We need to create the best conditions for learners to flourish. A place where they can grow. The teacher is the farmer with a huge responsibility.

When I walk in and out of classrooms at school, I look carefully at the conditions for learning. Not only the physical space (the land) but the nurturing and coaching of the teacher (maintaining and utilizing the weather conditions) as well as the resources available (the tools).

I think kids flourish in learning environments which:

- support innovative thought
- encourage questioning and critical thinking
- encourage discovery
- offer space to grow as a learner with unique styles and needs
- are fun

So, let's get out there with our wellies on, equipped with the tools and start growing!