

Report to Educate Plus

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Through generous scholarship I attended the September 2016 Educate Plus International Conference. Now some big pieces are coming into place in my developing understanding of what I'm doing and why. I'm not there yet, I won't be for a while/ever. What you get here is the response of someone near the bottom of the ladder – it is big broad stuff as more of the rungs come into focus. It might be useful to know my background is in teaching and learning and I now work part time in the start-up Development Office of a decile 4J state school.

The three things I have taken

Know Thy Impact, the work of John Hattie has vital relevance to our work in advancement

1. Several times Simon Breakspear acknowledged New Zealand's lead with this– and while some New Zealand schools may as yet have a stronger claim than others to a place in this space – it is a space New Zealand schools should own and for advancement purposes as well.

Apply this to funding projects, use it as a filter said Simon Breakspear. Because our work is to advance learning to transform lives, we should use the evidence, the science of how humans learn best to ground advancement projects. We need to know what the impact of learning is in our schools and how our school knows this, we need to use (and help develop) language to describe our school's unique learning proposition. We need to talk to alumni and potential donors about where teaching and learning are in our school, and we need to do this in clear language. No buzz words, 'if you can't say it clearly you don't understand it yourself'.

Talk with our alumni then is about how an advancement project contributes to the growth of learning and how the school will know this. Perceptions of excellence and of maintaining traditions are important to school community cohesion but they are not the fundamental purpose of a school and the message I took was: they should not be the substantive part of a school's engagement with alumni.

2. Knowing impact seemed relevant also to one segment of the international student market. Wesa Chua outlined some influences behind Asian students' enrolment decisions in Australasian schools, and she referred to interest by one particular Hong Kong philanthropist in this education sector

Story trumps

3. "Tell the stories of growth in learning" said Simon Breakspear. Seek authentic stories from classroom-land, talk about where teaching and learning are in your school, and be

immersed in the teaching and learning of the school so you can tell them in the clear language of learning that the school uses

“Tell stories” said Daiga Galins, stories about advancing future learning.

“...we want to educate and inspire the next generation of” Rather than “...we want to build a...”

Co- story – skip the fancy case statement and brochures when approaching major potential donors she said. Use a draft, so you are consulting them not telling them.

“Story”, said Michael McQueen “someone’s lived experience, not facts, data”. Story humanises, offers that point of resonance, and is most effective transcending the generational landscape in which different segments of the alumni population have different reactions to the work of advancement.