



The Australasian Leadership Exchange: An Exercise in Reciprocity

By Juliette Hayes



At Caroline Springs. L-R: Marcus Duvenhage, Amy Hacker, Juliette Hayes, Gabrielle Leigh, Julie Netzler, Angela White, Clare Lambert, Peter Katsikapis

The recent iNet New Zealand ‘Leading Innovation’ study tour saw a group of middle- and senior-leaders from secondary and middle schools travel to Melbourne for the purpose of exploring the leadership of innovative practice in schools. The pragmatic benefits of this tour are now being explored back in schools, but a lasting impression of the tour is of the spirit of – and further potential for – reciprocity in such an exercise.

A spirit of reciprocity goes a long way towards generating true learning exchanges, and there are many ways in which both the visitors and the hosts potentially gain from such an experience. Literature suggests that, in a research context at least, strategies for inviting reciprocity include breaking down hierarchies; sharing information about individuals as well as organisations; avoiding jargon-laden language; and checking on participants’ interest and understanding throughout the interaction (Hedges 2001). In a cross-cultural exchange it is also important that participants avoid imposing alternative cultural world views onto one another, and instead reflect on contextual implications (Reinharz, 1992). Reciprocity in outcomes is also essential in ensuring the learning experience is of value to both the visitors and the hosts. This could include sharing the findings and reflections of the touring group with the hosts; collaborating with new contacts on further projects; and disseminating results to policy makers, and others, to influence change and improvement, with acknowledgement to the sources where appropriate (Hedges, 2001). Cram (2001) mentions “leaving our communities in a good space when the research ends” (p. 49), and this is also true of the study tour, where one would hope to leave the hosts with a positive and affirming relationship, and a sense of contributing together to the profession.

This paper seeks to summarise the spirit of reciprocity encountered through the iNet study tour, through a model that demonstrates the gains made by both the visitors and the hosts, and that could be reciprocated in a return study tour from Australia.



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References:

Cram, F. (2001). Rangahau Maori: Tona tika, tona pono: the validity and integrity of Maori research. *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Auckland: Pearson Education.

Hedges, H. (2001). A right to respect and reciprocity: ethics and educational research with children. *NZ Research in ECE*. (4). 3 – 7.

Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist cross-cultural research. *Feminist Methods in Social Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Learning about the Victorian education context

Learning about the NZ education context

Experiencing multi-cultural elements of Melbourne's schools

Experiencing te reo in presentations

Opening doors to schools & classrooms

Describing learning practices in NZ contexts

Understanding the leadership profile of the Australian principal

Opening doors to reciprocal understandings in NZ

Noting the rich use of data in Victorian schools

Reflecting on self-management in NZ schools

Identifying similarities in leadership programmes

Identifying potential to share leadership programmes

Engaging educational leaders and academics in seminar and forum contexts

Opportunities to present current research in interactive contexts

Hearing student voice

Representing student voice

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