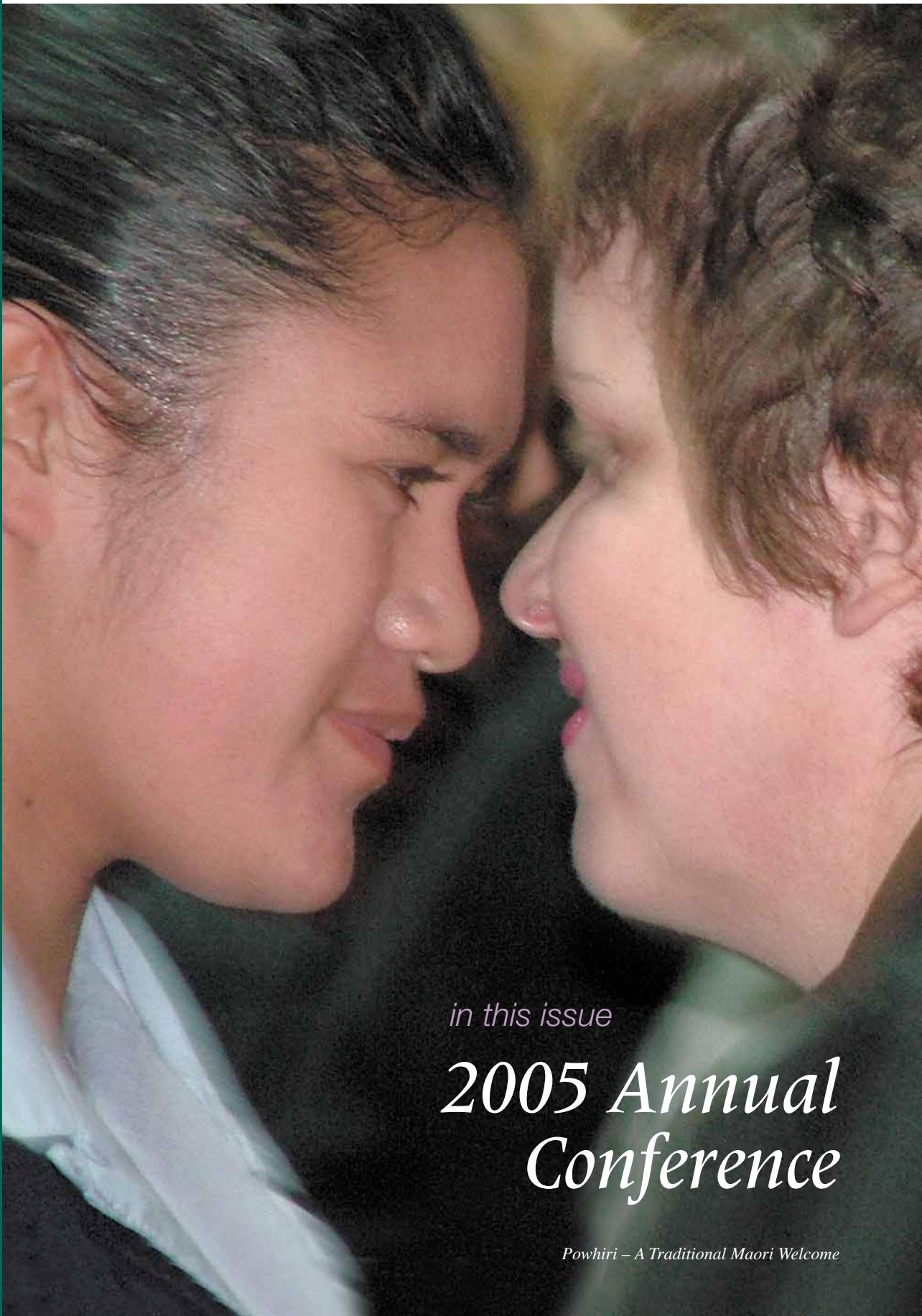


in alliance

Volume 32 September 2005



in this issue

2005 Annual Conference

Powhiri – A Traditional Maori Welcome

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In Alliance 2005
Editorial Deadlines
VOLUME 33
Friday 21 October 2005
Communication: Strategies that work

CORRECTION

We apologise for attributing the wrong author in the article *Learning at the Speed of Fun* in the last issue of *in Alliance* (Vol 31, May 2005).

The author was Graham McMahon, Head of Learning Technologies, Penrhos College. SR Kessell was the author of one of the references used: he does not work at Penrhos College.

From the President...

Beth Blackwood



My recent study leave commenced with our Alliance of Girls' Schools Conference in Auckland and also included the National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. While both conferences provided food for thought, action and challenge, the enjoyment also comes from being with educators of girls in girls' schools. For me, that singular focus creates a unique and empowering collegiality.

I discovered in the early 1980s, as Director of Boarding at MLC, Kew, how vibrant, affirming and liberating single sex school environments could be! Since then, by choice, my career in education has been in schools for girls. At a time when the 'norm' for the establishment of new schools throughout Australia is taken for granted to be co-education, I think we have a particular challenge to be advocates for single sex education. It is about ensuring parents have a choice with regard to the educational setting for their children.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Barbara Stone for her extra-ordinary leadership of the

Alliance across the last three years. With her guidance the Alliance has established an infrastructure that is representative of all sectors and all regions and provides focus for the Executive. She has strengthened the organisation through her clear vision for excellence in education for girls in girls' schools. On behalf of Alliance members I thank her for wise counsel, commitment, advocacy, energy and mentorship. I am delighted that she has accepted an invitation to continue as a member of the Executive for the next twelve months. Her corporate knowledge, experience, encouragement and humour will be invaluable.

I also welcome Jan Butler as our new Executive Officer and trust that she enjoys the challenges, friendships and responsibilities of her new role.

One final note of appreciation for our New Zealand colleagues for organising a wonderful conference in Auckland and for the warmth of their hospitality: congratulations and thank you.

Beth Blackwood
Beth Blackwood

From the Editor...

Jan Butler



The 2005 Annual Conference *Healthy Women: Healthy Girls* has been held for the first time in Auckland, New Zealand, attended by 137 delegates from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The delegates were richly rewarded by inspiring and provocative speakers, interesting workshops, wonderful food and of course useful networking – always one of the most important parts of a conference. We can't provide the elegant atmosphere of the host school, St Cuthbert's College, in our journal, but we can bring you excerpts from some of the presentations. You will be able to find links to more information on our web site at www.agsa.org.au.

We are grateful to the staff of St Cuthbert's College, Epsom Girls' Grammar School and Diocesan School for Girls for the tremendous time and effort they spent in preparing for this conference, and in particular to Christina Jones of St Cuthbert's who expertly managed many of the tasks in the absence of

an Executive Officer. Preparations are already underway for the next annual conference in Brisbane from 9-11 June 2006. The 2006 Conference Committee is currently inviting members to consider presenting at a workshop session.

It is a great pleasure for me to have joined The Alliance of Girls' Schools as Executive Officer and Editor of *in Alliance*. One of my tasks will be to ensure that we are using technology effectively to communicate over such large distances, in order to give all the members the opportunity to participate in the activities of The Alliance and to strengthen the aims of the organisation. We now have an email list (address messages to ags_members@edna.edu.au) which may be used for general communication among the members.

We welcome contributions of reports and photographs for *in Alliance* so that we can all share the wonderful work you are doing in your schools.

Jan Butler
Jan Butler

Summary of 2005 Annual Conference

by Margaret Bendall

We have heard from fine keynote speakers and expert workshop leaders, and we have had important conversations with each other, where women characteristically do the crucial work of stitching together thoughts and impressions into ideas, to take home. We have been exploring the connections between healthy women and healthy girls, the concept of interdependence, which I see as a continuous thread running through the rich tapestry of this conference. I think we have been asked to understand interdependence, or connectedness, as a fundamental principle of health and well-being, individually and collectively, personally and professionally, for our own schools and our extended communities.

For each of us as individuals, and for each of our students, the New Zealand Curriculum's powerful concept of *hauora*, presented by **Denise Atkins** and **Anne McKay**, reflects the simple truth that human well-being requires that all the elements of self – physical, mental and emotional, social and spiritual – are strong and secure. As individual women, we were asked to take a hard look at our personal health and balance: **Tania Clifton-Smith**'s presentation resonated with many of us because she gave us practical ideas about how to address the symptoms of disordered breathing, instead of taking refuge in vague descriptions of feeling stressed and exhausted. I think Tania would have liked the connection between her business, *Breathing Works*, and *hauora* – which can be translated literally as "the breath of life".

As teachers, we were reminded of the pivotal role schools play, and how influential teachers are. The self-efficacy of young adults often grows from the fact that their teachers believed in them and for many highly successful adults, like **Justice Potter**, the words of a teacher have marked a turning point, a moment of dawning self-belief.

As individual school leaders, responsible for ensuring that educational structures and systems are faithful to their purpose, we were challenged by **Lester Levy** to understand that our leadership can only release the full potential of the people we work with if we understand that we cannot work alone.

Both **Lesley Max** and **Diane Levy** in their different ways challenged us to think about the interdependence of the personal and professional dimensions of our lives as human beings, with particular reference to the lives of women. I recalled research in the States, demonstrating that women principals are more likely than men to blur the distinctions between their personal and professional lives, to see their effective relationships with partners, families, children and friends as interwoven with their ability to be effective in their jobs – they don't make clear distinctions between the two and they instinctively understand how each affects and reflects the other.

Nevertheless, it was implicit in **Trudie McNaughton**'s presentation that discussion about work/life balance is increasingly engaging both men and women.

I think **Lesley Max**'s challenge was to remember that in educating girls to be all they want to be, all they can be, we should be careful not to suggest that girls must choose between cot and career. We should avoid complicity in replacing the tyranny of having to stay at home with babies with the tyranny of having to return immediately to work.



"The self-efficacy of young adults often grows from the fact that their teachers believed in them..."



Margaret Bendall



Denise Atkins



Anne McKay



Tania Clifton-Smith



Justice Judith Potter



Lester Levy

CONFERENCE SUMMARY *continues overleaf...*

CONFERENCE SUMMARY *continued...*



Lesley Max



Diane Levy



Trudie McNaughton



Shenagh Gleisner



Cindy Kiro



Stuart Middleton

Trudie McNaughton and **Shenagh Gleisner** argued for more flexible parental leave, to give both parents equal opportunities to make choices about how to care for their baby. **Diane Levy** also suggested that we recognize the connections between what we know about parenting and therefore know about the world of work; like **Lester Levy**, she asked us to remember, as teachers and as parents,

that most people, children and adults, students and staff in our schools alike, are not driven by behavioural rewards for compliance, like hourly pay. What drives most of us is the joy of knowing what we are good at, and having that valued in a complex web of mutually respectful relationships.

That idea leads to the simple truth that we cannot be concerned only for our own children, our own schools, even our own states or nations. I was reminded of John Dewey's credo, which has always seemed to me so powerful:

"What the best and wisest parent wants for his or her own child, that must be what the community wants for all its children. Any other ideal is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys democracy."

"This conference has reaffirmed that women are very good indeed at making connections."



TOP: Ann Mildenhall, Trudie McNaughton & Shenagh Gleisner
MIDDLE: Beth Blackwood and Barbara Stone
BOTTOM: Our hosts

interdependent. And both speakers pointed out the interdependence of the healthy and rewarding futures of the young people for whom we have individual responsibility, our own children and students, with the futures of other young people, too often emotionally blighted beyond repair and made destructive by despair. It is not enough that our own students shine – every young person must know that he or she matters and develop the confidence and skills to make a contribution. **Stuart Middleton** did have a serious point – we cannot forget our boys.

I liked **Lester Levy**'s quotation from the work of Alvin Toffler:

"the new illiterates will be those who cannot unlearn and relearn."

Girls' schools can and should be leaders in challenging colleagues in other schools to think differently, to reach forward to what Australia's Emeritus Professor Hedley Beare describes as "a preferable future". Women take seriously their connections with the past (so many of our speakers mentioned their mothers, didn't they?), and their responsibility for the future. Women, who have seen in their own

children different abilities but equal potential, are often the spokespersons for education that recognizes many different kinds of excellence, so that most students can see their own strengths as important and valuable. The preferable future depends on education that empowers everybody to make a contribution and requires everybody to value the contributions of others.

This conference has reaffirmed that women are very good indeed at making connections. In Barbara Stone's final year as President of the Alliance, it is appropriate to record the gratitude we feel to Barbara, and the other women who formed the Alliance that brought us together and sustained us this weekend. At the first Alliance Conference to be held in New Zealand, we have also celebrated the strengthening of connections between Australian and New Zealand members of the Alliance. And it is appropriate to record our gratitude to the organising committee: our colleagues from the wonderful host school, St Cuthbert's College, supported by colleagues at Diocesan School for Girls and Epsom Girls Grammar School.

At the *powhiri*, guests were welcomed "Tena koutou katoa" – welcome to you all. I salute you, at the end of this conference, "Tena tatou katoa" – greetings to all who are part of this group of people, who are connected with each other. I hope you feel strengthened individually and collectively, that you take away the knowledge that each of you has the power to make such a difference. The key message of the conference is that to do your important work, for the women and girls for whom you have immediate responsibility, and for the wider community that is interdependent with your own community, now and even more in the future, each of you must look after yourself, first. The health and well-being of others is interdependent with yours in so many explicit and subtle ways.

To finish, I would like you to consider a *whakatauki* – a Maori proverb – that sums up for me the essence of that idea of the interdependence of things. The way forward to what Justice Potter called "new horizons" certainly requires the strength and courage she described; I would add that the best way forward will demand the deliberate, focused efforts of skilful people, like you, with a sense of purpose.

Whakatauki:
Whāra ko te ia o te wai
Whāra hoki ko te pupuhi o te hau
Engari ko te whakatika ke o nga ra
Ka tae ora te waka ki uta

In translation:

*It is not the direction in which the current flows
 Nor is it the direction in which the wind blows
 Rather, it is the setting of the sails
 That enables a canoe to reach its destination.*

Sail on strongly; kia manawanui (be great of heart).

(Margaret Bendall is Former Principal, Epsom Girls Grammar School, Auckland, and Consultant to the Ministry of Education in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning.)



Edited Address to the 2005 Annual Conference

by Justice Judith Potter

In November 1893 the women of New Zealand won the right to vote. South Australia followed in 1894, Western Australia in 1899, and the Commonwealth Government in 1902, but Aboriginal women were excluded. Britain limped to full female suffrage in 1928.

The leader of the Women's Suffrage Movement in New Zealand was Kate Sheppard. You can see her pictured on the back of a \$10 note. She, with a number of women who had campaigned strenuously for the right for women to vote, went on to form the National Council of Women, which apart from a decade in the early 1900's has consistently, responsibly and actively worked to keep women's rights in the forefront in New Zealand and to effect change for the benefit of women. It is an organisation that was tremendously important when it was formed and is tremendously important now.

Kate Sheppard was the first President of the National Council of Women. She said:

We women need self education, and we know of no more thorough method of educating ourselves and each other, than by discussion and study. Having obtained a franchise, it is of the utmost importance that we women should be thoughtful and well informed.

So it was in 1893 and so it is now.

In the year when women first obtained the right to vote in New Zealand a young woman started to study for her law degree at Otago University in Dunedin. She wanted to study and practise law, but when she started her degree she did not know if it would be possible for her to practise. Her name was Ethel Rebecca Benjamin. She was the first women lawyer in New Zealand and the second in the British Commonwealth. Clara Brett Martin became a barrister and solicitor in Canada just two months before Ethel Benjamin in New Zealand.

Ethel Benjamin enjoyed what was then regarded as a liberal education at Otago Girls' High School, and was fortunate to be able to enrol at the University of Otago which was the first university in the British Empire to grant women the right to obtain degrees. But although she graduated brilliantly with a law degree in 1896 she had to battle not only the maleness of the legal profession, but the legal impediment that under the Law

Practitioners Act as it then stood, women were not able to practise law. That is because the Act referred to "persons" who wish to practise law, and at that time, "persons" did not include women. So in 1896 they had to pass the Female Law Practitioners Act to enable Ethel Benjamin to be admitted to the Bar.

The Act did not have an easy passage through Parliament. The Hon Sir GS Whitmore in opposing the Bill is reported as complaining that it would have the effect of:

...women were not able to practise law ...because the Act referred to 'persons' who wish to practise law, and at that time, 'persons' did not include women."

inducing a number of females to quite unsex themselves and to neglect the ordinary female duties.

The preamble to the Act recited interestingly as follows:

Whereas women are now prevented by statute from exercising their talents in the study and practice of the law, and it is desirable that such disability shall no longer continue...

And so the stage was set. But it is interesting to note that whereas under the previous Act men who wished to practise law had to pay their fees and pass the appropriate examinations and prove themselves to be persons of good character, there was no such requirement under the Female Law Practitioners Act of 1896, that women should be of good character. I choose to assume that was because it went without saying that women are of good character; or perhaps it was that Parliament thought it impossible. However, they found out all about us, because in 1908 the two Acts were amalgamated into the Law Practitioners Act of 1908 and from then on women as well as men who wish to practise law have had to prove that they are of good character.

Ethel Benjamin was accorded the honour of giving the reply to the Chancellor's address at the graduation ceremony in 1896. One wonders if she was a fill-in at short notice for she said:

It was only yesterday that I was asked to undertake this pleasant task, and while deeply sensible of the compliment paid to me, I was somewhat diffident about taking so much upon myself at so short a notice. But I knew that little would be expected of me and even if I succeeded in talking nonsense, the charitable verdict would be, oh well, it is all that can be expected of a woman.



She went on to say:

...it is well that women should make such an inroad into the fields of labour. We should come to a position where women should be economically independent of men and should marry for love and not just for home.

The speech was regarded as an outrage and foreshadowed the stormy, difficult and all too brief career that Ethel Benjamin experienced in Dunedin trying to practise at the Bar. She later married, went to England and never returned to New Zealand. But her courage and achievements live on, and her memory is celebrated each year with an annual lecture in Dunedin which I have the honour to give this year.

I should tell you that the reason I even contemplated studying law in an era where law was not seen as a career choice for women, was a chance remark made to me by our 5th form English teacher. She looked over my shoulder when I was writing an essay and remarked:

Judith Potter, you have a remarkable ability to sort the wood from the trees. You should be a lawyer.

...it must have sparked something within me for a couple of years later when decisions had to be taken about the future, I found myself asking my parents, could someone like me do law? The influence of teachers on the futures of their students is incalculable.

For me, one of the driving factors in accepting appointment as a Judge was that I believe it is crucially important that women are represented in all aspects of legal and judicial work. Legislation, that is statutes which are passed by Parliament, is not the only way law is made. Inevitably Judges also make law, and Judges interpret the law and are clearly influenced by gender, social and economic backgrounds. Contribution by women across the board is absolutely essential to avoid resort being had to assumptions that reflect entrenched views. For although in New Zealand we have a woman Governor-General, Prime Minister, Speaker of the House and Chief Justice – all very significant appointments – and although there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women entering Law Schools and qualifying as lawyers – they have numbered more than half for many years now – women are still under-represented in the legal profession today, and are under-



represented in the judiciary.

Women's access to justice raises many very serious concerns and issues... unless there are women active in every aspect of the law, as Judges, in the legal profession, serving on our juries - then women's access to justice is, and will be, seriously impeded. For as we all know only too well, legal recognition of rights is one thing, recognition in fact is another. The translation of theory into fact is a necessity and an entitlement for women, as it is for every member of our community.

While demanding, being a Judge is truly an interesting and worthwhile occupation. The same I believe can be said of your profession, the teaching profession. As Judges are accountable, so too are educators.

You are accountable to the young women for whose education you are responsible, to the community of which those young women are part and to which in future years they will contribute their own learning and talents, and like Judges, you are accountable to the fidelity of the system.

Yours is a hugely responsible and ever more challenging task and responsibility. If at times it all seems too much, may I leave you with a thought from Charlotte Whitton, a former Mayor of Ottawa. She said:

Whatever women do they must do it twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily this is not difficult.

The Call for Leadership

By Lester Levy



What is Leadership?

Leadership is an interesting and intriguing subject and has been described by James MacGregor Burns (1978) as “one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on Earth”. Given its somewhat formless and ambiguous nature, how you define leadership is likely to set your co-ordinates for thinking about this topic.

The definition I favour is that derived from J. Thomas Wren (1995), who states that “leadership is an interactive process in which leaders and followers engage in mutual interaction in a complex environment to achieve mutual goals”.

Leadership and Management

According to Field Marshal Lord Slim: “There is a difference between leadership and management. The leader and those who follow represent one of the oldest, most natural and most effective human relationships. The manager and those managed are a later product with neither so romantic nor inspiring a history. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision – its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, statistics, methods, timetables and routines – its practice is a science.” (Townsend and Gebhardt, 1997)

Developing Leaders

The enduring debates in this realm are: “Can leadership be learned?” and “Are leaders born or made? The consensus ... is that leadership can be learned and that leaders are made. They now regard the “leaders are born” notion as a falsehood and that more than a favoured handful have the genetic password for leadership.

In many ways, leadership is probably no different to any other activity in that those with greatest potential are likely to learn with greater ease. But those with less potential who make a more concerted effort to learn may well achieve greater success than those with higher potential, but are unwilling to make the effort. There will also be those who, despite making every effort, will find the concept of leadership elusive.

The Skills of Leaders

I believe most leadership skills can be taught reasonably easily. The dimensions of perspective and disposition, however, are more implicit and consequently more difficult to develop through formal or accelerated instruction.

In terms of developing leaders, there is a parallel to sport in that everyone wants to be a winner on Saturday, but only a few are willing to practise and prepare all week, in season and out of season. In reality, leadership is like an endurance sport. It requires

constant practice and preparation, refinement and improvement, with learning being a continual process.

Toward Positive Solutions

The primary focus should be on developing an understanding of leadership, but perhaps the more critical element is developing an understanding of oneself. Leadership teaching and development should not be exclusively focused on what has worked for others and those who have been successful. It is important that those learning leadership should have exposure to business failures and poor role models. The deconstruction of the latter as a learning process can often be a more enriching learning experience than focusing only on what has been known to work. The reality is that development programmes can be powerful, but those learning leadership skills will often become more in tune with their own leadership strengths and weaknesses when they begin to guide and develop others, particularly in a group or team situation.

Mastery of Self

Your own leadership development requires the courage and insight to start with the most difficult and challenging human resource analysis you will ever face: yourself.

Leadership is a synthesis of a wide range of capabilities and attributes and it is that process of synthesis that, in my view, separates the truly effective leader from the pack. True mastery of oneself is linked to this ability to synthesise and is one of the most important links to successful leadership.

“Effective leadership realises that the link between aspiration (created by a sense of purpose or vision) and achievement is simply the ability to get things done.”

Effective Communication

I often hear modern management blaming the failure to succeed on what they like to call “employee resistance to change”. In my experience, this is often an oversimplification and lack of recognition of the main reason for the failure, which is inability of management to communicate effectively. Communication requires listening by both parties as well as interaction, which helps develop a shared understanding

I do not feel particularly inspired, confident and, most importantly, moved if I’m listening to a message of critical importance that has to be read from a written speech. To me, that seems like a message coming not from the heart and soul, possibly not even from the mind, but from some speechwriter’s pen. Communication, to be effective, needs to be from the heart, it needs to be honest and it needs constant repetition and discussion, until it is truly understood by all.

Speak less, say more... live by what you say: your actions speak louder than your words.

School Tour Program

Sense of Purpose

The creation of a sense of purpose or a vision for an organisation or company is one of the critical elements of leadership and it justifiably has preeminence in the leadership literature.

Creating a sense of purpose or vision is not the same as creating a plan. It is something much more important and fundamental. It is the creation of direction: a clear, credible, relevant and understandable future that inspires individuals to act collectively to reach the destination.

Effective leadership realises that the link between aspiration (created by a sense of purpose or vision) and achievement is simply the ability to get things done.

Credibility

The key to leadership is simply credibility. It is the heartbeat of leadership and without it, I do not believe that it is possible to lead. You can preside over an organisation or company by virtue of your position and its vested authority, but you will not be able to lead it without credibility.

In a timeless observation, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner (1993) identified that leadership is “a reciprocal relationship between those who choose to lead and those who decide to follow”. The decision to follow is inextricably linked to credibility. Can people believe in you, in what you say and most importantly in what you do?

Leadership is not simply a matter of minds; it is a matter of souls. The call for more and better leadership can be answered. If more needs to be done, then through leadership development more can be done, but in the end, the decision to lead is yours to make. It is your choice... make it!

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Edited version of a paper kindly provided by Professor Lester Levy. The full text of the paper can be found on our web site at www.agsa.org.au

(Dr Lester Levy is the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Leadership Institute at the University of Auckland and Adjunct Professor of Leadership at the University of Auckland Business School.)

Prior to the start of the conference, delegates were given the opportunity to visit some New Zealand schools and gain a first-hand insight into their learning programs and facilities. The Alliance is indebted to the following schools for making their schools and staff available for the tours.



Auckland Girls' Grammar School

A progressive state school with a tradition of social responsiveness, Auckland Girls' Grammar School finds over 60 different cultures represented among her 1430 students and after 100 years stands at the forefront of girls' education.



Carmel College

Founded in 1957 by the Sisters of Mercy on the shores of Lake Pupuke, Carmel provides a 'whole person' education in a Roman Catholic and Mercy environment with a special commitment to the education and empowerment of women.



Dilworth School

Dilworth School is an independent boys' boarding school with a unique foundation. All the boys are on full scholarships and are required to board. The Dilworth Scholarship provides tuition, boarding, uniform and sporting and cultural training.



Diocesan School for Girls

Diocesan School for Girls is one of the largest independent schools in New Zealand. The new Centennial Building is a four storey wireless building with 70 classrooms, formal and informal spaces, senior library, specialist language rooms, media suite and computer laboratories.



Epsom Girls' Grammar School

Epsom Girls' Grammar School (1917) is a leading state day and boarding secondary school for girls with 1900 students. A hostel caters for rural students and high quality new facilities include a performing arts centre, a heated covered pool and new technology specialist rooms.

MASH (Mediators Against Student Harassment)

Conference Workshop by members of the MASH Student Mediator Team, Epsom Girls Grammar School



Epsom Girls Grammar School is a large multicultural, inner city school seeking to acknowledge the diverse composition of the school and celebrate difference within a community of care and respect. The MASH Team grew out of a previous team known as Student Contact Team starting in 1996. This group was available to hear student concerns of conflict or harassment and guide them in deciding who else in the school might best help them with their concern if they needed further support.

As the participants walked into the room, the Beatles were singing *I'll Do It My Way* and six senior girls from the Epsom Girls' Grammar student mediator team, some in elegant floor length navy skirts (the mark of a student in her final year), were calmly and confidently discussing their plans for the workshop with their teacher, Jill Darragh.

Participants were entranced for an hour by these amazing young people who were able to transform Heads of schools into Year 9 students, eliciting their fears and thoughts from their own school days and encouraging them to play games and discuss what they would do as a Year 9 student in certain situations. Each girl had a role to play in the demonstration of how they work with young peers in their school, taking it in turn to lead the conversation and each working with small discussion groups.

Many different cultures and values exist in a school community. What makes it possible for people to suspend their own values and beliefs and to be able to be open to what others are thinking and feeling? This is the sort of question these young women are grappling with in their role as mediators working to actively strengthen restorative processes within their school. "Words hurt, words heal" – the team pays particular attention to aspects of girls' talk and seeks to explore ways to "influence dominant ideas and practices within the student body, in order to foster attitudes and practices among students that maintain a safe school environment for all."

It was interesting to learn that membership of the MASH team is hotly contested and girls must undergo a rigorous application process, selected by senior MASH team members in conjunction with counselling staff.

It was a privilege to be part of this workshop, to see these capable young women not only working to transform the culture of their school, but in the process developing valuable leadership and mediation skills which will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Jan Butler

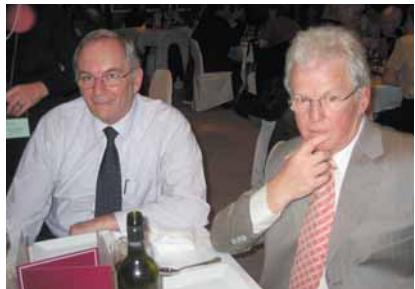
TOP: Jill Darragh with some of the MASH Team

Conference Workshops



1. Alison Locke
 2-4. Mash Workshop
 in action
 5. Workshop audience
 6. Ngaire Hoben
 7. Ro Lange
 8. Graham Watts
 9. Frances Tweedy
 10. Lynne Tonking
 11. Sally Merry
 12. Jeni Pearce
 13. Kay Hawk





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The Alliance of Girls' Schools - 2005 Annual Conference



From the Bookshelf

BREATHE, STRETCH & MOVE

Get rid of workplace stress

by *Dinah Bradley & Tania Clifton-Smith*

Tania was a presenter at the 2005 Annual Conference

You know how to breathe. Right?

But do you suffer from headaches; shoulder, arm or back discomfort; upset digestion; or sleep problems? Or are you just tired all the time?

If so, you may not be breathing correctly.

We are becoming more sedentary. We think more and use our bodies less - communicating all day with computer screens, becoming so absorbed that our shoulders tense, our breathing changes, we hold our breath too much and, by the end of the day, we're exhausted.

Breathe, Stretch & Move includes methods which are designed to break this cycle. They will help you restore energy-efficient breathing and improve your energy levels, productivity and work pace. You will learn to run on natural not nervous energy, and your thought patterns will become calm but alert. You will reduce your stress levels naturally and without drugs.

Dinah Bradley and Tania Clifton-Smith - the queens of calm - are world experts on breathing pattern disorders. As practising physiotherapists they have an in-depth understanding of the physiological and musculoskeletal problems caused by bad breathing. Dinah is the author of *Hyperventilation Syndrome*. Tania is the author of *Breathe to Succeed* and they co-authored *Breathing Works for Asthma*.

Breathe well to be well

QUICK BREATH CHECK FOR 'INSTANT CALM'

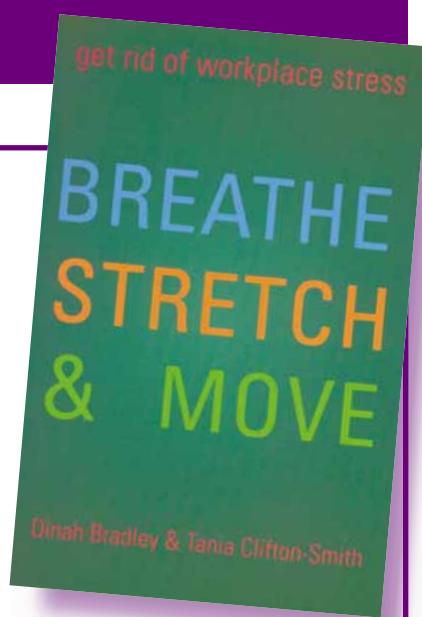
When there are too many files open in a computer you run the risk of it shutting down. Our brains tend to work like this too. This exercise enables you to close all your files. This is especially useful to use at the end of sessions of prolonged speaking/lecturing, in between classes, in peak hour traffic, when things have become just too much. (Hourly as a good habit when stress levels are high).

- 1 **Stop**
- 2 **Breathe out**
- 3 **Pause and relax**
- 4 **Breathe in nose low (belly) and slow**
- 5 **Breathe out – for as long as you can, releasing all muscle tension**
- 6 **Pause – still your mind, and your body**
- 7 **Continue what you were doing**

Try some of our methods. Check family friends and colleagues.

Take responsibility for making sure this aspect of your health is understood and in tip top working order. Deal with stress effectively.

And visit our website www.breathingworks.com



Tania Clifton-Smith and Dinah Bradley Morrison are co-founders of

B R E A T H I N G W O R K S
the only Breathing Pattern Disorders clinic in Australasia

Primary focus is on prevention, assessment and rehabilitation of breathing pattern disorders – the first step in health.

The Well-Being of Girls: Strategies for Life

Snippets from the NCGS 2005 Annual Conference, Nashville, Tennessee

This year the National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference was hosted by The Harpeth Hall School in Nashville, Tennessee. Their hospitality was welcoming and the campus itself an inspiration for ideas with its new purpose-built Middle School, magnificent Library and Resource Centre and leafy, green gardens and grounds. In 2006 the NCGS Conference will be held in Boston, Massachusetts. I share some snippets from the Conference that found resonance with me.

The Thin Line

This was an example of the power of drama to present contemporary issues to young students. *The Thin Line*, by Cathy Plourde, was a 30-minute one-woman play that told the story of a girl's struggle with her eating disorder and the attempts of those close to her to understand and help. The issue is explored from four angles – the girl, her internal negative voice, her mother and a friend.

This and other productions are offered to schools in the United States by *Add Verb Productions Arts and Education* with guides for follow-up discussions with students. Perhaps there is an opportunity to develop similar productions in Australia.

Finding Her Voice: Teaching Girls to Speak Up and Speak Out

The presenter, Tracy Nowski, is an impressive young college student, currently studying at Harvard. A former student of an all girls' school, she was a student leader and, in her final year of school, was a student representative at the 2002 NCGS International Girl's Forum.

Nowski is an advocate for and coach of public speaking. In delivering a programme, *Strong Women, Strong Girls* to 3rd graders in a Boston public school she was astounded to hear these girls articulate that oration is a male domain. Public speaking and debating is available in most schools but while it is principally a co-curricular activity Nowski claims that only a few girls gain proficiency. She argued convincingly that public speaking is as central to learning as reading and writing and should be core curriculum.

Nowski hypothesises that girls do not lack verbal skills – in fact they have a predisposition to talking. The problem is public speaking. Boys tend to treat the opportunity as a challenge and fun, whereas girls view the situation as uncomfortable and unsafe. She concludes that it is important to recognise and act on the gender experience of public speaking.

Women need to speak in public with confidence and clarity, and if girls are taught the skills to speak they will speak out. She recommends developing a culture of speaking as well as providing opportunities for students to challenge themselves by speaking to audiences outside the school, in unfamiliar places. To Nowski it is not about teaching women to be like men, but fostering their own unique voices.

"Tracy Nowski argued convincingly that public speaking is as central to learning as reading and writing and should be core curriculum."

Best Practice Forums

These forums proved to be a highlight of the Conference, with educators from a range of schools sharing their practices with regard to fund-raising, technology, girls and sport, peer support, diversity, global projects and community service.

The discussion on technology revealed that, while we are all grappling with the inappropriate use of Internet and e-mail, another frequent misuse by American students is online shopping. Forewarned is forearmed!

I was impressed by the approach to community service presented by Directors of Community Service (or equivalent) of three schools. Service to the local and wider community has been embedded in the culture of all three schools and, in many instances, is linked with core curriculum. At Harpeth Hall one hundred per cent of their students volunteer their time to give service. It was described as a 'contagious culture'.

Ideas shared included:

- at Harpeth Hall each tutor group annually adopts a focus such as partnerships with the local zoo, planting flower gardens, maintaining a local cemetery, producing a puppet show for local children, graffiti cleaning

- Lunch and Munch sessions for tasks such as filling envelopes for local charities
- a Maths class designed a stained glass window for a senior citizens' home
- Brown Bag Lunches – designed to inform students of the world around them
- Literacy coaching programme with a local primary school
- Senior Olympics supported through the teaching of the ageing process in Science
- Retired persons helping students with projects

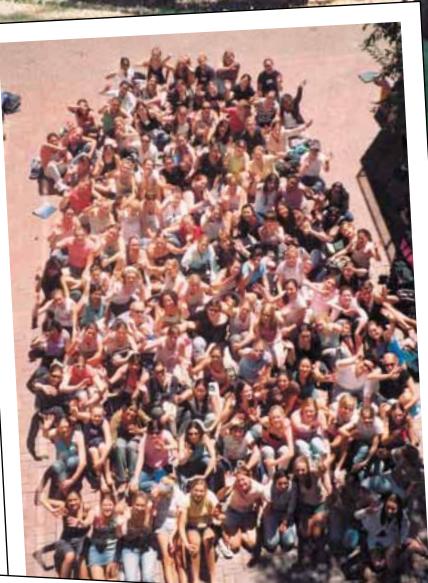
Some common practices from the three schools that seem to be keys to a successful service programme included:

- a dedicated staff member with responsibility for leading the programme
- student leadership and project coordinators
- train the trainer programmes
- keeping records that allow for tracking individual contributions and areas of interest
- marketing the ideas, benefits and programmes through assemblies, literature, posters, Internet
- celebrating service with a series of awards and thank you events

Beth Blackwood

The Alliance of Girls' Schools Annual Student Leadership Conference

18-22 January 2006



To be held at: Melbourne Girls Grammar School, South Yarra
and St Catherine's School, Toorak, Victoria, Australia

*A residential convocation for senior students
which focuses on understanding leadership
and developing skills and confidence.*

Two girls from the 2006 leadership team of each Alliance member school are invited to attend. They will meet and work with student leaders in schools from all over Australia, New Zealand, Asia, South Africa and the United States: a unique opportunity to form lasting connections.

The Brisbane-based Synergy team, who have run the SLC since its inception in 2000, have put together a training package which will focus on goal setting, group management skills, conducting meetings, public speaking, event management, conflict resolution, time management and many other skills. The girls will also learn about mentoring and the power of networking: valuable skills to equip them for their role in the school and beyond as leaders of tomorrow.

Highlights of the conference will include:

- Leadership challenges with staff at accounting firm Deloitte Touche Tomatsu
- A visit to the Volvo Ocean race team and tour of the boats
- Conference Dinner

Excerpts from students relating their experiences at the 2005 conference can be found in a recent issue of *in Alliance*, Volume 31 May 2005, at www.agsa.org.au.

Download information and registration forms at www.agsa.org.au

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