Learning in school is one thing. Heading to university another. Rarely does either truly reflect the incredible pace of change in the world beyond those thirteen years of formal education, where the demands for more complex collaboration and ingenuity test even the best education systems' agility to the limit.

Take the world of fashion, for example. One of our clients, a luxury fashion brand for whom we develop and deliver education programmes in the communities in which it operates, has grown nearly ten times in as many years. Digital teams now operate on a par with merchandising and finance, and clothing designers themselves are acutely aware from their very first sketch how their product will look in a digital store as much as on the runway.

The people in these teams would be unlikely to have ever met had they attended the same school. Slightly geeky computer programmers would hardly be seen creating amazing projects with the fashionistas, the mathematics and science majors wouldn't be seen spending time in home economics thinking about how they could imbue cloth with data-processing technology that will heat the fabric when it's cold outside, and cool it down when summer arrives.

And in university, these serendipitous, tangential collaborations are made even more unlikely to succeed in anywhere other than extracurricular clubs, as students specialise ever deeper, narrower.

Yet, in the world outside formal education, serendipity is increasingly what makes the creative, financial, scientific and engineering worlds go around. Tangents, not five year plans, are where the biggest discoveries and creations of the past decade have come from, whether it's developing social networks with billions of users, finding preventative medicine in foods that can help more of us avoid cancer by eating certain foods regularly and cooking them correctly, or developing construction technologies that enable apartment blocks 17 stories high to be constructed in one week in China's expansive metropolises.

Chefs work with PhDs, construction trades work in ways that run against what their forefathers would have said was "right", and individuals in dorms can reach out and find the right team to get the rest done just as well.

Schools have an opportunity to prepare their young people with the robustness and acuity that is required to survive and thrive in this fast-paced, anything-is-possible world. It involves schools spending time like they've never spent it before understanding what constitutes collaboration, real collaboration and not just 'group work'.

It means the construction of new spaces, and the overhauling of existing ones. Rows of chairs and the same group of students sitting with each other all year long is not preparation for collaboration 'out there'. Students of the same ability working with each other doesn't chime with the notion that, in true collaboration, you reach out to those smarter than you to fill your gaps in understanding - we need more cross-age coaching, joint projects, younger students bringing their different perspective on the world to older students who might have lost it on the way.

And these aren't just great for collaboration. Education research is mounting that it is the skill set for collaboration in the real world that also brings the most to learners' progress in school.

Now, go and discuss this. In a team. Collaborate on something to rock the status quo of group work and encourage young people to truly collaborate.