

NZEALS 2014 Conference

The theme of the National NZEALS conference was *Leadership in Times of Change*. There was a mix of high quality and interesting keynote and break - out presentations. The following are the key messages from the keynote speakers:

1. Jennifer Garvey Berger, ex-senior researcher for NZCER, covered preparing leaders for the future. She covered new ways of thinking about uncertainty. She shared tools to help us make sense when coping with our complex world during e.g. the Cynefin Framework adapted from Dave Snowden which categorized the predictable and unpredictable worlds of change into four categories simple, complicated, complex and chaotic.
2. Dave Harris, an ex-principal, spoke about his personal experience in developing a school catering for years 3- 18 in a UK setting. To be successful in challenging times he challenged us to push the boundaries, develop innovative partnerships, have high expectations for all in the school's community and to be brave to do what we feel just might work.
3. Margie Hohepa covered leadership of teachers to secure cultural competencies for teaching Maori leaders
4. Holly Elissa Bruno an American academic, while entertaining she did not float my boat. She covered preventing and addressing resistance to change by adopting a no problem attitude.
5. Dr. Jan Robertson shared research from the NZ Aspiring Principals' Programme and other work in systems change internationally. She focused on key concepts such as moral purpose for equity, disposition to learn and culturally responsive leadership practices that builds capacity in individuals, teams and communities. Her message included leaders knowing what they stand for and inspiring leadership practice for sustaining meaningful change.

The breakout sessions that had NZ contexts proved to be more beneficial for me as I was able to compare 'like with like' when considering the educational leadership stories and research with my own setting. I found the presentations of the presenters from overseas sessions that I attended had little connection with my own work. With some I thought we were poles apart and reflected how interesting that was considering we were all in the game of teaching children.

The conference also provided me with an opportunity to network with educators across all sectors both nationally across New Zealand and internationally, with delegates from Australia and the U.S.

Thank you for providing me with the funds to cover the cost of the conference. What I learned I have begun to put to good use.

Margaret Palmer