



knowledge  
wave2003  
the leadership forum

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Presentation also available on Forum website - [www.knowledgewave.org.nz](http://www.knowledgewave.org.nz)

## **Knowledge**

### **1. Creativity and Interconnectedness**

I have always liked the definition of creativity by Arthur Koestler, who claimed it was the bringing together two or more seemingly unrelated ideas. This interconnectedness and creativity are major themes in the Knowledge strand

Vint Cerf highlighted the interconnectedness both in the virtual and real world and this a challenge to our knowledge system – how to make incubators and curricula for this creative world consisting of much more knowledge and more connections than most of us ever had to deal with, while at the same time how to make the knowledge and connections real and powerful for those learning and expanding the connections. These connections can be made as Stuart Horner has demonstrated via the Australian Competency Movement, which has provided clear solutions of connecting schools and business in a transformative way. And by Mark Beach as he transforms NZ largest school, the Correspondence School with 18000 students in exciting ways.

Rita Colwell argued that the boundaries of Knowledge are becoming more overlapping, that traditional scientific domains are merging into new fields – and this will be a challenge for our current Secondary and Tertiary curriculum – where we currently see the greatest degree of subject chauvinism.

The message came through that we need to become the Creative Country. The pressure then is on our communities to create creative connections, tolerate the different, for business, education, government, and workplaces to create systems to make the connections, and for schools and tertiaries to establish curricula that model and teach about the interconnections.

If our communities do not connect, creative talent moves to find it.

## **2. What is knowledge?**

The second theme was the almost unspoken communality. **What is knowledge?**

We heard clearly from Juan Enrique that knowledge is power, we have also heard that knowledge is what is taught in schools and universities, that it can be measured by various community indicators, and we heard the message that we need to interconnect and be creative about this Knowledge. A major theme has been that

**Knowledge is the start. Understanding, relating ideas, mixing people, being excited about ideas, turning people on to knowing is the power ... So maybe the next Conference will be renamed the Creative Wave**

I note Rita Colwill's plea that there is an obligation to convey the excitement of research as well as find the new connections. We heard from Michael Scriven about the importance of experiencing knowledge as well as knowing that and knowing how; and why it is critical that we embrace the schizophrenia of evaluation. We heard about the need for the development of science and technology from Paul Romer, and heard about the need for the development of artistic, civic, social and aesthetic knowledge from Richard Florida. And the tension seems to be, that for growth, do want one, both, or here we go again, do we wish to interconnect the scientific and artistic knowledge.

The messages of this Knowledge strand certainly points to the absurdity of having guidance advice for young people relating to which career they should prepare for – when what they need to prepare for is How to Interconnect/ Be creative.

## **3. The foundation and the excellent**

A third major theme related to the juxtaposition of the foundation and the excellent, between the potential and the actual, between quantity and quality.

The message is that we need a firm foundation for Knowledge and then develop the interconnections. Vint Cerf noted that you need a minimum of electric power, a non-leaking roof to begin to gain the benefits of this new knowledge, and as Juan Enrique stated “those who understand the digital language will become the new rich”. People and countries get poor quickly if they are not literate in the dominant language – although it is not quite clear to me what is this dominant language – IT or the language of life; but the other message is that this needs to be founded on an exciting cultural and artistic lifestyle – You therefore need to decide what the NZ mosaic should look like.

The evidence in our schooling sector indicates that we have the foundation well embedded. We have high investments in schools, we don't need more we need different, and we currently suffer from a lack of purpose for our schools and this is a vacuum you must jump in and fill, otherwise a politician will.

We have an 80% full glass in our schools, and this should be considered an excellent foundation on which to build. Obviously, many of our teachers are making the difference. You have heard the pressures to up the ante by identifying excellence among teachers – who are currently the major change agents in education. It is a national disgrace to the profession when we can hear the statement last night -- “I am sorry my Mums just a teacher”. We do not need to use the Kiwi curse to blame the PPTA, the teachers, the Minister or whomever. We need to take the actions ourselves – there is more power in this room today than in Wellington.

As Trevor Mallard argued, using our work in schools in South Auckland, it CAN be done; it HAS been done. We can make it a National priority to devote resources to improving teachers to make the difference.

The case study of Te Whare Ako showed they made a difference, We have great investment in schools and resources, we perform quite highly on most OECD indices. We have excellent teachers, but we lose them or they lose it as there is not much support to stay at that high level of energy and creative ness that is demanded by excellence. Our need is to find ways to UNLOCK the creativity, allow it to flourish, nurture it, and esteem it.

As noted in the panel discussion, we need to not forget the effects of Principals. My work has shown me that they do not, but that does not mean that they CAN not and certainly they should make a difference We can redefine them from managers to educational leaders, and it is worth noting that only in the past year have NZ principals been offered any formal training to be prepared for their job. We have an opportune time to set the high and rigorous standards of what we expect Principals to do, and like teachers, we need to credibly identify the very best and use them as the lighthouses for all Principals. We need to hold Principals accountable for quality teacher and student learning.

We also need to be involved, along with Andrew West, in fixing the problems of Tertiary Education, as we have aimed for quantity often at the expense of quality. We have moved up the quantity ladder, with 1000 HEIs, although Anne Salmond has highlighted that we are still excluding critical cohorts, the panel noted the dramatic fragmentation in the sector, and most noted that the increase in quantity cannot be at the expense of quality.

Both the Teachers Council, the development of Principals as Educational Leaders, and the Tertiary Education Commission had better get it right, and you had better be part of setting the directions. Adapting Richard Florida

We had better get it right, Hey Dude we cannot afford the recovery time.

#### **4. Keep ‘em here**

The fourth key message is that we may getting much right in our system, but as we succeed Richard Florida has told us about the need to build communities so that we keep the emerging leaders here. Richard is right, as what will make my children stay in NZ

will more related to quality of living, excitement, tolerance of difference, an open society, and ease of getting out and into NZ, as their workplace could be the world.

Ross Blackman vividly noted that the attractiveness of the knowledge not the sails and boats; Team NZ now want a Frenchman to be the tactician.

The world is pirating our teachers not our curricula or our examinations

The message is that NZs new war should be the global war for talent.

### **Concluding Comments**

In conclusion:

#### **Here are some action directions that come from the Knowledge strand:**

- Identifying and esteeming excellent teachers and principals?
- Identifying and esteeming our excellent students?
- Getting the bohemians together so that they can cross boundaries (in Auckland, in Timaru, and in Nightcaps?). Connecting the IT and the Life Sciences, the painters and the wine makers
- Building the kinds of communities we wish to aspire
- Helping our teachers at all levels to prepare students for this creative world
- Being among the top five of the OECD in education for ALL our students
- Getting R&D working in the private sector?
- Better using our untapped creative communities and people?

The four key messages seem to be

How to be creative, to connect, to aspire to excellence, and to keep 'em in NZ