

Reflections: Leading for Social Justice in Education

Leading for Social Justice in Education was the topical theme of the 2016 New Zealand Educational Administration and Leadership Society [NZEALS] International Leadership conference held in Dunedin, NZ, on 20-22 April. The NZEALS president described the biennial conference as providing her “with some of the best thinking around social justice I have heard in years.” This was brought about by the boutique conference atmosphere, participants’ willingness to engage with each other around the social justice theme, and by the high calibre of guest speakers and presenters.

Four keynote speakers were used as ignition points for subsequent thinking and discussion. Associate Professor Ross Notman’s opening address provided a positive and challenging launch pad for future plans for action for leading social justice, particularly in high-needs schools. Mai Chen (a leading New Zealand lawyer) spoke about the impacts of superdiversity on Education, with New Zealand being one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Dr Chris Sarra (Queensland educator) brought an Australian perspective as he reflected on his personal and professional journey as an Aboriginal educator and how we can put right the damage caused by low expectations of our students. Finally, Professor Bruce Barnett (UTSA) concluded the conference with an energetic address that encouraged high-need school leaders to become agents of hope for their students.

Conference attendees were able to enjoy national and international presenters from early childhood, primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions who shared research findings and practitioner experiences about leading for social justice and high needs in their education sector. Presentation topics ranged from *Social justice leadership of teachers and school directors in Costa Rica and Mexico* to *Beginning a new school based on the principles of social justice and curriculum integration in New Zealand* to *Transcending the contexts of a rural school in Texas and an urban school in California*. One conference member made the following comment: “It is imperative that we build cultural understanding, inclusiveness, equitable thinking and resourcing in New Zealand. My deputy principal summed it up beautifully with, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if we could have brought the whole staff to this – the ideas are so powerful we can’t just leave them in Dunedin’.”

In addition to this exposure to professional learning, attendees were able to take in an iconic train excursion, and visit impressive art galleries and the Otago Peninsula albatross colony. They all enjoyed the 20-minute ride to Larnach Castle for the evening conference and awards dinner, which included bagpipes and a haggis ceremony – not a surprising event given Dunedin’s deep Scottish heritage!

Contributing to the New Zealand conference success was the inclusion of members of the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) research project who both presented papers and held their annual meeting prior to the conference. The project was instigated in 2011 and comprises two fields of research endeavour: social justice and high-needs schools. This 15-country collaborative investigation seeks to address leadership challenges among the two streams via small-scale, case-study research. International team members at the conference included researchers from the Universities of Hong Kong, Melbourne and Edinburgh, together with Cal State Long Beach, Georgia State, Tennessee, and the University of Texas San Antonio.

The next biennial NZEALS International Conference will be held in Auckland, April 2018.

Speakers' Programme

We are pleased to be able to offer the following speakers' programme for teachers and leaders in the Otago, Southland regions this year:

In association with the New Zealand Educational Administration & Leadership Society (NZEALS), Dr Rachel McNae, University of Waikato, is the NZEALS Visiting Scholar for 2016. Rachel is Associate Professor and director of the Centre for Educational Research at the University of Waikato. Her specialist areas of expertise include: Women and Educational Leadership; Youth Leadership; Appreciative Inquiry; Leading for Social Justice.

Local Otago/Southland seminars will be held at the following venues:

Tuesday 25 October, 4 – 5.30 pm:

Dunedin (College of Education Resource Centre, Lower Union Street)

Wednesday, 26 October, 4 – 5.30 pm:

Invercargill (Southland Campus, College of Education, Nelson Street)

Cost: Free entry, as part of NZEALS support for leadership development in the southern region

Enrolments: Registrations of interest will be called for.

Use of Office Facilities

We have an office available for educational leaders wanting to work with us, undertaking a period of sabbatical leave, or simply wanting a quiet space to reflect on leadership issues! Access to leadership staff is freely available, as is our library of leadership books and journal articles. So far in 2016, we have had two secondary principals take advantage of this facility. Please contact me for further details.

Consultancy Services

The Centre offers leadership consultancy services to schools and early childhood centres.

Senior leadership teams in primary and intermediate schools

Murray Fletcher facilitates tailored professional learning for leadership teams. These are conversation-based, school context-driven and evidence-informed in sessions that take place over time (three / four terms). Murray acts as listener, questioner, reflector and provider of resource material focused on growing aspects of collective and individual capability within a leadership team.

Middle leaders in secondary schools

Ian Stevens and Ross Notman present two one-day workshops for HODs based on locally identified leadership needs. These two professional development days are separated by implementing leadership strategies learned on Day 1.

CELA has an ongoing leadership development focus on promoting teacher and middle leadership for 2016 - 2017. Inquiries should be directed to Ross at the Centre: ross.notman@otago.ac.nz.

Recommended Leadership Readings

Social justice and high-need schools

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., Clarke, S. & Wildy, H. (2014). High-needs schools in Australia: The leadership of two principals. *Management in Education*, 28, 3, 86-90.

Morrison, M., McNae, R. & Branson, C. (2015). Multiple hues: New Zealand school leaders' perceptions of social justice. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, 30, 1, 4-16.

Māori concepts of leadership

Katene, S. (2013). *The spirit of Māori leadership*. Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers.

Ministry of Education (2010). *Tū Rangatira. Māori medium educational leadership*.

Teacher leadership

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S., Fergusson, M. & Hann, L. (2002). *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success*. California: Corwin Press.

Torrance, D. and Humes, W. (2015). The Shifting Discourses of Educational Leadership: International Trends and Scotland's Response. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 43 (5), 792–810.

New Zealand educational leadership

- Bolstad, R. & Gilbert, J. (2012). *Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching: A New Zealand perspective*. Wellington: Ministry of Education, New Zealand.
- Burgen, J., Ferral, H., Hodgen, E. & Wylie, C. (2011). *Educational leadership practices survey: Report on the national norms and benchmarking. Report prepared for the Ministry of Education*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
- Cardno, C. & Bassett, M. (2015). Multiple perspectives of leadership development for middle-level pedagogical leaders in New Zealand secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, 30(2), 30-38.
- Cardno, C. & Youngs, H. (2013). Leadership development for experienced New Zealand principals: Perceptions of effectiveness. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(3), 256-271.

Publications by CELA Staff: Ross Notman 2015 - 2016

Refereed Journal Articles

- 2016 (forthcoming) Teacher leadership in the contexts of Scotland and New Zealand: Policy and practice. *Scottish Educational Review*. [with Torrance, D.]
- 2015 Seismic leadership, hope and resiliency: Stories of two schools in the Christchurch earthquake, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 14, 437-459.
- 2015 Leadership in New Zealand high-needs schools: An exploratory study from the International School Leadership Development Network project, *Scottish Educational Review*, 47, 1, 28-48.

Refereed Conference Proceedings

- 2016 Pathways to leadership: Perspectives from Scotland and New Zealand [with Torrance, D.] NZEALS International Leadership Conference, Dunedin, 21 April.
- 2015 Educational leadership research in the Asia Pacific region: An overview. Asia and Education Conference, Dunedin, 12 December.
- 2015 Leadership professional identity: New Zealand school leaders in a second principalship. UCEA Conference, San Diego, USA, 20-22 November.
- 2015 Successful high-needs leadership in New Zealand early childhood centres. UCEA Conference, San Diego, USA, 20-22 November.
- 2015 The professional identities of school leaders across international contexts [with Johnson, L. & Crow, G.] ISSPP Conference, Seville, Spain, 31 May – 3 June.
- 2015 Changing principalships: The identity pathways of two New Zealand school leaders. ISSPP Conference, Seville, Spain, 31 May – 3 June.

Invited International Research Presentation

2015 School leadership lessons from the Christchurch earthquake. Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, 27 May.

Conference Keynote Presentations

2016 *Motivation strategies for leaders: Looking after ourselves.* Aoraki Secondary Principals Association Conference, 19 August.

2016 *“They said we couldn’t do it!” Success and challenge in leading for social justice and high need.* Opening address, NZEALS International Leadership Conference, Dunedin, 20 April.

Guest Speaker Engagements

I am very willing to accept invitations to speak at educational leaders’ meetings across early childhood, primary and secondary sectors.

With best wishes for your leadership work in Terms 3 and 4.

Kind regards

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