NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
TE RŪNANGA O AOTEAROA MŌ TE RANGAHAU I TE MĀTAURANGA

What role might research play in supporting future-oriented community engagement with education?

A working paper from the Changing Minds research project

Rachel Bolstad

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2012

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ISBN 978-1-927151-71-6

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

Abstract

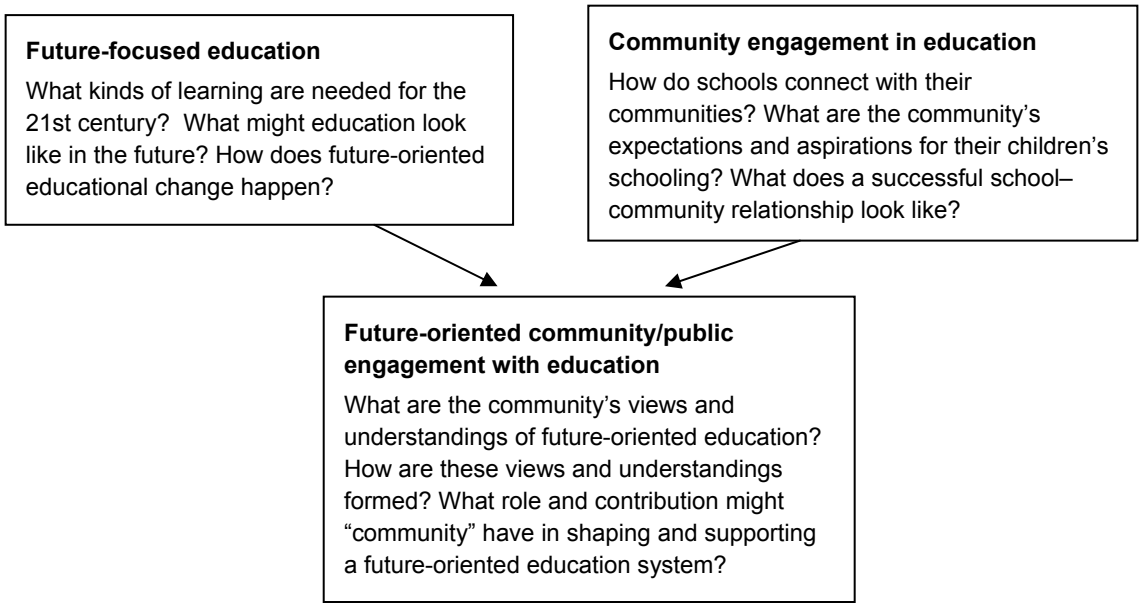
This working paper discusses NZCER's research in the broad area of future-focused public and community engagement with education. Although we have now carried out a variety of related projects in this area, we have sometimes found it challenging to identify where our limited research resources are most usefully directed for advancing knowledge and supporting development. What is our remit as researchers—knowledge building, or using research knowledge to actively support and sustain change, or both?

Our approaches to date have involved aspects of both, with varying degrees of success. Only with hindsight can we begin to see how the complex challenges of supporting future-oriented public engagement with education might be addressed, and what part research knowledge and processes might play. I conclude by proposing that future research in this area should be prefaced with further development work and relationship building with a broad collective of stakeholders with a commitment to long-term iterative change processes. This means as researchers we will need to build and maintain working relationships that support this goal over a long-term period. One possibility worth exploring further is the recent thinking about "collective impact" approaches amongst some New Zealand stakeholders in this field.

Introduction

In recent years, NZCER's research programme has included a number of projects in the two broad areas of "future-focused education" and "community engagement in education".[1] The first has investigated questions about relationships between schools and "the community", while the latter has explored questions about what education and schooling might look like in the future if it is to better fit changing learning needs for the 21st century. Over time our work has increasingly focused on the intersecting space and the research questions that arise *between* these two strands (Figure 1).

Figure 1 **Exploring the intersection between the two research strands**



This paper steps off from Bull's (2011) working paper which suggested differentiating between the term "community engagement *in* education"—which tends to focus on engaging parents and whānau support in order to improve the performance of students *within* the current system—and "public engagement *with* education", which she argued should be reserved for initiatives that address broader questions about how schools and the public might work together to *reinvent* schooling and public education to better meet the needs of *all* students in the 21st century. While there has been significant activity—and research—in the former area within New Zealand, Bull suggested the latter is a much more challenging task, and it has been more difficult to find examples of this kind of public engagement *with* education in practice.

[1] Key examples of work within these two research strands are given in Appendix 1.

This paper parallels Bull's (2010, 2011) discussions about what future-focused community engagement with education might look by considering the role(s) *research* might play in this process. I begin by outlining the inherent challenges for future-oriented research and discuss methodological challenges that have arisen as we have sought to contribute meaningful knowledge in this area.

The challenges of future-oriented research

As discussed in a recent report for the Ministry of Education (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012), future-oriented research is inherently difficult, since the basic building blocks of research—data, artefacts and so on—exist only in the present or as traces from the past. However, research is also built from ideas, and there is some consensus among innovative educationalists and theorists about ideas which should underpin the future of education. These ideas are founded from both empirical research and well-developed theory, but they are not necessarily expressed in today's practice.

Research into current practice—even that which is considered "best practice" within current frameworks—cannot provide sufficient knowledge to tell us what education could or should be like in the future. What role, then, can research play in contributing to a future-oriented view of education? Rather than working towards a picture of "best practice", research with a future-oriented lens could be thought of as working towards the development of a view of "desirable possibilities". Researching for the future is not about *predicting* the future, but using research knowledge and processes to support continuous thinking and conversations that can help to *create* a future that is built around an informed consensus that is supported by parents, children, teachers and policy makers (Leadbeater, 2011).

Our work on public and community engagement with education suggests that such a consensus does not currently exist, and it is an open question as to whether or how it might be achieved. Over time, as researchers we have shifted our focus from investigating what *is* happening in school–community engagement, to what *could* happen in terms of future-focused public engagement with education. There are several obvious ways research could contribute. For example, through:

- *gathering and reporting* data on current understandings and "best" practices
- sharing research findings and contemporary educational theory with schools and communities in order to *inform* understandings and the development of "next" practices
- *collaborating* alongside partners in the education sector and/or community to explore and test new ideas and ways of working in community and public engagement with education (a research and development approach).

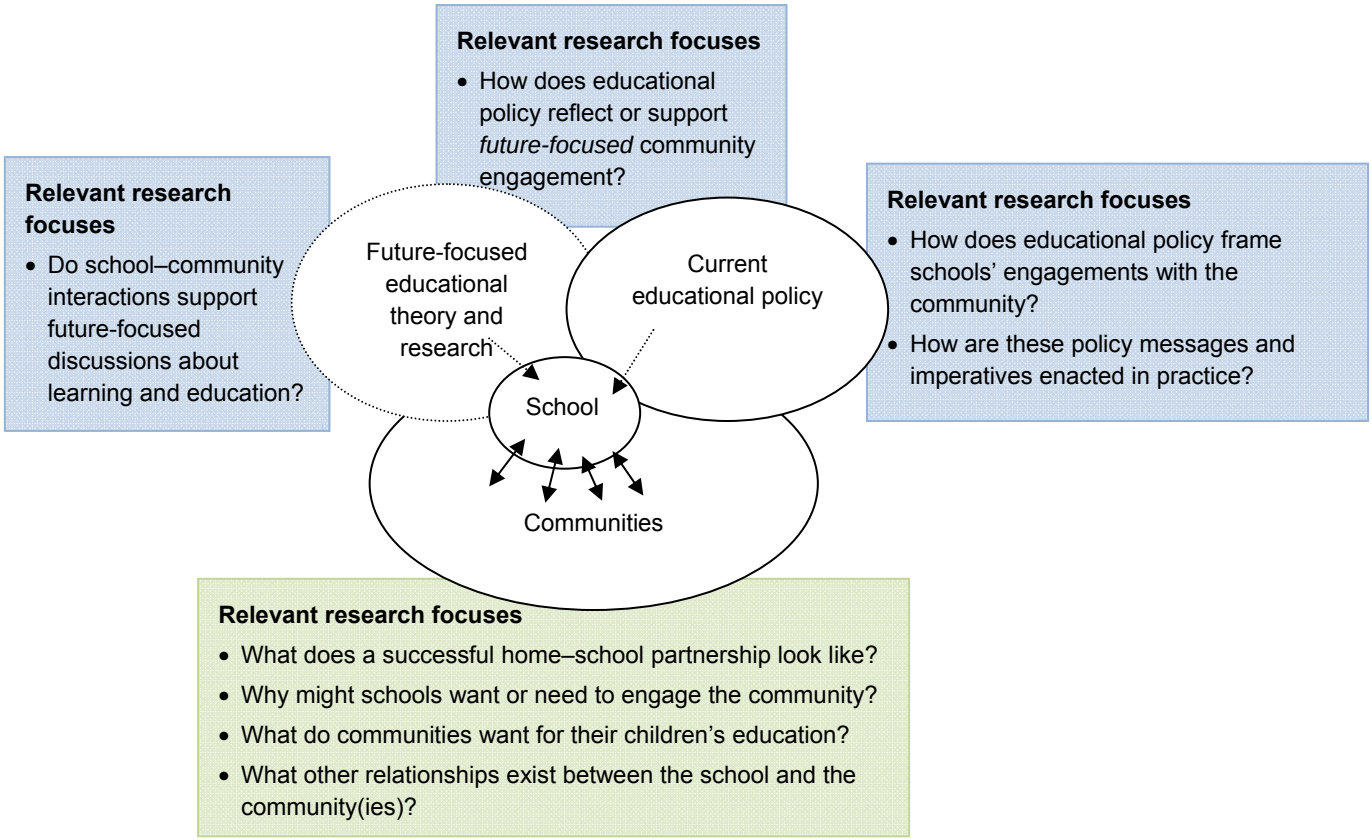
As I outline below, our approaches to date have involved aspects of all of the above, with varying degrees of success. Only with hindsight can we begin to see how the complex challenges of supporting future-oriented public engagement with education might be addressed. At the

conclusion of this paper I suggest that if research is to successfully contribute to growth and development in this area it should be designed in connection with initiatives that involve a broad collective of stakeholders with a commitment to long-term iterative change processes, and the ability to maintain working relationships that support this.

Exploring schools' engagement with their family and whānau communities (2007–8)

Our initial work focused on questions around schools' engagements with their family/whānau communities, building from several evaluations of the Ministry of Education's home–school partnership (HSP) initiatives (see Appendix 1). Figure 2 illustrates some of the key elements that framed our research work at this phase, and gives examples of relevant research questions in relation to these elements. The main focus of the HSP evaluations was on the nature of the engagements between schools and their parent/whānau communities (green box), but our research also considered those engagements in relation to current education policy, future-focused educational theory and research and the connections between these (blue boxes).

Figure 2 **Research on school–community engagement in the context of educational policy and future-focused ideas**



What we learned

While the research pointed towards key elements for success in home–school partnerships,[2] Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008) suggested a need to further explore exactly what *sorts* of home–school partnerships are beneficial, how they are beneficial and to whom. Bull (2009) questioned whether there is widespread clarity around the *purposes* of home–school partnerships—for example, are they mainly a strategy for lifting student achievement? Or are they intended as a way of engaging communities in discussing and debating the future of schooling and education in their community? How are they understood by the people involved?

Bull's small exploratory study aimed to find out what some parents and teachers thought about community engagement, interviewing principals, teachers and a selection of parents from four schools. Among those interviewed, teachers and parents tended to have similar views of the purpose of education, and their respective roles in this.

Parents were generally happy with their current, relatively passive, involvement in their children's formal education. Staff and parents agreed that decisions about teaching and learning should be made by staff, but that the views of parents should be considered and the reasons behind decisions should be made explicit to parents. In short, the parents and teachers we interviewed were happy with the "status quo" (Bull, 2009, p. 4).

Though we can't assume that these parents' views were representative for all families and communities, Bull's findings are consistent with several decades of research on school-based curriculum development which suggests that parent and community involvement in shaping school curriculum *is* relatively rare (as is student involvement), and is often seen as best left to the professionals (see Bolstad, 2004). However, commentators in the field have argued that communities can and should have greater input into debates about the ways in which education contributes to the public good as an important part of democratic life (Bull, 2011; Gilbert, 2005; Reid, 2007).

Bull (2009, p. 4) argued that time and effort needed to be put into working with teachers, parents and the wider community "to think differently about education and to think differently about the roles of each of these groups in bringing about change". The challenge, she suggested, was how to go about engaging schools and their communities in these discussions. She posed several open questions: What "levers" might encourage all members of the school community to think differently about education? How can we get communities talking about what is important in education? Who are the best people to facilitate these discussions, and what sort of input is necessary?

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[2] Key elements include partnerships being based on relationships that are collaborative and mutually respectful; partnerships being multidimensional and responsive to community needs; and partnerships being planned for and regularly reviewed. Successful home–school partnerships are goal oriented and focus on learning and there is timely two-way communication between school and the home.

Taking an R&D approach: Researchers as change agents (2008–10)

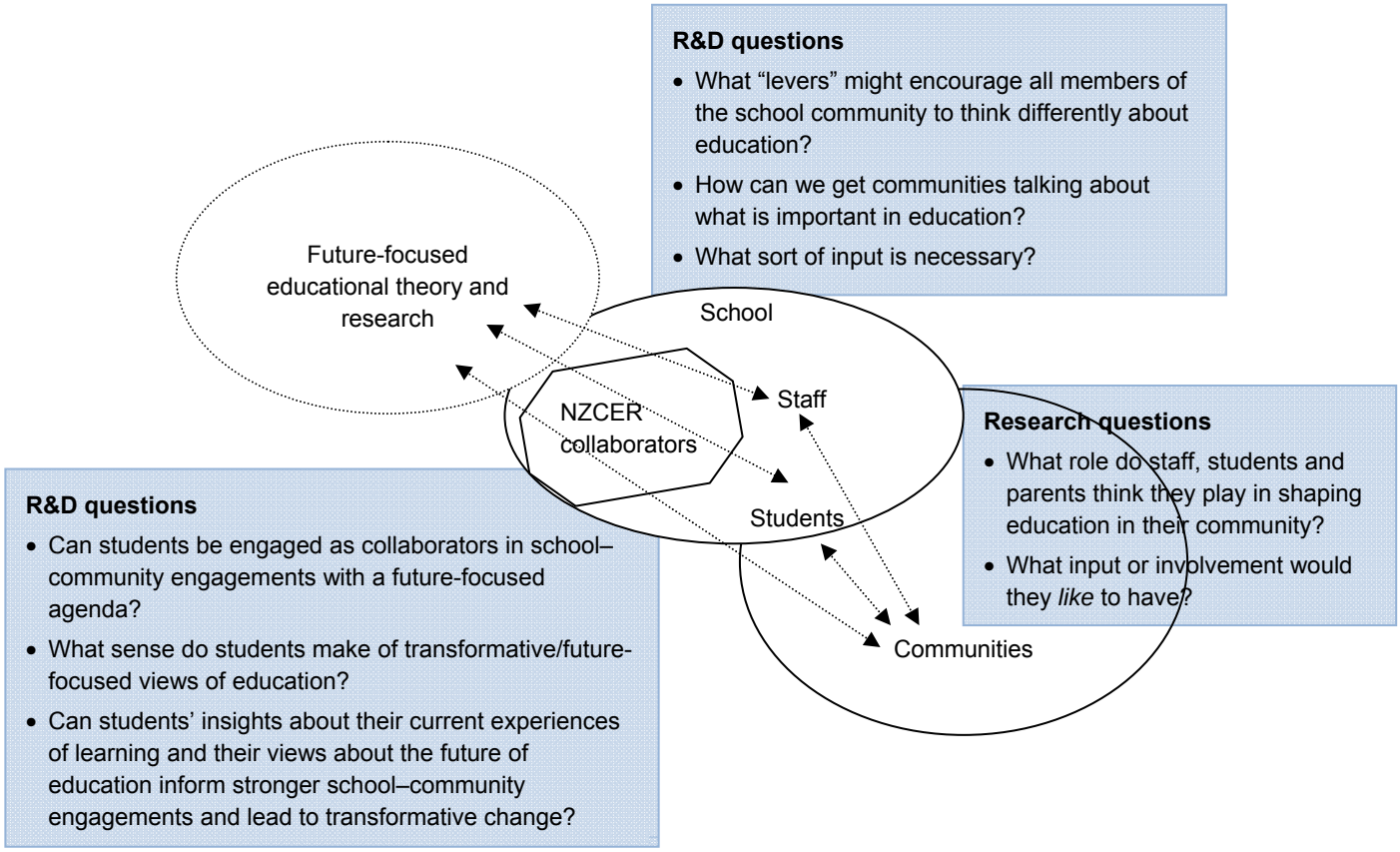
The questions above underpinned the second major phase of our work in community engagement with education. In the Families and Communities Engagement in Education (FACE) project, we formed working relationships with four schools[3] taking on a more active role as change agents. These relationships grew out of NZCER's prior interactions with some of the schools, which, like many, were grappling with questions about why and how to engage with their communities. Leaders in these schools had requested that members of our wider team give presentations about future-focused educational theory and research[4] to their staff and, in some cases, to their communities.

Figure 3 represents the key relationships and questions for the FACE work. Because the schools' leaders saw us as having access to knowledge that they considered to be powerful, our research team had a more overt role in *contributing* to schools' engagements with their communities through our work with teachers, students and people in the community. The schools' leaders believed that these groups would benefit from this input of ideas they may not otherwise have access to, and we were all interested in whether this could lead to new kinds of purposeful engagement between the school and community.

[3] These were the four schools whose parent communities were interviewed by Bull in 2009.

[4] The main focus here was "21st century education" or "Knowledge Age" views of learning and education, for example, as outlined in Jane Gilbert's *Catching the Knowledge Wave?* (2005).

Figure 3 **Researchers as collaborators/change agents in community engagement**



NZCER's work with the schools included:

- interviewing selected staff and parents/whānau to elicit their perspectives on the purpose of education and their view of school–community engagement (see Bull, 2009)
- by schools' invitation, presentations to school staff and parent evenings on "Knowledge Age" ideas (Gilbert, 2005)
- researchers collaborating with small groups of students in a series of workshop in the two secondary schools (methodology and outcomes described in Roberts & Bolstad, 2010)
- collaborating with the schools to bring together, on a small scale, the students, some staff and some parents/whānau to share reflections on the thinking and questions this work together had raised, and to discuss what might happen next.

Our goal was to work with the schools to explore and support where they might take their own journey in terms of engaging students and the community in conversations about the school, curriculum, learning and the future. Neither we, nor the schools, were exactly sure what might come out of our work together but we anticipated that this emergent process might help to identify appropriate "next steps".

What we learned

The FACE project had mixed success. On one hand, the work with the students in the two secondary schools appeared to have positive effects, building participating students' confidence, knowledge, interest and reflexivity—to a point where we believed they could start to engage in broader learning communities with teachers and family members, and continue inquiries into their own and other students' experiences. We gained some insights into what kinds of support help students reflect on their experiences and critique taken-for-granted educational ideas, and shifts that occurred for students, schools and family engagement as a result of the process (Roberts & Bolstad, 2010). Although our direct work with these students ended after about a year, the learning from these and other "students as researchers" projects has subsequently provided a useful theoretical base for us and others working on issues of "student voice" and young people's engagement in co-constructing education (see Bolstad, 2010, 2011).

We noted some important parallels between the learning experiences of students, teachers and researchers throughout the FACE project (Roberts & Bolstad, 2010):

- We all took on new roles that extended our skill sets beyond what is traditionally associated with our positions and our "training" (i.e., there were opportunities to rethink what it means to be a student, a teacher, a researcher or a parent with regard to education).
- We all sometimes struggled to translate our ways of seeing the world into the language of another group (research language to education language, or "school" language to language that was relevant to parents and families).
- We all wanted to value our own and each other's areas of expertise without one form of expertise dominating the conversation.
- We all had to work around systemic constraints associated with current schooling practices—such as timetabling and other school culture practices—that, among other things, positioned our work with students as something "extra" that took time away from their regularly scheduled classes.
- We all appreciated feeling that our small project together was contributing something useful to a bigger system (students contributing to their school system, each school contributing to the student component of FACE, our student research component contributing to the full FACE project, the FACE project hopefully contributing to New Zealand education and so on).

On the other hand, limits around the time and resource that we could allocate to our work with the FACE schools meant that our engagements were relatively infrequent, and from our point of view the schools needed to be "driving" the direction of their own development. For the schools it was often difficult to identify what was the best way forward to build on the groundwork we had developed together. A further engagement with a wider group of schools which aimed to spark community engagement activity around "levers" identified by the schools themselves was also ultimately unsuccessful in terms of an ongoing research and development engagement.

Reflecting on what had been learned through FACE and other projects, Bull (2010) commented that such is the scope and challenge of reframing community engagement for the future that it was

ultimately unsurprising to find that most schools we encountered were not at a "transformative" stage with their community engagement work. Recognising that these kinds of developments would take significant time, she suggested some ways that schools might at least "begin to lay the foundations now for tomorrow's interactions" (Bull, 2010, p.4) . For example:

- fostering multidirectional communication that would support relationship building not only between parents and educators but *among* parents as well
- involving the wider community (see below)
- provisionally trying out new roles (e.g., engaging students in deliberations about learning and curriculum in the school, as in the small projects undertaken in the FACE schools).

She also commented again on the importance of ensuring "that the whole school community has adequate information about how schools work now and is exposed to ideas about 21st century learning and how schools might need to change" (Bull, 2010, p. 4).

Bull also discussed the idea of a community-based model of community engagement and how this might differ from a school-centred model. At the time of the FACE project we were aware of several initiatives aiming to develop town-wide or district-wide forums to increase community engagement in education and made exploratory contact with some of these with the view to potential future research connections. The idea of a *wider* community engagement that might involve shaping goals and plans for learning for a whole area (rather than a single school) was tantalising, but the initiatives we knew of were in their early stages, and it was difficult to identify at that stage what role (if any) research might play in supporting these initiatives.

Stepping outside the school–community frame: How does the "general public" make sense of messages about education? (2011–12)

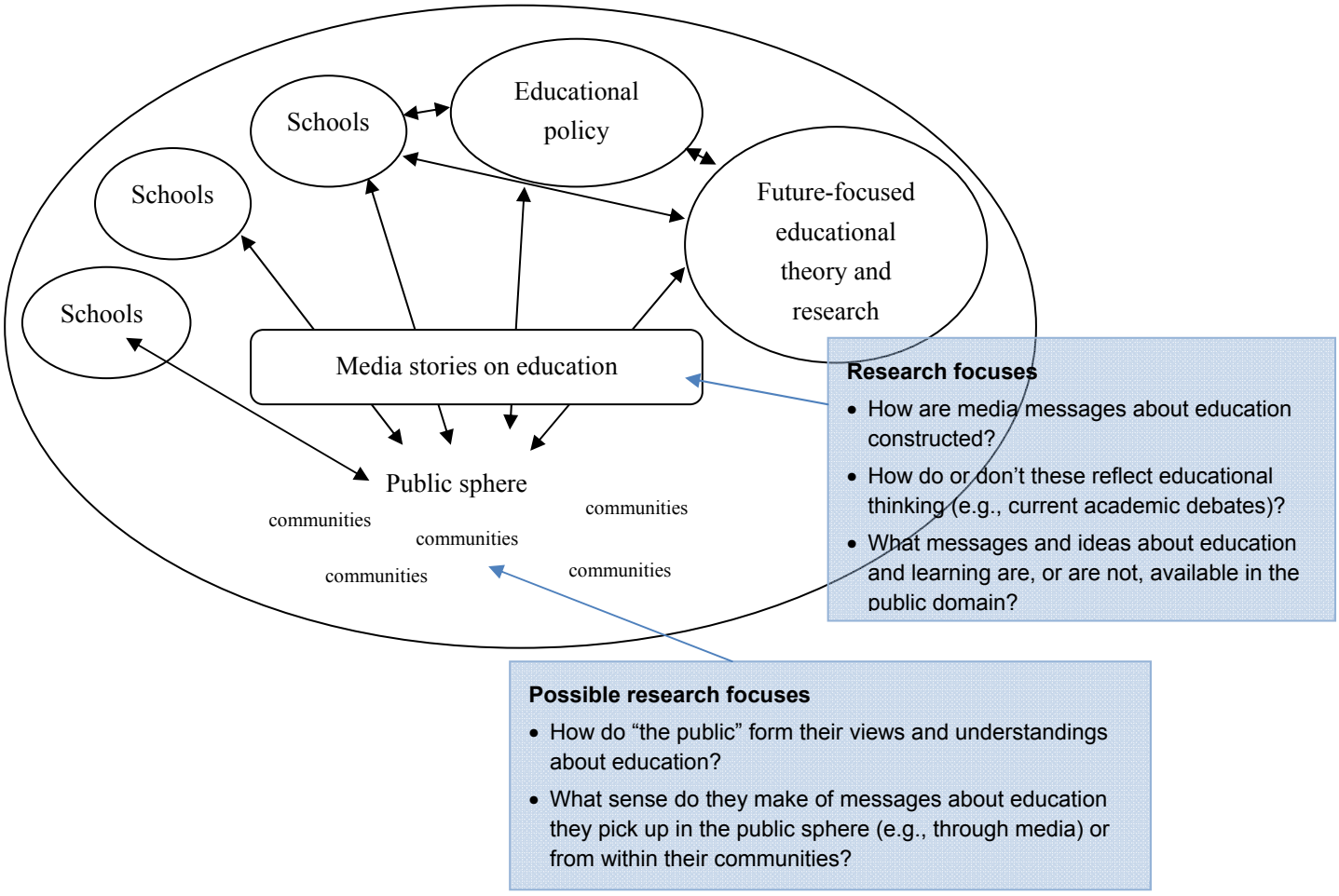
The most recent stage of our work in public engagement with education—a project called Changing Minds, represented a change in tack from the previous stages of our work. The schools and communities with whom we had initiated research relationships in FACE hoped that research could provide them with useful suggestions and directions for where to go next in their community connections and engagements. We began to review what knowledge gaps we might fill in order to contribute answers to questions that might arise for schools and communities as they developed deeper forms of community engagement with education.

Our recent synthesis of emerging themes for a 21st century learning system (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012) indicated a twofold reason why greater "connectedness" is needed between schools and other organisations, groups and individuals in the wider community. First, schools as they are currently set up will not have the resources to provide "in house" all of the very different kinds of expertise needed to develop 21st century learning experiences for their students. Second, community understanding of and support for future-oriented educational ideas is required if schools are to achieve the required shift in focus. As Jane Gilbert has argued (Gilbert, 2005,

Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012), public education as a collective good is supposed to meet individual and social needs, but also needs to take a "long view", putting in place structures and systems and developing our collective capacity to continue to provide for the greater good, benefiting the public as both the funders and receivers of public education.

NZCER's "future-oriented education" research work has explored in some depth the challenges for people *within* the education sector to shift their thinking and practices to meet changing learning needs for the 21st century (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012; Boyd et al., 2005; Bull & Gilbert, 2012; Hipkins, 2011), but how much do we know about how people *outside* the sector—in the "wider public"—might engage with, make sense of and contribute to new thinking about education? Could a better understanding of how people in "the community" think about learning and education prove useful for schools and others interested in engaging communities in future-oriented educational development work? The Changing Minds project initially set out to build knowledge in this space through an exploration of what access the community/public has to future-oriented thinking about education, and what sense they make of those messages. The thinking frame for our initial methodology for Changing Minds is represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 **The Changing Minds initial methodology**



The Changing Minds methodology represented an effort to move beyond access to "the community" mediated through existing connections with schools (e.g., working through schools to connect with parents and whānau), and instead explore ways of carrying out research with "the wider community" or "general public" more directly. At the outset of Changing Minds we were conscious that the "wider community/general public" is an umbrella category and that we would have to rationalise choices about which segments of this population we might work with, and why. These decisions proved difficult, particularly following feedback from our peers in the educational research community at the 2011 NZARE conference, and ultimately led us to park our plans in order to re-evaluate our next steps in this research domain.

Our pilot methodology involved carrying out a brief exploration of messages about education represented in the New Zealand print media over a 6-month period. Our intention was to look at what sorts of ideas were presented in these stories, in order to develop some stimulus materials that we could use in focus group conversations with people and groups from "the community". Our intention was not to undertake a detailed analysis of media constructions of education and how these media discourses compare with contemporary academic views (Roulston, 2006). Rather, the main object of our inquiry was to identify what ideas, experiences, knowledge and attitudes people brought to their sense making about current and future-focused educational ideas. The stimulus materials we aimed to develop from news items were seen as a way of provoking conversations for this purpose. This methodology mirrored aspects of a previous project that had explored how people from different parts of "the community" made sense of messages about science using constructed materials such as pastiche news stories about science (Hipkins, 2002).

We carried out an electronic search of the New Zealand online newspapers for articles, blogs, opinion pieces or letters connected to three key story "themes": National Standards; ICT in education; and any stories about "success" in learning and education. These themes were chosen for two reasons. First, they were topical at the time our searches were being carried out. Second, a cursory scan of articles connected with these nodes suggested each of these topics had the potential to present a mix of "20th century/Industrial Age" and "21st century/Knowledge Age" thinking about education. Electronic searches were carried out for a 4-month period (July to October 2011). Relevant articles were printed, reviewed and sorted into key subcategories by pairs of researchers. We also scanned a free local newspaper for any messages about education over a 3-month period (12 issues). Appendix 2 summarises the main findings from our analysis.

In late 2011 we used our findings to shape an initial set of discussion questions based around three articles. These were used in a workshop and presentation session with our peers at the NZARE conference.

What we learned

Our first pass at using a discussion-based methodology based around educational news stories elicited useful questions and feedback from a community of educators and researchers at the NZARE conference. Some of our colleagues questioned whether the approach would suit the

communities they worked with (e.g., some suggested it was too text-based). The conversations we had at NZARE also identified particular people and groups who were interested in questions around system-level community engagement and were working on this within their own communities, and their questions and comments to us provided useful food for thought.

At this stage of the Changing Minds project we took the decision to step back from our planned next steps in order to re-evaluate our methodology. Key questions included: Who is the audience for the research and how could it inform or support them in their work? Had we thought about this sufficiently? Did we need to reallocate some of our time and resources to build stronger networks and relationships with specific people or groups who could provide further input into shaping this work and/or be likely stakeholders/users of the outcome of the research?

Rather than proceeding as planned, we used the remaining 6 months of the Changing Minds project to process the questions above and scope new possibilities for future connections. The result, as outlined in this paper, was a review of the "big picture" regarding the contributions of research to future-focused community engagement with education.

Where to next: Collective impact approaches?

Looking back at the work described in this paper we can see that NZCER has developed research knowledge and some expertise in several areas relevant to the questions of future-oriented community engagement with education. These include:

- deep access to future-oriented educational ideas, and some experience in translating these ideas into different formats for discussion with educators and other people
- research knowledge about the processes and challenges that New Zealand educators experience as they work with future-oriented educational ideas in their practice
- an understanding of the kinds of learning that can occur for students, teachers, school leaders and others at the individual and group levels, and the conditions that can support or inhibit this
- a foundation of theoretical principles and some experience in developing workshop processes for collaborating with young people in deliberations about learning, teaching and curriculum in their schools and community.

At the outset of each of our pieces of work in community engagement with education it has not always been clear *which* aspects of our research expertise and knowledge are most usefully applied, and how easily we can change tack with changing needs and contexts. It is also clear that our work has become increasingly oriented towards the future-oriented transformative end of the research spectrum. The focus on what *could* happen (and how), rather than simply what *is* happening or *has* happened, challenges us to develop new ways of thinking about what it means to do future-oriented research. We have also learned that the developmental processes required to work with the potential collaborators and benefactors of this kind of research require time, resourcing and skills which push the boundaries of our training and infrastructure as a research organisation.

In my view, future research in this area should be prefaced with further development work and relationship building with a broad collective of stakeholders with a commitment to long-term iterative change processes. This means as researchers we will need the ability to build and maintain working relationships that support this goal over a long-term period.

One possibility I think is worth exploring further is the recent thinking about "collective impact" approaches amongst some New Zealand stakeholders in this field.[5] Collective impact is a particular type of collaboration emerging in practice in several communities in the United States and elsewhere. According to Kania and Kramer (2011), collective impact involves "the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem" (p. 36). Collective impact approaches are premised on the idea that "large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated interventions of individual organisations". They are particularly suited to complex "adaptive" problems, in which "the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or the authority to bring about the necessary change". Further, because the problems at issue are adaptive, "reaching an effective solution requires learning by the stakeholders involved in the problem, who must then change their own behaviour in order to create a solution". Based on their research on collective impact initiatives, Kania and Kramer identify five conditions for success (Table 1).

Table 1 **Five conditions of collective success (after Kania & Kramer, 2011)**

Common agenda—all participants have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.
Shared measurement systems—agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported.
Mutually reinforcing activities—where a diverse group of stakeholders work together, not all doing the same thing, but each undertaking a specific set of activities at which they excel, in a way that supports and is co-ordinated with the actions of others.
Continuous communication—for participating people and organisations to recognise and appreciate the common motivation between their different efforts, to develop shared vocabulary.
Backbone supporting organisation—with staff and an organisation with specific skills to provide a supporting infrastructure for co-ordination, applying principles of adaptive leadership.

Collective impact thinking has underpinned work towards developing a city-wide, community-developed and supported view of the future of learning in Auckland arising out of the Auckland Education Summit in 2011,[6] and has been proposed as a strategy for co-ordinating the activities of non-governmental organisations, families and individuals promoting the wellbeing of children and

[5] We were introduced to this idea by a colleague, Nicola Meek at the Cognition Institute. See also Simpson (2012).

[6] This work is called *Learning Auckland* and has been shaped initially by a group of leaders from the summit, supported by the Cognition Institute and the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET).

youth within a human rights framework (Simpson, 2012). There are other opportunities for collective impact work in other areas of New Zealand. For example, we are aware of a community-driven movement in Nelson to develop as an "education city".[7] Also, at least one group of innovative educators in Canterbury collaborated to create a cohesive, compelling vision and direction for the future of education in their city post-earthquake. They suggest the development of a federated learning model, where learning hubs encourage collaboration across sectors, communities and services (Shaking Up Christchurch Education Network, 2011), but the current challenges facing educators and the wider community in Christchurch are enormous and make it difficult to sustain energies around this kind of forward-looking planning.

The framework of a collective impact approach suggests that all of the possible roles for research/knowledge development we have already experimented with in respect to future-oriented community and public engagement with education could be relevant and contribute value to the long-term goals of these collaborations. Questions for us to consider as researchers might include: What would it look like if research was threaded through a collective impact approach? Who could be doing that research and how could it be developed and sustained adaptively? How could future-oriented adaptive research processes feed into collective impact approaches, and how might this continue to change what we know and can do as a research organisation?

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[7] See http://holisticlearning.weebly.com/about-ako-a-rongo.html and http://education-cities.com/

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Appendix 1

Selected examples of NZCER work in the areas of "future-focused education" and "community engagement in education"[8]

Theme: Future-focused education	Theme: Community engagement in education
Future-oriented learning and teaching[9] (2011) A synthesis of 10 years of research on current practice and futures thinking in education, commissioned by the Ministry of Education to support its programme of work to develop a vision of what future-oriented education could look like for New Zealand learners. **21st century schools (2010)** This project involved working alongside teachers and leaders in two innovative secondary schools that are attempting, each in their own way, to move to being a "school for the 21st century". **Future-focused issues in education (2009–10)** Building on a body of work that NZCER had already undertaken in areas relevant to the "future focus" principle in *The New Zealand Curriculum*, this project aimed to explore how knowledge networks form around the future-focused issues in both formal and nonformal education, with particular emphasis on how new knowledge is generated in these networks. **Disciplining and drafting, or 21st century learning? Rethinking the New Zealand senior secondary curriculum for the future (2008)** A book that was developed from a background paper originally commissioned by the Ministry of Education to explore current and future possibilities for senior secondary curriculum in New Zealand schools.	**Families' and communities' engagement in education (FACE) (2009–11)** This programme of work grew out of our contract work for the Ministry of Education on successful home–school partnerships. It explored deeper questions, such as *why* schools might want or need to engage the community, and how this might be done. **Successful home–school partnerships (2008)** This project reviewed literature and analysed seven New Zealand case studies to improve understanding of the key elements of successful home–school partnerships, and how these partnerships operate in different school settings. **Evaluation of the Home–School Partnership Programme: Literacy (2006–7)** **Evaluation of the Home–School Partnership Programme: Numeracy (2007)** **Evaluation of Secondary Home–School Partnerships (2007)** These three projects evaluated the Ministry of Education's Home–School Partnership programmes.

[8] Additional projects not listed in Table 1 have touched on aspects of one or both themes. For example, the 2007–9 evaluation of the Regional Education for Enterprise (E4E) Clusters Initiative included a focus on schools' and students' involvement with the community through enterprising learning activities.

[9] Original title: Supporting 21st century teaching and learning for New Zealand students.

Appendix 2

Findings from our analysis of online news media in the Changing Minds project

ICT in education	**Main findings** • There were approximately 140 items about technology. • The two most common topics were about schools' access or adoption of broadband and iPads. Most of these stories were focused on cost or access issues. • There was little discussion on the impact of technology on learning or arguments for *why* and *how* the technology could support better learning, or what kinds of new learning would be enabled.	**Common subcategories of stories** • Schools'/students' access to different technologies. • Health and harm/benefits of student use of ICT. • Use of ICT for young peoples' safety/surveillance/behaviour management. • Impact on efficiency. • Stories about specific technologies to assist with learning. • Stories about young people as a "digital generation".
What counts as "success" in education?	**Main findings** • There were approximately 70 items about educational success (including institutional success, and success of individual students). • Very few discussed *why* the success was important, in terms of its relationship to larger purposes for learning and education in the 21st century. The articles simply reported that the success had occurred.	**Common subcategories of stories** • Stories about traditional academic success (e.g., students winning top scholarships or awards, or institutions reaching new levels of success in student achievement levels or qualifications gained). • Student success in creative/arts activities. • Students succeeding in pathways to work. • Students succeeding in having a positive impact on their community. • Success of Māori students. • Success of Pasifika students. • "Life stories" of adults with a retrospective view of how education contributed to their success. • Stories linked to the Canterbury earthquakes.
National Standards	**Main findings** • There were approximately 100 items either for or against National Standards. • Very few attempted to give a balanced view or to unpack the reasons behind the arguments for or against standards. • A large number of items simply reported on the number of schools boycotting standards. • A smaller number of items reported on research about standards.	**Arguments "for" National Standards** • Schools should comply with what the Government says. • Unions are only interested in looking after their members' interests. • National Standards will improve accountability. • National Standards will make schools focus on "real" education. • National Standards will highlight where improvements are needed. • Reporting to parents will be improved. **Arguments "against" National Standards**

		• Children are unique; they progress at different rates. • Focus on literacy and numeracy narrows the curriculum. • More measuring won't fix underachievement. • National Standards are not reliable, have not been trialled, implementation too fast. • National Standards' implementation ignores overseas experience and educationalists' expertise. • National Standards will lead to league tables. • National Standards will disadvantage certain groups of students.

Analysis of local newspaper

During the study period there was very little coverage of anything to do with education and what there was tended to be "good news" or local interest stories. There were:

- 24 items celebrating student success (mainly in sport and the arts)
- one news item about Labour's education policy and this mentioned National Standards
- no articles relating to technology in education
- no letters to the editor concerned with any aspect of education.