



President's Comment 2

11th February 2010

From the SPANZ Office

2010 Symposium Update

Registration forms and brochures were emailed out on Tuesday and are also available on our website.

If you notified your expression of interest a place is being held for you however you now need to return the completed registration form.

Don't forget to book your travel and accommodation.

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Dear Colleagues

We were delighted with the announcement that Alison McAlpine, former Principal of Nelson College for Girls and SPANZ Executive member, has been appointed as the new chair of the NZ Teachers' Council Board. Congratulations have been sent to Alison and I know that she will provide highly credible leadership to the Board.

I had been a fan of Sir Ken Robinson ever since he presented at the ICP Conference in 2007 and he has interesting views on the curriculum that should be offered in our schools. His views are as relevant today as they were five years ago, especially when considered in the context of the implementation of the NZC. I recently stumbled across a 20 minute videotape of a talk by Robinson on how schools kill creativity. It is easily accessed on the web – www.ted.com/talks/ken-robinson or just Google Ken Robinson – and I recommend it as a thought provoking and entertaining talk that could be a useful starting point for some staff wide discussion.

The last week I referred to Dr John MacBeath's keynote speech at the ICSEI Conference and he concurs with Sir Ken Robinson's ideas. MacBeath talked about the 'bankruptcy of the school curricula' – it doesn't suit the needs of many students – and the fact that a focus on schooling depletes other learning. He gave examples of research that shows that students in higher socio-economic areas improve their learning during the long vacation breaks, whereas those in lower socio-economic groups typically stagnate in their learning or even go backwards. He therefore contends that it is not a school that makes the greatest difference but a lack of schooling.

As we return to our schools from the long summer break it is always interesting to hear from our students about their holiday activities. I'm sure that if there was NZ based research done on the impact of holidays on learning it would support the international findings – and that provides another hurdle for families in lower decile areas and for the teachers and leadership in those schools.

Peter Gall

President