



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Research Commons

<http://waikato.researchgateway.ac.nz/>

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**FUTURES-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

**A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education
at the University of Waikato by**

JULIETTE HAYES

University of Waikato 2009

ABSTRACT

This study explores the issues facing twenty-first century secondary school principals as they face changes in education brought about by the *New Zealand Curriculum*, and changes in their communities in the face of the emerging knowledge society.

The study explores literature on educational leadership, futures thinking and some of the social factors influencing communities today. Data is gathered from semi-structured interviews with four futures-focused secondary principals from a range of schools and localities. Findings are presented in a narrative style that attempts to capture the person behind the principal, while maintaining confidentiality.

The major findings from the study indicate that school leadership in the twenty-first century is likely to be complex, and have influence far beyond the school gates. It concludes with recommendations for principals and systems administrators in supporting next steps for leadership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been inspired, motivated, encouraged and mentored by so many wonderful people in the process of writing this thesis. My colleagues and the Board of Trustees at Waikato Diocesan School for Girls have been interested in, and supportive of, my research, and tolerated my enthusiasm for futures thinking over the past five years. I am especially grateful to Gillian Simpson, now of St Margaret's College, for her mentoring and on-going encouragement.

The staff of the University of Waikato Educational Leadership Centre set me on the path of further study, with a leadership focus, and constantly pushed me out of my comfort zone – for which I am grateful. I was blessed to find Catherine Lang, who was prepared to be my supervisor, and am thankful for her professional guidance and willingness to challenge my thinking.

My family has sacrificed a great deal in order for this thesis to be completed. To Glenn, Audrey and Charlotte – Mummy has finished her homework!

The four principals whose work I researched and analysed have been patient and very gracious in their willingness to share their stories. I remain inspired by their work, and can only hope to be as courageous in leadership as they are.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE	6
• Overview	6
• Futures thinking in education	6
• The future in schools	11
• Futures-focused leadership	13
• Strategies and tools for futures thinking	17
• Summary	21
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
• Overview	22
• Qualitative research	22
• Interviews as a research method	24
<i>Characteristics of the semi-structured interview</i>	26
<i>Relationships and reciprocity</i>	26
<i>Data collection</i>	27
<i>Reliability and validity</i>	27
<i>Analysis of data</i>	28
• Ethical considerations	29
<i>Access to participants</i>	29
<i>Informed consent</i>	30
<i>Confidentiality</i>	30

<i>Potential harm to participants</i>	31
• Summary	32
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	33
• Overview	33
• Jo	33
<i>Introduction</i>	33
<i>Futures focus</i>	35
<i>Motivations</i>	37
<i>Changes</i>	40
<i>Leadership</i>	42
<i>Strategies</i>	44
<i>Conclusion</i>	45
• Marion	46
<i>Introduction</i>	46
<i>Futures focus</i>	47
<i>Motivations</i>	49
<i>Changes</i>	52
<i>Leadership</i>	56
<i>Strategies</i>	58
<i>Conclusion</i>	60
• Netta	60
<i>Introduction</i>	60
<i>Futures focus</i>	61
<i>Motivations</i>	64
<i>Changes</i>	65
<i>Leadership</i>	70
<i>Strategies</i>	74
<i>Conclusion</i>	75
• Matt	76
<i>Introduction</i>	76
<i>Futures focus</i>	77
<i>Motivations</i>	80

<i>Changes</i>	82
<i>Leadership</i>	85
<i>Strategies</i>	87
<i>Conclusion</i>	88
• Summary	88
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	90
• Overview	90
• That futures-focused leaders use the <i>New Zealand Curriculum</i> as a current driving force	90
<i>Urgency</i>	93
<i>Leading learning</i>	93
<i>Embracing the changes</i>	95
<i>Many voices</i>	96
<i>Seeking a critical mass and system-level change</i>	100
• That future-focused leaders seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures	101
<i>Networks</i>	101
<i>Research</i>	102
<i>Secondary Futures</i>	103
<i>Community awareness</i>	104
• That future-focused leaders regard leading change as a challenge	105
<i>Teachers</i>	106
<i>Students</i>	109
<i>Community</i>	110
• That futures-focused leaders find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice	111
• That futures-focused leaders employ models for future thinking	114
<i>The nine gateways</i>	114

<i>Secondary Futures</i>	116
<i>The networked camping ground</i>	117
• Summary	118
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH	119
• Conclusion	119
• Recommendations	121
• Further research	123
• A final word	124
APPENDICES	125
Appendix A: Information for participants	125
Appendix B: Consent form	128
Appendix C: Interview questions	129
REFERENCES	130

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Positioned as we are in the early years of a new century, thinking often turns to the state of the world in which we live today, and the implications for the future that we face. With global-scale wars, economic crises, health pandemics, extreme divisions between poverty and wealth, rapid technological advances and the rise of India and China as superpowers, we are being affected in ways which many of us cannot begin to imagine or understand. Our young people are growing up in a time where the messages they receive about their twenty-first century world can appear contradictory to the more conservative, traditional social, political and educational constructs of New Zealand society in which they actually live.

There is a growing body of literature that explores what the future might hold, and, importantly, how we might face that future. Toffler (1970) labelled it ‘future shock’, while today we have what is described as the ‘knowledge society’ (for example, Gilbert, 2005), or suggestions that the ‘world is flat’ (Friedman, 2006). Around the world we can find groups established specifically to think about and discuss the future, such as The World Future Society (<http://www.wfs.org/>), members of which call themselves ‘futurists’. In education, organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and International Networking for Educational Transformation (iNet), and in New Zealand, Secondary Futures and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), are researching the trends that are likely to affect us in the future, and the effect these trends might have on education.

The *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) is an important document in helping education, at least, to reflect the reality of the twenty-first century. By providing a vision for the knowledge, skills and competencies our young people will need on leaving school, this document is intended to guide schools, and the communities that they serve, towards educating young people for their futures, rather than our own pasts. It is based on the premise that each school will develop its own approach to the curriculum, in a way that is responsive to the interests, needs and aspirations of its own communities of learners, and that the

learner will be placed at the heart of the curriculum. In many ways, therefore, this curriculum signals a shift in the ways teachers, students and communities must engage in education, and this shift has been explored over the past four years, across New Zealand, since the release of the draft of this curriculum. The time has come, however, for discussion and reflection to move to action, as the curriculum is to be implemented in 2010.

Secondary school principals are charged with the leadership of curriculum implementation, within the context of this rapidly changing world, and for a generation of young people whose futures are likely to be very different to the world faced by today's school leaders as they were growing up. This is potentially an uncomfortable place for school leaders in which to find themselves. While grappling with the day-to-day running of a school and the workload associated with this, it would appear they must now also attempt to predict the future of the young people in their care and design a curriculum to meet this. They must try to convince a community that appears to remain relatively conservative, and parents who believe that education must look like it did when they were at school, that the world is changing and so must school; they are also expected to confront the teacher unions, young people, local employers and social agencies regarding the shift in roles each of these groups might be expected to have in education. School leaders, who have themselves been educated, trained and experienced in the twentieth-century paradigm of education, may find these expectations, and more, very difficult to address.

This study, therefore, attempts to identify the motivations, barriers and strategies of a selection of principals who are addressing these issues in their own school contexts, and some of the consequences and outcomes of their futures-focused thinking. The leaders in this study have explored theory related to future trends, and of educational transformation towards the future. They have approached their daily workloads with an eye to the future, and have assembled toolboxes of strategies for building the capacity of others to think about the future.

The present study

My interest in the futures element of leadership emerged as I undertook study towards my Masters of Educational Leadership through The University of Waikato, at the same time at which I became increasingly involved in the work of Secondary Futures. Exposure to theory and dialogue around futures thinking in education through both of these contexts, I found, complemented my current role as a deputy principal, and as an aspiring principal. The opportunity to meet people, such as those in this study, led to my desire to explore their work more closely. I have personally found the insights into the thinking and actions of futures-focused leaders to be inspiring and practical, and I feel privileged to have had time with these principals.

This study investigates the experiences of four principals around leading futures-thinking in their schools. The principals were each identified through my networks with Secondary Futures and iNet, as well as in discussion with peers. The study consists of a two-hour semi-structured interview with each principal, and some follow-up through telephone and email conversations. The sample is small, but analysis of the findings provided sufficient data from which to form some generalisations about leading futures thinking in secondary schools, when examined alongside the literature relating to social and educational theory about the future.

On reflecting on the four interviews, six common themes have emerged regarding the work of futures-focused leaders. These themes are:

1. That each leader has a clear **futures-focus** in his or her work;
2. That futures-focused leaders are **motivated** by a range of personal and professional experiences;
3. That leadership of **change** is a significant aspect of their work;
4. That specific, yet different, **leadership** styles are established;
5. That futures-focused leaders use a range of **strategies and tools** to guide their work; and
6. That the work of these leaders is grounded in **theory**, and theory permeates their practice.

Each principal shared examples of these themes in action in their own practice, and I was able to build a clear picture of their intentions and aspirations for education, both in their own schools and at a systems level.

Analysis of the data gathered through the interviews then led to the identification of generalisations about the work of futures-focused leaders. The generalisations include the motivations for thinking about the future that were identified by the principals; the challenges that are specific to leading futures-focused thinking and action; and the strategies that they have found helpful. Five generalisations emerged:

1. That futures-focused leaders use the *New Zealand Curriculum* as a current driving force;
2. That futures-focused leaders seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures;
3. That futures-focused leaders regard leading change as a challenge;
4. That futures-focused leaders find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice; and
5. That futures-focused leaders employ models for thinking about the future.

Recommendations

The study makes two recommendations for consideration by agencies charged with the support of principals and the responsibility for implementing a futures-focus in education. The recommendations are that:

1. Futures-focused principals need support in engaging their communities;
2. Principals need specific and pragmatic strategies for thinking about the future and leading developments in learning.

Further research

Some suggestions are made for further research into the practice of principals today, based on questions I have remaining at the conclusion of the study. The questions for further research are:

1. To what extent are the current, and next, generation of school leaders - trained, practised and experienced in the twentieth-century industrial-

age model of education - willing or able to make the changes that are inherent in the new curriculum, as leaders?

2. To what extent is there congruence between the understandings of the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures, and the positioning of schools and communities today?
3. Who else could be involved in leading change, and building a critical mass in support of, instead of resistance to, futures-focused principals?
4. How can the role of the principal be better managed, so that creativity and innovation are priorities, and who can help that to happen?
5. Which models of futures-focused education design can be best developed in the New Zealand context, and how could these be shared?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter reviews selected literature on the theory of futures-thinking in education; studies and theories on a futures-focus in schooling; and the significance of leading futures thinking in schools. The review identifies the motivations, barriers and issues that often surround futures-thinking, and draws on both international and national commentaries on thinking about the future in education.

Futures-thinking in education

Literature shows that, internationally, futures-thinking has been happening for many years. Thinkers in the twentieth century, such as Toffler (1974), Galtung (1982, cited in Roberts & Gardiner, 2005) and Beare (2001), began making distinctions between personal and global futures, and the distinction between probable and preferred futures. An emerging influential commentator in thinking about the future in a contemporary American context is *The World is Flat* (2006) author, Thomas Friedman. An influential Australian author focusing on the future in education specifically is Hedley Beare. In 2001, Beare published *Creating the Future School*, and put a face to the future of our society in the form of a fictional five-year-old girl, Angelica. He outlined a society twenty years hence, for which today's child – Angelica – would be poorly prepared by the current education system. Misplaced nostalgia, Beare says, for the schooling which seemed to serve today's parents and teachers so well when they were young, now belongs to an outmoded paradigm. Indeed, he predicts, schools of the future will no longer be distant places of hallowed ground, but more integrated into their communities, with teachers working as private consultants and mentors, and the curriculum re-shaped to explore skills more than current definitions of knowledge. More recently, the research in New Zealand from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) is focusing on building an understanding of the global elements facing today's society and economy and its significance for the future of education in this country.

Despite the long period of time that futures-thinking has been developing, Durie (2006) says, there remains cynicism and inertia around exploring the future in education. Most people, he claims, are restricted by beliefs such as the assumptions that in twenty years time things will be relatively the same as now; or that the future is so unpredictable that there is no point wondering about it; or that there are more urgent matters to be addressed immediately; and that we do not have the tools and strategies to actually think about the future anyway. Mason Durie, as one of the guardians of Secondary Futures, is prolific and commanding in his determination to raise the awareness of futures-thinking in education (2006, 2007, 2008). At a symposium of delegates discussing community connectedness with Secondary Futures in July, 2008, he stated that he does not accept the place of cynicism and inertia as, while New Zealand has been through:

...radical and often traumatic change since the 1980s as we have begun to make the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial or knowledge-based economy - a social revolution - substantial reforms have not significantly changed the basic culture of the classroom. Education continues to fail too many of our young people. In the more sophisticated economy of the future, New Zealand will no longer be able to afford this wasted human potential. In 2028 failure is not an option.

For Friedman (2006), who explores the ‘flattening’ of the world through technology and the rise of China and India as highly educated and flexible workforces, the lack of action around change is also a looming crisis. Contrary to the growing push to emphasise computer-based education, Friedman emphasises the need for young people to be able to communicate and collaborate at a sophisticated level. In a model he discovered at Georgia Tech, USA, Friedman admires the move to recruit students for engineering and science degrees who also play a musical instrument. He quotes the College principal as saying:

the idea was that people who have other interests tend to be able to communicate, tend to be more social, tend to ask for help more readily when they need help, tend to help others more who need help, tend to think

horizontally... tend to be able to tie things together from different disciplines and fields. (p. 311)

In other words, says Friedman, “perhaps, contrary to what we have come to believe in recent years, people skills will become more valuable than computer skills. The geeks may not inherit the earth after all” (p. 306). His concern is that, in America at least, schools are not producing the scientists and engineers that are essential to sustaining an innovative and competitive economy, while China and India are. “The education in American junior high schools, in particular, seems to be a black hole that is sapping the interest of young people, particularly young women, when it comes to the sciences” (p. 337). In New Zealand, one commentator, entrepreneur Bob Jones, agrees that communication skills are more important than commerce degrees. In a rather light-hearted editorial, Jones claims, “commercial success stems from knowledge, initiative and an inquiring mind, and history and philosophy will cultivate those characteristics rather than MBA rubbish” (Jones, 2001). Stating that he would “disinherit any child” of his who did an MBA, and would certainly never employ anyone with an MBA, he asserts that graduates of such degrees are “the contemporary fodder equivalent of the factory workers and clerks” of the past. That MBA degrees are so prolific, as Friedman points out, in China and India, is a further signal than that education in the West needs to build other skills.

Definitions of futures thinking can often focus on what it is not: however many emerging studies are more explicit (among others Miller, 2003; Durie, 2006, 2008; Slaughter, 2004). Miller (2003) defines futures thinking as “a collection of methods, theories and findings [that help people to] think constructively about the future, [where the aim is] neither prediction nor advocacy (p. 7). As Durie (2008) pointed out at a Secondary Futures symposium, “it is impossible to be definitive about the future because there will always be an element of the unknowable... for this reason futures planning is necessarily an exercise in uncertainty”. So, perhaps, imagining possible futures is not about clarifying an expected future to which to react; rather its purpose is to increase people’s understanding of the factors that interact to influence change (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p. 9). In a world where many young people see the future as a hopeless and depressing place where they

are disempowered and afraid - often a negative image fed to us through the media, therefore making us passive and powerless in confronting it (Slaughter, 2004) - there are emerging futures-focused tools and strategies that can “help people to think and act critically and creatively about the future without necessarily trying to predict it” (Bateman, Gidley & Smith, 2006, p. 14). Such conversations are intended to see us moving from the idea of a single, pre-determined future to that of many possible futures, so that we need not be reactive and feel powerless.

The OECD has the Schooling for Tomorrow project which has identified juxtaposition between planning for a specific future, and futures-infused decision-making. For this organisation futures thinking aims to “enhance dialogue about ways ahead, including among those who normally avoid constructive communication” (OECD, cited in Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p.13). This project has also been building a vision for what Miller (2003) describes as “not planning for the future but creating the future by changing the nature of decision-making in the present” (p. 20). The OECD, in exploring scenarios for future schooling, states that “because the future is open, thinking clearly and rigorously about it is essential if we want to realise our values and commitments and to understand the choices we might make, individually and together” (OECD, cited in Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 3). In yet another context, at an international school leaders’ forum in Beijing in 2006, the assembled principals identified the urgency around creating a futures-focused mind-set for globalisation, identifying that “how globalisation will affect us and the future of our education systems depends on how we face the challenges” (Hopkins & Zhao, 2008, p. 134).

There are several bodies in New Zealand education that are interested in creating futures-focused conversations, and in finding evidence of such conversations being led within schools. In 2002, the Labour government requested “an independent body that will envisage what secondary schools might look like and how they might function ten, fifteen, twenty years from now, so we can shape our system to best help children achieve” (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p. 1). From this concept emerged the Secondary Futures project, with the purpose of “facilitating discussion and debate about the future in secondary education” (Secondary Futures, 2003). The Secondary Futures project has identified five key themes that

will be of greatest significance in forming a desirable future for New Zealand through secondary education. They are students first, inspiring teachers, social effects, community connectedness, and the place of technology (Secondary Futures, 2003). Under each of these themes the project has sought voices from international and national sectors both within and beyond education, concluding that “there is an almost unanimous acceptance of the need for change and a broad consensus around the direction that change should take” (Durie, 2008). These voices have been collected by “exploring new ways for government to engage with citizens and so create a vision for the future of schooling” (Pride & Meek, 2009, p. 2), through strategies aimed at “democratising education design” (p. 1) such as management through guardianship, creating spaces for all voices to be heard in safe conversations, making time for conversations and debate about the future, and valuing conversation rather than consultation. In this democratic process, “valuing all voices, valuing conversation, creativity and imagination, valuing the time to talk about preferences and possibilities and in particular valuing students’ articulations of their preferences and aspirations are all fundamental” (Pride & Meek, 2009, p. 13).

Further, the Ministry of Education’s *Schooling Strategy 2005 – 2010* (Ministry of Education, 2005) reflects the shifts in thinking around the purpose of education in New Zealand. The central goal of this strategy is “all students achieving their potential” (p. 4), which is underpinned by three key strategies: all students experience effective teaching; children’s learning is nurtured by families and whanau; and evidence-based practice. The *New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) is explicit in its intention to build an education for the changing face of the global economy and society, while at the same time emphasising the best of what it is to be a New Zealander in the twenty-first century. Its vision is for “young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 7), and it identifies some possible future-focused themes, intended to make links across learning areas and competencies, such as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation. The Education Review Office also has a national focus over the next three years of building evidence of futures conversations occurring in schools, describing this as “discussing with

secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students” (Education Review Office, 2009).

The future in schools

A defining text for many of New Zealand’s educators in understanding just what is meant by ‘the future of education’ was Jane Gilbert’s 2005 book, *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The knowledge society and the future of education*. Here, Gilbert provides a background to New Zealand’s education system, explaining it in terms of “the production line model of education” (p. 47), likening the way children are put through a one-size-fits-all programme of schooling to that of the early twentieth-century industrial concept of the factory production line. Gilbert then argues for the need for New Zealand to “adjust our mental model” (p. 128), from one where social cohesion is created through everyone – regardless of race, gender or class – having “the same opportunities to aspire to the same goals” (p. 129) to one where “rather than repressing difference and trying to make it invisible, [we] celebrate it” (p. 129). For education, Gilbert says, there will be many challenges to forming a new mental model for how learning could look, because a twenty-first century re-defining of knowledge has yet to be widely explored. Gilbert says:

Because [reasons to change] are not yet well understood, the current focus on learning skills will be resisted by those committed to traditional academic forms of knowledge. The divisions between academic and applied knowledge, rigour and inclusiveness, the economy and society are a feature of industrial-age approaches to education. If we are to develop post-industrial-age education we need to move beyond those divisions... We need to do this because what people will be able to do with knowledge (and who needs to be able to do it) is now very different. (2005, p. 155)

For educators developing their curricula, there is an increasing body of thought around including futures thinking for students. This body of thought explores the notion that, “if education is to take account of rapidly changing social, economic and environmental world conditions and prepare young people for what will undoubtedly be a turbulent century, futures thinking is an imperative” (Bateman,

Gidley & Smith, 2006, p. 14). Rance (2006) points out that it can be a challenge to balance the fostering of optimism among young people while raising student awareness of world realities. Some believe that futures should be taught explicitly in schools (Beare & Slaughter, 1993), including development of futures literacy and curriculum statements that refer to alternative futures rather than a taken for granted future. To this end, in his attempt to develop a possible framework as a starting point for looking at the curriculum, New Zealand educator Mark Treadwell explores future themes in his work. He signals the importance of these, stating that:

Future focused themes are encouraging us all to reflect on our humanity and our ability to make personal sacrifice for the betterment of everyone. A new ethic and morality is now sweeping the globe as we start to realise our interdependence on each other and that no one is immune from this interconnectedness. The future will not necessarily be a “happily ever after” story unless we have strong leadership based on good understanding by all citizens of their part in their futures (Treadwell, 2008, p. 300).

The OECD has developed a discipline called Future Studies, which it describes as being closer to that of an historian than a forecaster. For example, “both futurists and historians seek clues in the present and the past in order to substantiate their analyses of why and how life did or might unfold” (Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 6). However, others argue that anxiety over global changes could increase pressure for teachers to focus more on the economic role of schools, such as teaching and assessing in isolated disciplines, at the cost of teaching future competencies such as social justice, connectedness and other key competencies. Bolstad and Gilbert (2008) give us some scenarios for “rethinking the senior secondary curriculum for the future [where] 21st century learners do more than reproduce knowledge – they interact with it” (p. 38). At the same time, issues of sustainability of change arise as we consider “the capacity of the education system to adapt and transform without losing its vision and core values” (Fullan, 2005, p. ix). In Gilbert’s upcoming work (NZCER, in press), she will be exploring the actual capacity of teachers, trained in the industrial age society, to provide a curriculum that is reflective of a future-focused and transformative education system.

The work of Secondary Futures is significant in addressing some of these concerns, as it has pooled the trends facing New Zealand across sectors such as the economy, globalisation, demographics, technology and education, and compiled these in contexts that suggest questions we need to address for the future. From this Secondary Futures has produced resources, such as ‘Trends Cards’, and used these at workshops in many contexts across New Zealand over the past five years (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005). In their evaluation of the effectiveness of Secondary Futures workshops, Roberts and Gardiner found that in most cases people’s thinking was extended. “Those who had not necessarily thought about education through a futures lens were helped to begin this thinking. Those who had adopted a futures lens often reinforced and extended their thinking” (p. 36). This was generally followed by an intention to enter into dialogue, and follow-up with action inspired by the workshop conversations. However, the evaluation found that these positive intentions to think, talk and take action around the future in each participant’s area of educational leadership were often not carried through, as interviews conducted 18 months after a workshop indicated. Interviewees “overwhelmingly suggested that the potential for change is undermined by constraints operating at the organisational/school level and a structural/national policy level, as well as within the Secondary Futures process itself” (p. 46).

Futures-focused leadership

Just what all of this means for New Zealand school leaders is the topic of the 2008 position paper from the Ministry of Education, *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*. This document aims to “present a model of leadership that reflects the qualities, knowledge and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future” (2008, p. 6). It has been based on the findings that will form the impending Educational Leadership Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (Ministry of Education, pending publication) along with feedback from principals and other leadership groups, and links closely to the vision for schooling in the twenty-first century as stated in the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), on the basis that “as society, knowledge and technologies grow and change, so do

our students' learning needs and the way learning is delivered" (p. 8), which has implications for school leadership.

A common message from futures-focused literature is that we must look to the past and the present to be able to anticipate the future; that nothing happens in isolation. Beare (2001) advises us that to know what teaching or education will be like in ten years, we need to diagnose what big-picture developments are occurring now, as a result of past trends. For Maori, it is also important to examine the past to gain a better understanding of the future. Durie (2006) explains this through a proverb: "Titiro whakamuri, kia anga whakamua – directions for the future lie in the paths behind us" (p. 4). Friedman, too, implores educators to "look at the trend lines, not today's snapshot" (2006, p. 334) if we are to capitalise on the possibilities of the flat world, rather than be left behind.

Leaders need to have looked to the future, considered possibilities for where the trends are taking us, and "be able to devise the strategies which need to be set in place so that the school is creatively abreast of international best practice" (Beare, 2001, p. 99). However, even as we extrapolate current trends into the future they will be "pummelled" (p. 100) with powerful and influential trends that we may not even imagine from right now. For this reason, Beare warns, there are problems in both looking too far ahead, with the risk of any strategic planning being made obsolete by unforeseen factors; and not looking far enough, therefore lacking any foresight. However, Secondary Futures has the brief to "stimulate debate and discussion about schooling in twenty years' time, and to identify the implications for learners, teachers and others involved in the education sector, including parents and whanau" (Secondary Futures, 2008).

As stated above, most commentators agree that the aim of futures-focused conversations is not to predict the future. As Beare says, "it is unhelpful to talk about 'the future' as if it is a single option – it is better to use 'futures', the many options available" (Beare, 2001, p. 101). Futurists such as Toffler (1974), Galtung (1982, cited in Roberts & Gardiner, 2005), and Beare (2001), propose three types of future: 'possible futures', with an infinite range of possible scenarios, most of which are unlikely to eventuate; 'probable futures', which can be established

based on current trends, mathematical equations, or intuition; or 'preferable futures', which is what we would really like to happen. To create a preferred future takes planning against probabilities that we do not want and making other probabilities more likely. Beare explains that, "planning deals with those preferable futures that it is our intention to bring into existence" (Beare, 2001, p. 102).

While it is commonly accepted that we live in a time of rapid change on a global scale, and "that major societal change of one form or another is already a reality" (Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 44), it is still questionable as to whether it is "the role of schools to be at the vanguard of this societal change" (p. 44). Schools have the ability to shape society in many ways, "because of their particular influence in shaping the routines and destinations of the young" but it remains unclear "to what extent schooling increases the motivation, capability and understanding with which fresh generations face the future, or whether they in fact help to hold in place institutional methods and social assumptions which act as a brake on what is possible" (Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 44).

In this somewhat paradoxical environment, the current expectations of the school leader will be quite unrealistic, according to some of the literature. Bray (1999) points out that the focus on an individual as leader is "unrealistic" and "inadequate" (p. 12) as it leads to traits such as focusing on administration; coercing followers; enticing others to invest in the vision; using outmoded measures of excellence; and investing too much in an individual, leading to unsustainability and stress. For Durie (2005, p. 4) also, sustainable school leadership is not about the skills and philosophies of individuals, and does not depend on popularity and acceptability. There is a growing movement (Bray, 1999; Dunoon, 2004; Durie, 2005; Miller & Bentley, 2002) towards models of leadership that are shared and more relational, and sustainable. "To lead, people must be actively involved and committed to seek after the common purpose of the group" (Bray, 1999, p. 13), and to this end leadership resides between people rather than within an individual. Kotter (in Bray, 1999), defines leadership as "people thinking and acting together on issues beyond day to day business" (p. 7). Durie says that sustainable leadership builds strength in the organisation through

disbursing leadership among staff, students and the community, in a way that “develops capacity and networks for innovation rather than standardisation” (2005, p. 6), in order to make improvements that endure over time, even when personnel move on. Further, according to Hargreaves and Fink (2006), “sustainable education leadership is about being responsible to and for all the schools and students that your leadership affects” (p. 16), where a ‘ripple effect’ of good school leadership builds stronger communities. Like Durie, who says “tomorrow’s leaders will be educational leaders rather than institutional leaders” (2005, p. 6), Hargreaves and Fink see sustainable leadership in networked learning communities, where “to ensure social justice we need to break the assumption of the essential bond of one student and one school” (2006, p. 19). However, currently, Miller and Bentley point out, school leaders can “change many aspects of the way they manage, communicate, reward, monitor and drive the process of improvement in the own schools, but it is very rare for them to be able to change the basic nature of schooling itself” (2002, p. 47).

Kotter (cited in Bray, 1999) has seen the distinction between management and leadership for quite some time in the context of business, describing leadership as a mode of action which builds capacity for the future, challenges underlying assumptions, and works to build new ways forward. Durie (2005) also makes this distinction, describing management systems as demanding compliance with established routines and accountabilities, while transformational leadership as being more concerned with the challenges of identifying future directions, discerning macro-trends and their impact on education, forging alliances, and enthusing staff about change.

Conversely, it appears that there are risks in transformational approaches to leadership, and recent research suggests that there can be negligible effects on actual student learning outcomes despite changes in leadership styles, tools or strategies. Robinson and Timperley (2007) asked how school leadership affects student outcomes, when the greatest impact on student outcomes has been found to come from teachers. They found that, while school leaders might promote and participate in teacher learning and development, this does not always appear to have a direct or positive outcome for students. Indeed, transformational leadership

can have significant effects on staff yet negligible effects on students; and instances of distributed leadership were found to have an impact on the institutional environment but not on student outcomes. Even strategic goal setting, and professional learning communities, can fail to have the intended effect if they are not seen as important or developed collaboratively. From their evaluations of teacher learning, they conclude that “effective leadership of teacher learning that makes a difference to students involves a combination of face-to-face interaction and the use of smart tools embedded in school routines that are clearly focused on the continuous improvement of learning and teaching” (p. 9).

So, in order to meet these demands of understanding trends, overcoming pessimism, and educating students for the twenty-first century, school leaders clearly need tools and strategies, along with the impetus to maintain a futures-focused mandate within their realm of influence. Miller and Bentley (2002) describe the challenge for school leaders as needing to operate with ‘double horizons’; “meeting current goals and demands while simultaneously exploring and moving towards much longer-term possibilities” (p. 48). While school leaders may feel isolated and like lone voices, “a critical mass of thinkers, talkers and actors is clearly crucial” (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p. 46) in effecting change. To do this, leadership needs to be transformational and collaborative (Fullan, 2005; Hopkins & Zhao, 2008; Bray, 1999; Dunoon, 2004, Drurie, 2005), leading to learning communities (Hargreaves, 2008; Fullan, 2005; Mulford, 2003) which support reflective dialogue and “strategic conversations that allow creativity in planning and acting” (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p. 13). If connections and systems are built between schools, “in ways which make it possible for new and more effective practices to generate critical mass, or to reach ‘tipping points’” (Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 49), it may be possible to change a whole system. In this way we do not act alone or in isolation, and may just reach that ‘critical mass’.

Strategies and tools for futures thinking

Much of the pragmatic perspective of leading futures thinking is around strategic visioning, planning and change management, and it is possible to look to the business sector for contexts in this regard. Increasingly, however, education-

focused literature is applying leadership theory from business to education and providing strategies for thinking about the future.

The first step, possibly, is for school leaders to become more critical questioners of the organisational and systemic constraints that they experience. McKenzie (2007) encourages doubt and questioning, distinguishing between ‘good doubt’, such as constructive scepticism and a positive sense of moving forward, and ‘bad doubt’ which dwells on problems and ultimately hopes a new project will collapse. He cautions that so-called visionary leaders can be intolerant of doubt or doubters, and that in their hurry to translate their dreams into reality they stifle the voices of constructive questioners and continue to provide simplistic answers to complex problems. Instead, McKenzie claims, “we must learn to flirt with the unorthodox” (p. 32) and ask questions with “courage, determination and stamina” (p. 41) so that organisations are not constrained by mindsets and beliefs that colour or limit innovative thinking. While the unconventional thinker can become the extraordinary leader, he says, “pressure to conform can make this a rare phenomenon” (p. 32). A ‘questioning toolkit’ can be a valuable strategy for a futures-focused leader.

Beare (2001) states that strategic planning is not possible in today’s rapidly changing world, where what happens in schools is significantly affected by external forces of economics, politics and globalisation; we no longer have the luxury of adapting quietly and systematically. Indeed, the World Future Society’s 2007 Conference, as reported by Wagner, 2007, focused on the concept that it is vital to look at the unintended consequences of contemporary change, such as the explosion of the iPod or the rapid effects of climate change, and then “explore the cascade of consequences” (p. 54). While much futures work is about strategic planning and problem solving, “finding the answer is only part of the problem” (Wagner, 2007, p. 54). Beare, too, believes that “one plans not a strategy but the consequences of it. Planning gives order to vision” (2001, p. 107). He presents a ‘backward mapping’ tool, starting with a vision for the future then a plan for how to get there. Another framework, developed by Hines (2006), for “applying strategic foresight to an organisation in today’s challenging environment of constant change” (p. 18), leads the organisation towards its preferred future. Hines

cautions that one of the traps of a foresight activity is to do it only once, “failing to leverage the learning and capabilities developed during the first strategic foresight exercise to make the next futuring activity more fluid and productive” (p. 21). By learning to utilise such tools, leaders with a clear vision for their future will be able to overcome turbulence in the journey and adapt to changes in reaching that vision. To that end, Beare says a leader must be a strategic thinker more than a strategic planner, and it is this that is the feature of a futures-focused leader.

Indeed, as Bray (1999) states, “change is going to characterise the new century. Rather than lamenting it, some way has to be found to capitalise on it” (1999, p. 12). However, change management is a challenge in schools, where elements both within and outside of the institution believe that their role is to self-perpetuate their existence; where “institutional methods and social assumptions... act as a brake on what is possible” (Miller & Bentley, 2002, p. 44). Rogers (2003) points out that, of course, innovation and change create uncertainty, and that the “diffusion of innovation is essentially a social process in which subjectively perceived information about a new idea is communicated from person to person” (p. 1). He identifies several reasons for change processes to fail, and outlines strategies for moving people towards change, from the ‘innovators’ in the organisation to the ‘laggards’. He describes sustainable change as when “sufficient members of a system have adopted the innovation being implemented” (p. 2), and lists variables affecting this rate of adoption. For futures-focused leaders, it seems, skills in understanding the people in their organisation, and being able to move everyone to that state of sustainable change, are essential.

Looking to the nature of organisations and the nature of change from a business perspective is a strategy to this end. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for example, has been working on improving learning about strategic thinking and looking towards the future in its management development programmes. Such improvements include requiring executives to develop the strategic thinking skills of everyone in the organisation, through mentoring and real-life experiences; supporting activities that incorporate experiential learning; and holding regular strategic direction sessions where the content requires an extension of participants’

thinking (Goldman, 2007). Another such business strategy that could be applied to education is that of Collins' *Good to Great* theory. In his writing, Collins advises that successful change happens from the inside, while the rest of the world ignores the signs – much like a chicken hatching from an egg; and that successful leaders ask not 'what' or 'where' change will happen, but 'who' – using the analogy of a bus driver who collects the very best people for the job on the bus route. Further, he describes great business leaders as 'hedgehogs' rather than 'foxes' – that is, "they know how to simplify a complex world into a single, organizing idea—the kind of basic principle that unifies, organizes, and guides all decisions" (Collins, 2001). There could be some practical strategies from a programme such as this for educational leaders to adopt.

A key strategy used by the OECD and subsequently adopted by Secondary Futures is that of creating scenarios for the future. In keeping with Beare's backward mapping process, creating scenarios is intended to create possibilities for the future where implications for various stakeholders can be considered, and tools for change implemented. The aim of building scenarios is not to paint a single vision, says Durie (2005), or to simply uplift findings from other contexts, but to develop conversations with a range of stakeholders around "what is possible; what is desirable; what are the implications" (p. 1).

In their critique of the impact of school leadership on student outcomes, Robinson and Timperley (2007), dismiss several current practices such as setting a strategic vision, forming professional learning communities, and staff appraisal and feedback, as having limited effects on student outcomes. Instead they recommend the use by school leaders of what they term 'smart tools' such as newly developed graphs for tracking learning progressions, that help their staff learn how to really improve the outcomes of students. A smart tool "promotes teacher learning by translating the abstract vision and goals of an initiative into concrete explanations and illustrations of what is required" (p. 7).

Such tools and strategies do not need to be developed in isolation. If an accepted shift in leadership philosophies is away from the individual to that of the collective, strategies need to be developed around achieving this. Miller and

Bentley identify a major element of futures-focused leadership as generating “organisational strategies, cultures and alliances that enable individual schools to connect their own learning and innovative capacity with those of others around them” and a key role for educational leaders as “brokering and shaping new connections” (2002, p. 50).

Summary

With reference to literature such as this, my research seeks to identify the experiences of principals who are processing the trends of the past and the present, and leading the collaborative dialogue that is forming preferred futures for their school context. It aim to identify the tools and strategies they have found – and developed themselves – and the motivation they have to do this challenging work in an environment that can be isolating and even intimidating.

CHATER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter discusses the research methods used, in relation to the research topic. It also provides a rationale for choosing the research methods and describes how the data was collected and analysed. Reliability and validity, and the ethical considerations for the research process within this context are also discussed.

Qualitative research

The purpose of qualitative research, it has been said, is to explore social reality; understand human behaviour; and evaluate the effects of social issues on society, within a given context (Sarantakos, 1993; Yin, 2006). Qualitative methodology, is, therefore, conducive to my study in the educational context, as it provides a means of capturing the social reality of principals in an aspect of leadership; it seeks to understand the behaviour of leaders and of those being led; and it evaluates the effects of thinking about the future in secondary schools, within the contexts of selected participants.

In choosing to conduct research using qualitative methodology, I was “aiming towards exploration of social relations, and describing reality as experienced by respondents” (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 6) within their work around futures-focused leadership in secondary schools. It is this exploration that, according to Barton and Lazarsfeld (1979; cited in Sarantakos, 1993), helps to analyse research objects, identify indicators and establish classifications, then to discover relationships between variables and enable comparisons and conclusions to be made about significant factors in those relationships. Yin says that, “when research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events” (2006, ---), qualitative methodology is appropriate.

Some of the challenges of qualitative research include its difficulty in proving hypotheses, as its lack of representativeness through the use of small numbers of cases makes it unable to reflect the attributes of the population, meaning findings may not be sufficiently valid to develop a theory. Further, a perceived lack of

rigour or perceived bias in the findings can lead to a lack of basis for scientific generalisation (Sarantakos, 1993; Yin, 2003). Some critics insist that hypotheses produced through qualitative methodology can only be validated through testing by quantitative researchers. This stance is challenged by qualitative researchers who, Sarantakos (1993) explains, assert that this form of exploration can lead to formulating, modifying and testing hypotheses, such as grounded theories. Representativeness, he says, comes not from probability but from generalisation. Based on a “typical case” (p. 27) the generalisations made are assumed to be representative, and able to be interpreted beyond this case. Yin (2003) supports this perspective, stating that qualitative research, including methods such as case studies, are “generalised to theoretical propositions, not to populations or universes” (Yin, 2003, p. 10). For this study I gathered data from four principals who had been identified by educational networks as futures-focused leaders, and used these cases as representative of other futures-focused secondary school principals. I was not attempting to form any “statistical inference” (Yin, 2006, p. 115), nor is my selection of participants intended to represent “controls” (Yin, 2006, p. 115) in terms of their age, gender, location or school decile.

There are further strengths and limitations in using qualitative research methodology. There can be questions around reliability due to its subjective nature, and concerns over generalisation; and there can be ethical considerations associated with entering the subjects’ personal sphere, and with the researcher’s objectivity and detachment around the process and content. From a pragmatic perspective, qualitative research can be time consuming, and carries a risk of generating a mass of data that may ultimately be meaningless (Sarantakos, 1993; Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Conversely, there are advantages to engaging in qualitative research. Sarantakos suggests that these include the outcome of gaining a deeper understanding of the respondent’s world, therefore generating layers of meaning and presenting a more realistic view of the world than might be possible in quantitative research. Yin supports this point in that qualitative study would be used “because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions and how they are pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The process itself, claim

Sarantakos (1993) and Fontana and Frey (2003), can be more humanising for the participants, as it is usually held in their natural setting and seeks to hear the individual voices of the people being researched. There can be a “sharedness of meanings” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 86) where both the researcher and the participant understand the context of the study. For the purposes of my research, I found that the limitations of qualitative research, such as those listed previously, were able to be overcome through preparation (Cohen, et al., 2000) and relationship-building (Bishop, 1997; Reinharz, 1992), while the benefits, such as those identified above, made the time and effort worthwhile.

Of utmost importance in this methodology is the relationship between myself and my participants. To draw on a kaupapa Maori concept, it is the personal connections - the whakawhanaungatanga - building “unspoken but implicit connectedness to other people” (Bishop, 1997) that generate the desired outcomes in a mutually respectful experience. I also engaged in electronic conversations during the research, and I found that this did not necessarily diminish this essential relationship; rather it developed a sense of mutual trust before embarking on the research process and “create[d] a comfortable online space for the researcher and participants to share their experiences” (James & Busher, 2007, p. 104). To draw on feminist research theory, it is argued that qualitative methodology is a better option than quantitative because it “encourages subjectivity and intensive dialogue between equals” (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 65). Indeed, using this methodology enabled me, as the researcher, to become “an active participant in interactions with the respondent” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 91) which further reinforced the relational aspect of my research process.

Interviews as a research method

My main research tool was the semi-structured interview, or “standardised open-ended interview” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 271). Contrary to the opinion of some quantitative, positivist researchers, according to Sarantakos, the interview is not a ‘soft’ form of gathering research data. Interviews require the development and maintenance of trust, collegiality and friendship between the researcher and participants. Charmaz (2004) challenges those who believe qualitative research to be ‘soft,’ stating: “They are wrong. Good qualitative research results from hard

work and systematic approaches” (p. 496). From a feminist perspective, interviewing is seen as an advantage when researching with women. According to Reinharz (1992), the interview allows participants to speak in their own words, in contrast to a questionnaire that demands a response in the researcher’s words. Also, in the context of an interview non-verbal communication, including proxemic, chronemic, kinesic and paralinguistic elements (Fontana & Frey, 2003), is transparent and of significance to the process. The interview, therefore, demands a sense of connectedness between participants, and can enhance the depth of communication during the process of gathering data. Those involved are “no longer pretending to be faceless subject and faceless researcher... [they are] portrayed as individual human beings... the reader learns about two people” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 87).

There are some challenges inherent in using the interview as a research tool. Sarantakos suggests that the interviewer must have a degree of competence, and avoid bias, while the respondent must have the ability to verbalise ideas and feel heard. Interviews also can be demanding and time consuming, so require thorough planning and a high level of commitment. Due to the lack of anonymity, compared to a questionnaire, for example, it is possible that participants may be more restrained in the face-to-face context than they would be if they were recording their responses to a sensitive issue in writing. Therefore, as reiterated throughout this chapter, the building of the relationship between the researcher and the participants is essential in overcoming such challenges.

Given these potential obstacles, I felt that I was in a very privileged position as an interviewer, firstly in that busy principals were prepared to take the time to speak with me, and secondly in that they were so candid and willing to share their experiences. One interview was carried out on a Sunday afternoon, and another into the evening; further testament of these principals’ remarkable response to my requests, and to their interest in the topic of the research. By conducting the interviews in their own spaces I had the benefit of seeing in practice many of the futures-focused initiatives they had put in place, and for this I was also grateful.

Characteristics of the semi-structured interview

The features of the semi-structured, or open, interview, as defined by Sarantakos (1993) include open questions asked of one person at a time, within a flexible structure. Interviewers have the freedom to make adjustments during the interview, adding prompting or probing questions. While the researcher may create the tone of an “informal conversation... like that of a friendly chat” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 86) with the participant, traditional researchers would avoid becoming involved in “real conversations” (p. 86), where they are answering questions or giving opinions themselves. However, from a feminist perspective, this “rule is rejected, with give-and-take, and shared empathetic understanding” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 86), and it was from this perspective that I approached the interviews. I found it important to check the participants’ spontaneous remarks with follow-up questions, and to cross-check some responses in order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions held regarding their roles and experiences in leading futures thinking in their schools. My interview took the form of what Cohen and colleagues (2000) call an interview guide, rather than a defined sequence of questions using essentially the same wording each time, and my questions varied slightly between participants. However, in order to explore responses to similar questions across my interviews, keeping to the interview guide was important.

Relationships and reciprocity

A spirit of reciprocity can go a long way towards generating good-will for research, and I intended that participants would also gain from this experience. Strategies for achieving this, suggested by Hedges (2001) include using first names and sharing personal information, avoiding jargon-laden language, and giving participants the choice to opt out. Reinharz (1992) advises the researcher to avoid imposing her cultural world view onto that of her participants. Reciprocity in outcomes is also essential in ensuring the research experience is of value to the participants. This includes sharing the findings with the participants, the possibility of collaborating with them on further projects, and dissemination of results to policy makers and others, potentially to influence change and improvement (Hedges, 2001). Cram (2001) mentions “leaving our communities in a good space when the research ends” (p. 49), and I intended always to leave the

participants with a positive and affirming relationship, and a sense of contributing together to the profession.

The “imposition of the researcher’s agenda, interests and concerns about the research process” (Bishop, 1997, p. 29) was a potential issue in this study, so in order to establish a constructive relationship with the participants for both face-to-face and online semi-structured interviews, I needed to declare my positioning in this research. My position as an emerging leader in a secondary school could be seen as an advantage as I would come from a place of learning – an apprenticeship, perhaps – and would naturally need to follow-up on areas in which I lack expertise. On the other hand, I work in a school which could be seen as being in competition with those of some of the participants. To this extent, my role as researcher was not intended to be, as Bishop (1997) suggests, an imposition, but rather as an active participant where the interview was a “negotiated accomplishment of both the interviewer and the respondent” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 91). Therefore, I hoped that a spirit of collaboration that would make the relationship equitable and empowering for both the practitioner and the researcher (Hedges, 2001) could be established from the outset.

Data collection

In each instance, semi-structured individual interviews were held with principals who had responded to an invitation to participate in the research (Appendix A), and who had received a copy of the interview guide (Appendix C) in advance. The interviews were held in the participants’ “natural surroundings” (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 76) and each took approximately two hours. Consistent with the nature of the semi-structured interview, (Cohen et al., 2000) questions were built upon through the use of prompting and probing to ensure each response was fully understood and learning was maximised. The interviews were audio-recorded, and copies of the transcripts returned to each participant for verification.

Reliability and validity

The reliability of data generated from a qualitative method, such as an interview, can be improved through the consistency and coherence of the process (Sarantakos, 1993). Keeping to a consistent set of questions, for example, and

ensuring that the interview remains consistent with the goals of the research help to ensure the process and its outcomes are reliable.

In terms of validity of the research data, Sarantakos points out that “qualitative researchers try to achieve validity not through manipulation of variables, but rather through their orientation towards, and the study of, the empirical world” (1993, p. 76). One strategy for building validity in such a study, as recommended by Sarantakos, includes identifying other studies that may support the findings. A study to which I refer in order to achieve this is that by Roberts and Gardiner (2005) in their critique of the Secondary Futures project. Other strategies for building validity include further questioning of the participants, in my case through email messages; carrying out the study in an environment that is most natural for the participants, mostly within each principal’s school; and seeking feedback from the participants by sending them transcripts and summaries of findings. Strengths and weaknesses in the data are found through comparisons against other research, especially in the fields of leadership and change management. This is consistent with Yin (2006), who says “robust findings” are those where “convergence occurs... and two or more sources point to the same set of events or facts” (p. 115).

Analysis of data

In qualitative research, analysis of data is often seen as “a description of events and of the development of concepts, categories and hypotheses” (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 298). Through the process of relating evidence to abstract concepts and theories, new concepts and theories may be generated. Sarantakos points out that qualitative research often sees data analysis take place through a cyclic process, as both the collection and analysis of data can occur simultaneously. I found this to be a quite dynamic process, as the analysis of my findings was indeed “interactive and continuous” (Sarantakos, 1993, p. 298).

I recorded each interview, and had the tapes transcribed, then checked each transcription before sending them to each participant to confirm and amend as necessary. Consistent with the process summarised by Sarantakos, at the point of data reduction I examined each interview transcript individually, beginning to

highlight points of interest and forming some potential codes and categories. As I assembled information around some themes I was able to organise the data and form some generalisations across the interviews. This led to the process of interpreting the data, for which I engaged the strategy of “memoing” (Sarantakos, 1993), enabling me to summarise ideas from the coding, integrate them and make connections, and link these ideas to wider contexts such as other studies and literature. At each stage of the process I returned to the tapes and transcripts to verify details, and checked generalisations with the participants, using email messages as a medium to do so. In doing so I was also able to check the non-verbal responses to the questions, and the extent to which these added meaning. As pointed out by Fontana and Frey (2003), “interview data are more than verbal records, and should include, as much as possible, non verbal features of the interaction” (p. 87). The features of proxemic and kinesic techniques used by the participants do indeed contribute to describing each interview, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Ethical considerations

Access to participants

In identifying participants for the research my intention was to work with a small (three to four) but balanced sample of principals. Some considerations for the sample were to represent genders, culture, school decile and school/staff size, although these were in no way intended to be used as a “control” (Yin, 2006, p. 115). Location was also of significance, as I needed to be able to reach each principal for a face-to-face interview. I drew upon my networks, such as Secondary Futures and iNet New Zealand, to identify and approach futures-focused principals for this study. Ultimately, each principal who I approached – two of whom I had never met – was extremely gracious and granted my request for an interview. This meant that I did indeed achieve my aim of working with a small but balanced sample of futures-focused leaders, and was able to explore my topic in a generalised manner.

I began with personal contact, by telephone, then followed up with electronic and written contact, to ensure the principals were clear about what I was requesting and were available to complete the study.

I anticipated that my biggest problem with accessing the principals was likely to be time, even for the principals to read my initial email message and introductory letter, and to then respond. I was concerned that finding what I hoped would be a two-hour session for the interview could be difficult, as principals are so busy, so a potential problem that I identified from the outset was gaining principals' commitment to the project, and then maintaining that level of commitment through to the interview stage. Also, my own time needed to be flexible so I could accommodate their time-frames. The principals were very generous in their willingness to negotiate times for the interviews, and in one case the interview was on a Sunday, and another went into the evening.

In order to gain a suitable sample of participants, I realised I would need to travel away from Hamilton, which had an impact on accessibility. I managed to fit in interviews out of town with other travel, and again was grateful that the principals were willing to accommodate my own time-frames. My preference was to hold the interviews in each participant's own office; however, finding a two-hour uninterrupted time period was a potential difficulty for a principal on site, so in some instances they suggested a different venue or time of day.

Informed consent

Each principal received a letter informing them about the project and inviting them to participate (Appendix A). They were invited to sign a consent form, at the beginning of the interview, stating their willingness to participate in the research, and their understanding of their right to withdraw at any stage up until the first phase of data analysis (November 2008), and were given a copy of the consent form for their records (Appendix B). They were informed that they could have access to their transcripts at any stage. They were also informed of their right to contact my thesis supervisor if they had an issue with the process.

Confidentiality

Participants are not identified in the reporting of my research findings, since a system of pseudonyms has been used. All taped and written records are stored securely. This information was communicated in the initial letter to participants

(Appendix A). Information that could identify individual participants has not been, and will not be, shown to others, except the thesis supervisor, without the consent of the individuals concerned. However, the data gathered will not remain confidential, as they have been reported in the thesis and there may be further possible products ensuing. This was also indicated in the letter of information, and approved by the participants through giving informed consent. All participant consent forms, transcripts, audio tapes and correspondence (written and electronic) which could identify participants are stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in my home office.

However, New Zealand's education community is, in many respects, a small one, and there is some possibility of identification by association. I can assure participants of my intent to keep their identity confidential, but have made them aware that the details in their responses may enable others to identify them or their school. Also, participants were reminded of the potential lack of privacy in email and advised to take care in what they record in this format (James & Busher, 2007). I was also careful not to send combined emails, or to forward emails from participants where they could be identified through the email address.

Potential harm to participants

Since the greatest concern for participants was likely to be the time involved, I needed to be very clear in my direction, efficient in my use of the two-hour interview, and respectful of time taken in any further requests for clarification or information. Also, the lack of anonymity in emailing and possible revelation of names through this communication method needed to be carefully managed, as mentioned above. Hopefully, any concern by the participant was alleviated through the careful and respectful development of a professional relationship prior to the formal part of the procedure beginning, and the participants' acceptance of this project as an important one that acknowledges their positive work for the future of New Zealand education.

As mentioned above, I also needed to establish a constructive relationship with each participant for both face-to-face and online interviewing, without imposing my own agenda or interests onto the process. I made it clear that I was an

emerging leader myself, interested in learning from others' experiences, and also identified myself in terms of the school at which I currently work. I therefore hoped that a spirit of collaboration that would make the relationship equitable and empowering for both the practitioner and the researcher (Hedges, 2001) could be established from the outset.

Summary

At the conclusion of the interview process I had not experienced anything but trust and transparency from the participants, and I realise what a privilege that has been. The participants reported feeling positive about the experience, and genuinely interested in the outcomes of my work. There was a sense of mutual respect, and reciprocity in ideas and consideration of what the future might hold for educational leaders.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter introduces the participants in my research, and describes each interview in relation to the futures-focused leadership of each principal. I begin with a brief description of the context of the principal's work, in a manner that endeavours to maintain the confidentiality of which I have assured the research participants. This includes the changing of names, and non-identification of the school in which the principal works. While the details may therefore be somewhat vague, it is intended that this degree of context may be of value to readers.

The description of the interviews that follows is structured under six categories that emerged as common themes from the interviews. The themes are:

1. That each leader has a clear **futures-focus** in his or her work;
2. That futures-focused leaders are **motivated** by a range of personal and professional experiences;
3. That leadership of **change** is a significant aspect of their work;
4. That specific, yet different, **leadership** styles are established;
5. That futures-focused leaders use a range of **strategies and tools** to guide their work; and
6. That the work of these leaders is grounded in **theory**, and it permeates their practice.

JO

Introduction

Jo is the principal of a co-educational, decile four, urban secondary school, with a roll of 1240 students. She was appointed to the role in 2007, from a principalship in another city. Jo is going through a process of leading significant change in a school where there is "concern about the level of achievement in the school," but where "the Board designed the vision before I got here. It just so happened that when I presented in my interview I actually presented something that would fit their vision."

Meeting in Jo's office towards the end of a tumultuous year of leadership, in the afternoon of a school day, I am reminded of what a privilege it is to take the time of a busy leader. Her office is small, hot, and a little shabby around the edges. It becomes apparent that Jo has not invested valuable resources in her own work space when there is so much to be done to enhance the learning spaces for her teachers and students. However, the office walls and shelves are adorned with affirmations from her family and students, and with inspirational quotations. One stands out for me:

Great minds discuss ideas;
Average minds discuss events;
Small minds discuss people.

Eleanor Roosevelt

This office is the base of a person who apparently shuns what might be seen as the overt trappings of leadership, and surrounds herself with motivation for her modus operandi: Students First (school prospectus, 2009).

During the course of the interview, and in subsequent analysis of the transcript, it is clear that Jo is a kinaesthetic person, whose background as a teacher in a practical subject has influenced her way of working. Her language is infused with statements such as:

- "In this school's culture they were used to having a principal that was not hands-on at all."
- "I want to be amongst it, I want to be part of the groups in my school, like student leadership."
- "We've got to develop our own model... it's not about taking it out of a book."
- "As a leader I'm trying to stay in the loop of not just being the visionary but also working on the nuts and bolts [at classroom level]. I guess that's my way of staying in touch."

- “By walking alongside them [teachers at her previous school] it gave me the confidence to be able to talk about what good learning looked like, what good teaching looked like.”
- “I’ll mentor that group; I’ll meet with the leader every week.”

She is a person of action.

Futures focus

Each of the principals who I interviewed was able to articulate their own future focus with certainty and clarity. In her humble way (“I’m not sure whether or not I am a future-focused principal but I hope that I can think at that level”), Jo is quick to admit that she is at the beginning of a steep learning journey, and that she will make mistakes along the way (“It’s amazing that you can get it right in a couple of cultures and then you can get it so wrong in another culture”). She is also not afraid to admit to experiencing worry and fear, stating, “I still find it quite scary, the unknown is still quite scary for me.” But she is unapologetic in her “strong philosophical belief base that every child can succeed... I get very upset that a number of students are failing in education.” It is this basic tenet that drives Jo to think about the future of education, and to attempt to move her school community towards a future where every child succeeds. Jo says:

Futures thinking is my lifeline. I couldn’t be a principal if I didn’t have opportunities to think about what learning should look like in the future. It’s kind of like my motivator; my driver.

While Jo is prepared to take the risks and make the mistakes at a personal professional level, she does despair at the lack of commitment, direction and capacity for thinking about the future at a national and policy level:

I think the future of education is exciting, but is somewhat of a concern as well. What worries me most is whether we have the high level thinkers to be able to actually deliver the future. How many forward thinking educators have we actually got at the top level, in terms of writing policy, developing documentation, and having that filter down into the schools? How many teachers, in any one school, could we say were innovative and

able to think at that really big level? I think there are a lot of very skilled principals around who run successful schools. I'm just not sure how many in New Zealand are thinking at the high level that this new curriculum gives us freedom to think at.

Jo cites the example of a new secondary school opening in Auckland, on the premise of providing a twenty-first century education. She says, "From their perspectives and their developmental ideas that I've been looking at, they are probably the highest level thinkers that I've seen." But this is within the context of a group of hand-picked people who have had two years to plan what they want to achieve. "So they can really think at a future level; when do established schools have the time and energy to have that opportunity?" This is in contrast to the situation Jo is in, where she must first instigate quite a culture change among her teachers, students and community in order to prepare for futures-focused conversations.

Moving her staff towards thinking about the future is a priority for Jo. "To develop our future thinkers in New Zealand we need to get our teachers equipped and skilled to be able to deliver at the level that they need to... but they have to be receptive to this, and there's a readiness scale". Jo identifies herself as someone who can recognise and accept a good idea immediately, while recognising that "some people will have to hear it three or four times before they're ready." She despairs that without a teaching profession with the higher order thinking and skills for twenty-first century teaching, "we're going to really struggle... we're going to keep doing the same old, same old. That's what worries me."

The tension between the motivation to look to the future and the urgency of managing a school is what Jo attempts to balance. She sees the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) as a strong motivator for exploring what the future might look like, and then working backwards to practical steps for implementing this within her own school's context:

I guess I've always been a person who has been able to envisage what I think it should be like and then to backwards design it to where we are.

And so because I've either been taught, or developed my thinking along those lines, that's probably the process I use when I put it into context with the future for New Zealand schools. But then you can spend ages on looking at vision and not get down to the nuts and bolts, so it's about marrying the two together and saying 'we want to be "here" so what are we going to have to do?' We are at that stage now.

These anxieties regarding New Zealand principals' capacity to lead with a futures focus do not overshadow Jo's conviction that students must come first, but she certainly feels the weight of the responsibility to carry this change through, saying, "unless we are going to do things differently in our classrooms we've got no chance. Our kids have got no chance. The expectation to effect that change by principals and leadership teams is a huge weight." But, in the concluding phase of the interview, Jo is emphatic in her assertion that, "educational leadership is a privilege, that's how I see it. It's a privilege, it's a challenge. Those who are in it to do well for our kids are in it for the right reasons."

Motivations

Each principal with whom I spoke has been shaped by their own education, upbringing, and journey toward educational leadership. I was interested in what each individual's motivation was in leading towards the future in education. Jo's own educational experience was traditional, "It was a good education I had, and I'm not saying that it wasn't", but she is resistant to community perceptions that the education experience of thirty years ago is relevant today. She says that when parents ask "questions like, 'Why aren't my kids doing homework every night?', you realise that the expectations of the community does not marry with the future thinking development we need to be doing with kids to get them to the level to lead our economy and that kind of thing." She considers it a "mission to educate the community."

Jo, who had wanted to be a teacher since she was five years old, went into teaching in a practical subject, "cooking and sewing or whatever you want to call it", and found herself managing with

... all these kids put in my class because, ‘oh well, they can’t do anything else but they should be alright here’, and my belief was that no matter what, they would do alright, it was my responsibility to ensure that they did achieve at what they did. And it is such a strong fundamental belief that all kids can get success that drives me to want to make a difference.

Coming from a practical subject gives her a positive perspective on the revised curriculum, and its shift away from “packing knowledge into kids”. In a practically based subject area, “it was always about teaching kids around key competencies anyway – they never had that label at the time, but that was what we were about, the life skills for the future”.

Jo came to teaching without a degree. She subsequently went back to university seven years ago and completed her degree (“I did a lot of leadership papers and that sort of reignited me really”), is a prolific reader (“I always have three books on the go at once on my bedside table”), and underwent the First Time Principals training programme with the University of Auckland (“I found the ‘big picture’ thinking enlightening, but I talked to people who didn’t like it because it didn’t give them enough concrete stuff”). But she does not see principal training or qualifications – whether before or early on in the appointment – as being essential:

I didn’t need a degree to be a good teacher. As an educational leader I think fundamentally you need to be able to have good relationships with kids, you have to be really good in the classroom, and you have to really understand how to interact with and engage kids. If you can do that you can pick up that curriculum, and you can develop great future thinkers.

Another motivator for Jo is the development of student voice around their school experience, learning and leadership. In the context of exploring strategies for improving the student behaviour management systems, Jo found that while she was consulting with teachers and parents it was clear that she needed student input into this fundamental issue. A student forum group was formed with the mandate

of discussing the problem of student discipline. However, Jo soon found that the students were keen to talk about much more than this:

...so I started to ask about what the future would look like for their children, what would they like to see. We all thought this was a good idea, and they were really keen to meet regularly. So they have become the driver for me, they have become my motivator to hopefully get the package of future education looking like it should look like.

The revised curriculum is the injection of excitement and motivation into education that Jo sees as the way forward for futures-focused learning, and she has been guiding her staff towards close exploration of this document. Small groups are beginning to unpack the document, and trial some models and strategies using the principles of the curriculum:

We set up a future leaders group in the school, which I invited staff to put their names forward for. I thought people who were wanting to think creatively, think about the future, could come forward. We started with what [the school] would look like in twenty years' time, thirty years' time. What did we want it to look like? So we're setting up a new curriculum pilot with one class, and we've got a team of three teachers who are working on an integrated programme, with some specialist teaching. We can start delivering a programme which we believe is futures orientated.

But there is no doubt that, for Jo, these small isolated groups are part of a larger staff that is moving too slowly towards implementing the curriculum. "Often you can introduce initiatives slowly and you can embed them, but this curriculum is here next year, and it has to be delivered." As someone who takes on ideas quickly, and is excited by the potential for this curriculum to realise her dream of all students achieving, this is therefore both a motivator and a frustration for this principal.

While she states, "I think principalship is lonely", Jo finds support from a range of networks, seeking to join with others who are thinking at the level she is about

education and the future. “You have to really search for those networks, you have to want to be part of them, because it could be easy to sit here as a principal and coast really, if that’s what you want to do. But I can’t do that, it’s not me.” Jo is a member of an Auckland secondary forum, a local cross-sector curriculum cluster, and a coalition of twenty-first century principals. She seeks groups that take discussion and theory into action. “We do high level thinking, we get ready before we go, we prepare, present and discuss and it’s good, great professional development.” Jo also follows closely the work of a few key practitioners, such as Mark Treadwell and David Hood, and that of Secondary Futures. Further motivation comes from carefully selecting mentors:

If you’ve come through education with mentors along the way who have said, ‘have you thought about this; what do you think about that?’ and challenged you, like I have had, it helps to develop your thinking that way. But if you have not had that experience and you’ve been told ‘you’re wonderful, you’re wonderful’ all the way through, with no challenges and no reflective opportunities, then you’d see those questions as threatening.

Changes

The single biggest issue facing each of the principals in my research appeared to be that of leading change, and the realities of change management in an educational context. For Jo, coming into a school that seemed resistant to futures thinking has set her plans and visions back a long way. She is having to implement some bold – and often unpopular – changes, because, “changing the culture of the school is essential if we are going to develop leaders from here, who are going to be future leaders in New Zealand.”

She is the first to admit her mistakes, especially in attempting to move too quickly, but is also unapologetic in her conviction that students must be at the heart of the change process, and that all students must experience achievement. She has realised that an important step in shifting the culture is to develop a professional community of teachers, such as that in her previous school in which “we had professional learning where teachers did want to be the best that they could be.”

I am trying to drive through the context of professional learning to try and get ‘student engagement equals student achievement’. If we become the best we can be through putting good professional learning in place, which includes curriculum development work, we’ll get there.

Jo keeps leadership of professional learning in her own portfolio, and either leads it herself or brings speakers in.

Another key area of change is the attitude and expectations around students gaining qualifications. She feels she has inherited “a basic philosophy at the school where people think, ‘as long as they have an experience that’s the most important’, and that’s what [the school] culture has been about.” Much to her despair, Jo is:

...having difficulty moving a course out of this curriculum for next year that offers no credits. So kids take five subjects, and for one of those subjects can get no credits. I’m not a credit-collection advocate, but most of those kids... actually need every opportunity.

However, Jo continues to despair that the support for principals to really make the curriculum into a relevant and engaging learning experience, where twenty-first century students are achieving, is lacking. Citing the work of Mark Treadwell in *Whatever: School 2.0* (Treadwell, 2008), Jo refers to the paradigm shift associated with the revised curriculum as people having to “go over this chasm [of change], they have to jump and for most people it’s going to be a leap – but for a number of schools it’s going to be a massive leap.” Her concern is that the Ministry of Education does not seem to be pushing the necessary change enough, that they:

... only want to keep the waters smooth.

They [Ministry of Education] came in last year, saw our data, and got the feeling from the staff that they’re really not taking ownership of this. But it’s not about **them**, it’s about the **kids** and where they come from. So they

know that change is needed here, that new vision was needed here, but when it comes down to the nitty gritty they just want it to be all smooth sailing. So who is going to actually tell our teachers out there, who actually don't think that they have to make a jump, when they do?

Another challenge to taking “the leap”, Jo finds, is the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA). She feels she does not have the backing of the union to push for higher expectations of her staff in raising the standards of teaching and learning. Whereas “once upon a time we'd all be in here [working] and it was just part of life”, Jo is challenged by teachers not prepared to start school prior to the students' starting date in January (“Is this a Board directed day? Will I be paid for this?”), and by the fact that:

... thirty staff drive out of here at 3.30pm every day and it's over for them. And PPTA backs that.

I think that the union will have a lot to answer to in terms of whether future education is going to prepare our kids to lead the economy and look after their families, be good citizens.

Leadership

There are diverse approaches to leadership, and leadership styles, among this small sample of four principals. As reported earlier, Jo considers that “educational leadership is a privilege, that's how I see it. It's a privilege, it's a challenge. Those who are in it to do well for our kids are in it for the right reasons.”

Jo aims to empower her teaching staff to think creatively and take risks in their practice. She recognises that a challenge for her as a leader, as such a hands-on practitioner, is recognising when to step back. One innovative programme that a teacher group is developing in her school is an example of her understanding of when to leave her staff to work on initiatives themselves:

I have seriously thought about being part of this programme. But I've thought I'll stay aside because I don't want teachers to feel that I'm

looking over their shoulders. I want them to have the licence and the trust from me, that I'm empowering them to go with it.

All the same, she describes the initiative as:

...my baby – I'm seeing it through. I'll mentor that group and meet with the leader every week. That's part of the way I like to lead. We have robust debate and that will keep us motivated to keep on going, but also allows issues to be brought to the table.

It is this encouragement of open debate and discussion, that she bases on research, which also typifies Jo's leadership. She has clear convictions about what is important in education – student engagement and achievement – but welcomes creative strategies for achieving these aims, attempting to build a culture where teachers will ask questions, solve problems and collaborate on solutions. In her leadership team meetings she models this practice, but finds:

... nuts and bolts can over-ride that other stuff.

I think it's really important to keep that sort of thing up, because talking is what keeps motivation up. I believe theory does underpin my practice and I often quote research with my staff, but actually it doesn't mean a toss to a lot of the staff who haven't had their eyes open to research.

Jo's interest in theory around educational leadership and futures education is evident as she peppers her conversation with references to academics, models, and other examples of practice. She intends to visit transformational schools in Canada, in order to see further evidence of theory in practice, in other environments. "For me, it's all very well to do lots of reading, but it's the practice and whether it works that's the proof." In an anecdote, Jo described a teacher of eleven years' experience on her staff, who has only ever taught at [the school]. To demonstrate for him how her theories looked in practice, she arranged for him visit other schools and shadow a teacher for a day. "He's come back with some really good ideas."

Jo perceives the lack of readiness of her colleagues to enter into reflective conversations is a barrier to developing futures thinking. She finds there is “a lack of willingness to engage in conversations at a professional level.” A local principals’ cluster was disappointing in this regard, with a reluctance to discuss education at a professional and informed level. In her own schools, Jo has maintained a policy of keeping a professional distance, saying, “It’s very hard to have a professional discussion with someone you’ve befriended.” However, it has become a feature of Jo’s leadership to ask questions:

I’ll have a conversation with people... like Mark Treadwell... and I’ll think, ‘oh, you’re way out there’. But I just keep asking the questions, I don’t care how dumb I look anymore. I guess I’ve got over that. As a practitioner I don’t need to know it all, whereas, once upon a time, I was of the mindset of ‘I’ve got to show I know’.

A big concern for Jo is sustainability for any futures-focused leader. Within her school she is finding that her ‘drivers’, or innovative teachers, are “getting worn down” by other staff, a trend she observed in her previous school too.

I had this most fabulous facilitator who was doing amazing work and helping us move results and move teachers. She gave us a year and then she said, ‘I’ve just had it, I’m worn out’. She was worn out by the negativity of her colleagues.

I know some of my principal colleagues – I admire them for their work, but they’ve stopped working at such a high level, and I wonder how long I can sustain having those conversations, to be honest.

Strategies

The principals in this study each employ explicit and practical strategies for leading futures-focused conversations in their schools. Each has developed a

personal toolbox, which is constantly growing, and being altered for their own contexts. Jo's toolbox of strategies includes:

- Backwards design – beginning with the vision for preferred futures and planning backwards until there are practical steps to put in place today. “We came up with our big picture, and worked back from there”;
- Building capacity for futures thinking by forming groups of teachers and students with this express purpose. “We set up a futures leaders group in the school”;
- Rewarding and supporting innovators, using principal discretion on the allocation of rewards such as management units and time;
- Building student leadership capacity and including students in problem-solving, by establishing a group to focus on one particular problem;
- Using self-review cycles, collecting evidence and data, and reporting on these to the Board of Trustees;
- Forming discussion groups, where theories, models and ideas are taken from the abstract to practical application within the school's own context;
- Being hands-on, and expecting the leadership team to be the same – being among the students, teachers and community, to listen and guide;
- Developing an effective appraisal system. “The appraisal system was a pat on the back. We need to re-jig it”;
- Taking models (“Secondary Futures thinking has given us a lot”) and applying them to the individual context of the school;
- Modelling the types of conversations learning leaders should be having in classes, such as ‘How do we know that the students have learnt this today? How can we check that?’; and
- Using small groups for discussion and problem solving, rather than large, whole-staff forums. Using tools such as a SWOT analysis to guide the discussions. “The difficulty is not getting bogged down in the negatives.”

Conclusion

As I write, Jo, with typical energy and commitment is facing another year with optimism and spirit. She remains committed to her vision of a successful

education for all children, and to bringing her community to a place of understanding about this.

MARION

Introduction

Marion is currently a consultant in technology in education, travelling widely to support schools in implementing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies that will enhance student learning experiences. She came to this role in 2007 from a principalship at an urban, single-sex, decile ten school, with a roll of 1230. It was in this school context that I had first met Marion, and having visited her school recognised her as a futures-focused leader.

Due to her travelling schedule I was able to interview Marion in my own town, at a friend's home. Her vast experience in education, along with her commitment to social justice, was reflected in the wisdom and clarity with which she approached each question. The respect with which Marion approached this interview was evident in her responses to the questions: "That's a really interesting question because..."; "A critical question because..."; "You're exactly right..."; "That's so true...". This approach succeeded in making me, as the interviewer, feel affirmed, and that there was some reciprocity in this exercise.

Marion speaks in the lyrical language of an English teacher with a passion for literature and language. On analysis of the interview transcript, it is clear that her communication style is one of weaving stories and rich experiences into everything she says. Her answers are long, each clearly structured and making a point with a combination of educational jargon and descriptions and images, much like a piece of writing.

- "I might start first with some of the things that have shaped some of my thinking..."
- "We worked to create the stories by which people could understand why it was important to change."
- "I love the analogy of being the lamp rather than the mirror that you shine out [from the school to the community]."

Futures focus

As Marion states, “It’s really hard to predict what the future’s going to look like”, but she is clear that “what we are preparing young people for is very different.” She cites the global economy, the environment, and shifts in the place of superpowers as having profound future influences on the global workplace. “People are going to be looking for work on the global stage, and the opportunities for doing that are so much greater because of the ability to collaborate, particularly with the connectedness of the current world.” She says the work of Thomas Friedman, in *The World is Flat* (Friedman, 2006), has helped to shape her thinking, along with a long involvement with ICT and the notion that:

... we are moving from the information age to the knowledge age.

If we are going to look back on this period of history, it will be quite distinct, just like the move from the industrial age, but as you go through those changes sometimes people don’t see them as clearly as you do when you look back historically.

Marion has had an interest in computers and ICT since early in her teaching career, observing their use in a mathematics department and thinking, “These are actually instruments of communication and teaching English is about communication, there must be ways we can use them for our subject area.” In her previous position as a principal she was instrumental in initiating student access to computers in all learning contexts, in many ways pioneering student-led learning-with and learning-about computer initiatives. She sees technology as just part of the toolkit for giving young people the very best opportunities.

If you are mindful of wanting to give young people the very best opportunity, then you are always looking at ‘What is it we are preparing these young people for?’

If you are mindful all the time that it is the young people who are important, then that's what gives you the resolve to look further afield and be the very best you can be.

In terms of embracing new ideas, and taking risks in the hope of improving student learning and preparing them for the future, Marion says it is essential to first have in place sound beliefs about teaching and learning. "There's not a lot of research at the moment because we've never been working in a saturated ICT environment, and so you can only hope that the sound things you know about teaching, about learning pedagogy... that you will take those with you into this different space."

For Marion, the culture of a school also must underpin the readiness of staff, students and community to move towards the future.

Creating room in the daily practice to be able to [look to the future] is really important, and a lot of that comes back to the systems and practices put in place in the school. If those things work like clockwork then you can find the space to think about the bigger picture.

If you're constantly worried because you don't know what support you're going to get over the next discipline issue, then you haven't got a culture where you can think the big picture.

She concentrated on building the capacity for futures thinking in her school by "creating an environment where risk taking is a part of the way things are done, and it's accepted." One of the first steps in her previous school that helped in creating this environment was to move from a punitive culture, where "people would be told off in staff meetings, publicly; students were yelled at and being disciplined", to one where an agreed code of conduct was overtly modelled. "Mediation became the way that we worked, both for when kids were having difficulty and staff as well. It's about modelling."

Wherever you are you should be a model of what you want other young people to be, so the staff should be behaving and being role models in which young people can see themselves.

Another way in which Marion fosters a climate of big picture thinking and risk taking is to build a collaborative culture in a school. In her own leadership she sees herself as one in a team: “I would hope that people who worked with me wouldn’t see me as a leader by virtue of position, but that they would see me as part of a team and someone who contributes to a team.” She cites examples of “building practices of collaboration”, such as sharing resources as a teacher, forming groups to solve problems, and building an “organisational democracy” as a way of working.

One of the most important skills for young people facing the future, Marion says, is to be articulate and confident, “particularly for young women.” Far from agreeing with the naysayers who despair that computers would see “the end of society and education as we know it”, as was feared with the earlier introduction of television, Marion sees computers as being able to enhance the literacy and oracy experiences of students:

Pod casting is a great example of [computer-generated] oracy... I’ve seen Maori boys using it to practise for speech competitions – a great way of protecting the oral tradition. Young people who haven’t got great literacy skills can take a piece of text that they’ve written and narrate it, and hear themselves speak.

In this way, creative teachers using all of the potential of ICT “will protect those things which I still believe are hugely important.”

Motivations

Marion speaks with fondness of the many individuals who have helped to shape her into the leader and educator she is today. Her conversations are dotted with reminiscences of past schools, teaching environments, lecturers, students and experiences. There is a sense that she has, throughout her career, sought like-

minded people who will support each other in changing the status quo to make education better for students and teachers alike, and that where such a network did not exist, she was prepared to create it. Many of the people who were part of this journey with Marion over the past twenty years have been influential voices in educational transformation in New Zealand.

Coming from a family of educators, with her father a principal, Marion attended a country school and was a keen debater and school leader. She says this educational experience grounded her in often looking at things differently from her peers. She went to teachers' college then soon went travelling for her overseas experience (OE). "I guess like all Kiwis my age, there was a real yearn to get out and see the world... this also seemed to open us to things being different." When she did return and begin teaching she says she:

always wanted to do things well, do the best I possibly could – coming from a teaching family the teaching ethic was probably from that notion of service, of giving to others, and those are probably the reasons I got into teaching.

For this reason also, Marion "got very involved in union activities very early on, so working for the PPTA shaped a whole lot of my ideas about employment and conditions of work, and what we were teaching young people for." As an organisation it [PPTA] is "about making sense of the world beyond yourself, and making the world a better place for other people." She has also always belonged to subject associations. "I've wanted to have that input from people, I've wanted to know how I could do things better." It was also early in her career that she became interested in computers, but had to fund her own trip to an English teachers' conference in Australia where the focus was on emerging ICT in English. "To go to a conference in Australia was quite radical, and you paid for it yourself!"

Another motivator for Marion is her personal experiences of poor leadership. "Experiencing bad leadership from other people is one of the things that motivated me to think perhaps I've got some ability to do a job better than

someone who I thought was doing the job badly.” This conviction led her to undertake further tertiary study towards a Masters in Education, where she encountered lecturers who inspired her and became mentors for her practice.

Combined, these early experiences, Marion believes, meant she has developed “a profound respect for other people’s world views”, saying she:

...always wanted to look beyond the local to how other people are doing it – there’s a natural curiosity I suppose. From wanting to go overseas when you are young, to see how the world works, to wanting to know how other people might view or understand [something]. And it’s been no different right through my career.

While, inevitably, Marion encounters people who look at the world differently to the way she does – “It’s quite a surprise to me to find that other people don’t always see things in the same context you do, when they’re doing exactly the same job as you” – she says she has never felt that “their view is any less valid than your own.” While admitting to a sense of some frustration, “frustration that you can’t change some people’s minds as quickly as you might like”, she does say:

The way I change my beliefs is by not being persuaded emotively, but by being a mix of things I guess – they have to be logical and there has to be reason and... some evidence. Some people are mentors so you have a belief that their thinking has put you on the right track so you give them more credit than you might give to others. There are times when you’re taking leaps of faith and you may not know what the outcome will be. The world of ICT is like that.

Despite leaving the immediate school environment for now, Marion remains motivated by the “notion of what’s best for young people... in New Zealand, what’s best for education.” A sense of moral purpose to serve beyond the immediate confines of the school permeates her work. As principal she tried to consider:

If this is good for my school, is it good for schools in the region, is it good for schools in the country? Because at the back [of my mind] is wanting to make the world a better place... how you can leave the world in a better place than you found it.

Marion remains true to a snippet of advice that she was given in her first teaching job, by a HoD “who had a profound influence on me”:

I said to her, ‘This is really scary, being a new teacher – how much do I tell these students?’ And she said to me, ‘Well knowledge is power – so is it power you want to have over them?’ I said, ‘No’, and she said, ‘Then that will be what governs how much you tell them.’ There have been some wonderful people in my teaching life.

To Marion, this has shaped her career as an educator who “wants to give back”, and to “make the world a different place for young people coming through.”

Changes

Marion has always found change to be stimulating, and “I can look back on my career and say that probably every five years I ended up doing something completely different.” Her career has included assisting in research at a New Zealand university, and a teaching exchange abroad. “Even teaching a novel, I could never do the same thing twice.” As someone who has enjoyed a lifetime of seeking and embracing change and new world views, Marion is very aware of the care needed in leading others through times of change:

When you are going along to [new] places, you think everyone else is like you, it’s the way you think about the world so surely that’s what other people think – then the element of surprise kicks in and you become aware of the differences that you have created, and you think, ‘Oh gosh, I wonder if I’m doing the right thing, if I’m pushing people the right way’.

It is in these times of self doubt that Marion reminds herself of her core purpose in education – “that it is the young people who are important” – and her resolve is strengthened to implement change, while maintaining a respect for others’ world views. She also believes that “radical change” is needed in education today, in order to be ready for tomorrow.

She believes that the biggest barrier to change is “human behaviour”, and explains that change management is “all about managing people”, and having emotional intelligence. “You can’t force people to do what they don’t want to do; you have to lead them to believe that what they’re doing is the right thing.” To get people to come on board with change, “even if they don’t see it the same way as you, have the belief that you’re moving in the right direction.” Then it’s about “how you treat people”:

Enabling and empowering them to really be able to say what they think... being able to deal with their fears so they can set them aside and say, ‘well actually that’s not going to be a problem in this situation’.

Having allowed people the opportunity to identify “what the barriers are, and what their worst fears are”, Marion says it is up to the leader to try to alleviate the fears and “remove the barriers so that those are no longer things they can put up an argument against.” She cites examples of staff claiming to not have enough time for creative thinking, “so we looked at creative ways of making the time”; when they said they didn’t have the right resources, “we made sure they had access to the gear we were wanting them to use.” She says when you elicit responses from people:

... they have an ownership of what’s going on and they realise that when you do something you’re actually responding to their needs, not imposing something, or doing something you hadn’t thought of... When the barriers are removed and there is no other option they have grown to believe that what you [are trying to implement] is the right thing. Often, when you’re building the bigger picture, the vision comes from everyone, it doesn’t come from any one person.

Marion says a big influence on change is peers. “When they see their peers beginning to adopt I think that’s a very strong moment because they think, ‘if so and so can do this perhaps I can do it too.’” Good leadership, she says, will “put in the emotional support for people to help them make change.” Marion says her “ability to handle people” is intuitive, “it’s nothing I’ve sat down and learned from books, it’s been the way I’ve been brought up and the way I’ve interacted.”

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) is an example of teachers’ voices being heard all over the country, says Marion, and there is an irony that teachers are now feeling that the changes inherent in this document are being imposed upon them.

It looks like it’s come [from the] top down, but I believe we have to keep reminding people [of the research that was done through expert groups and subject associations], so that when they say ‘*They* want us to do this’, that the *they* is actually the teaching profession and a fundamental part of the curriculum stock-take.

In her previous school, conversations around the curriculum began when it was still in draft, in 2002. Groups in her school were “grappling with the issues”, and “getting subject areas to talk to each other about the essence of the discipline”, having important conversations. She is pragmatic about the extent to which these conversations were embraced:

I know there are a lot of people who probably thought, ‘Oh let me just get on with what I have to do on a daily basis’, but until there is that common recognition of the need across the boundaries of knowledge, then you don’t get to the main page to make the changes.

A key to effecting pedagogical change, Marion found, was to implement necessary structures and systems changes as well. She formed a working party for the re-structuring of the time table, for example, as a way of maximising learning time. Another school system that needed changing in order for effective teaching

and learning to take place was the punitive discipline system, which became instead a code of conduct for teachers and students based on courtesy and respect. A physical manifestation of change was to replace corridors and classroom doors with glass, to “de-privatise practice.”

Another key element in leading change is within the school’s community. “It is incredibly important to change the community’s notion of what schooling needs to be about.” She despairs that more conservative schools are allowing the community to drive what schools do; “they’re responding to the demands of the community”, citing the past experiences of introducing the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) as a time when communities had to learn alongside the schools. “A lot of that was about creating the stories by which people could understand why it was so important to change.” She says it is important for school leaders to educate communities on how schooling is different from “what we may well have been through at school.”

For teachers in a time of change, in some instances affecting the very foundations of why and how they became teachers, Marion wants to build a culture where teachers are life-long learners; risk takers who are prepared to make mistakes. “That’s a huge change for teachers, the ability to admit failure.” For Marion, it is important to have a staffroom where success is celebrated, but you can also feel comfortable about saying, ““Oh! I’ve had a terrible week!”” without it being a sign of weakness. “You want to be supportive... but we all have bad days!” For those teachers who are not willing to make changes, she says there is not a place in her school. “If a person is not a good teacher and the young people are being inflicted with that every year, are we serving those young people well? Are we serving the profession well?” Dealing with those people with dignity and compassion is of the utmost importance to Marion, and she says she tries to find creative and flexible ways of managing their workloads or personal issues. “You can’t flinch from the hard stuff though, and it’s [letting a teacher go] the hardest part of the job.” The PPTA has useful guidelines and procedures to follow, Marion finds, “but you have to know them well.”

Leadership

Marion subscribes to some specific theories of leadership, but says these have emerged intuitively, “not from a book.” Again, many of her intrinsic leadership traits she attributes to her experiences when growing up; as the only girl in a family with three brothers, with a father as a principal, she found she often had to stand apart from the crowd, and be resilient. Leadership emerged early, as she was a prefect at primary and secondary schools.

In keeping with her views on collaboration in learning, Marion sees this as an important aspect of her leadership too. “I’ve never viewed hierarchies as important... I see teams of people with different purposes as making a school a school.” While others might see her as ‘The Principal’ – “people might not look at you in the same way that you view yourself” – she strongly feels she would like to be seen “as part of a team, and as someone who contributes to a team.”

She believes that the job of a principal is “to make things happen for people, particularly for the teachers around me who are the people with the good ideas about how to do things in their curriculum areas, and the young people in my school.” Again, this was a tendency that emerged early in her career, when she realised she wanted to make the world a better place, by working for the “collective good”. Further, the responsibility of the principal is to “lead their community to what is right for the age [in which we are educating young people]”. While there has to be “a balance between the role the community play and the school leaders”, Marion feels alarmed that some communities are holding back the future direction of education through a lack of understanding about our changing world.

Marion’s early tertiary leadership studies were based on business models of leadership. “There wasn’t a huge body of knowledge about educational leadership, so there was a lot of drawing on business models of leadership and then looking at how that differed from what we did.” While there were a lot of useful strategies she took from this, she says; “I can remember reacting to the hierarchies in the business models, because that wasn’t what I believed, or how I

wanted to act.” Then she discovered the notion of ‘organisational democracies’, finding:

This really appealed to me, that if we are a democracy then the institutions within the democracy should reflect that. That’s been something that has truly shaped a lot of the belief about the way that I work. While you have structures and boundaries, just like in government, what you are wanting to do is actualise people to be the best they can be, to take part in the society or school.

The notion of ‘instructional leadership’ was another one to which she related during her Masters level study, and meant she saw herself as not simply a manager in her school:

You may be a manager but you’re also an instructional leader. Promotion in school has come because you’re a good teacher; you become a good leader in a department; and then a good manager and administrator. But don’t leave the teaching and learning behind.

Marion considers this to be fundamentally important, and sees it as a difference between her own and others’ practice. “I think a lot of principals lose confidence in their instructional leadership because their job is about management and administration, and they have lost touch with what is around them, like in the curriculum or assessment.” She doesn’t claim to have held all of the knowledge of each curriculum area, for example, and relies on a well-informed team, “but what I have tried to hold onto is about theory and understanding of learning, and what’s important in making the world a different place for young people.” Having said that, Marion is clear that management and administration are essential parts of principalship, and that she valued learning about community consultation, financial accounting, student management systems, policies, and pastoral systems before she became a principal, mostly by working closely with her own principals as a senior leader.

Marion's leadership has also been shaped by some key, long-lasting networks and relationships. "As a young teacher in the eighties in Christchurch we set up a 'women in education' group... we got together and talked about educational things... a lot of talk over a glass of wine on a Friday afternoon, but about educational issues." Many of the women in that early group have gone on to be influential educators, and they maintain contact. "[Woman] has been a hugely significant person in my life, just in terms of empowering quietly in the background. We don't see each other a lot, but there's a very strong link." Mentoring is very important to Marion, and she found being part of the union was another place for "like-minded people to grapple with the issues and find solutions to problems."

Sadly, Marion left school leadership at a time when, she feels, the momentum of change at her school had not gathered sufficiently to be sustained. "My time at [school] was some of the most exciting of my career... we were on the brink of some quite big change." Working through this change with advisors such as Jane Gilbert, Rose Hipkins and Rachel Bolstad, of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER], the senior leadership team was at a pivotal point:

Jane looked at me and said, 'Well you know what will happen – if you go it won't happen, because we know that where leadership changes that the whole momentum's lost', and ironically it was soon after that that I was confronted with the reality of whether I stayed at the school or moved on to something else [her current role], and that was the worst decision of my life.

Torn over the decision to leave, Marion had only three weeks in which to decide. While she is convinced that it was the right thing for her – "I probably needed to refresh myself doing other things because the change process we'd been in had been so intense" – but there was "heartbreak" in knowing that the structural and curriculum changes she had been about to see through could suffer.

Strategies

Marion's toolbox of strategies has evolved over a diverse career, with a myriad of influences, but always filtered through her unswerving belief in the role of education to make a difference in the lives of students and teachers, and to do it with the utmost humanity. Here are some of her strategies for leading futures-focused education:

- Be upfront and honest – “even in difficult conversations you pay people the respect of being honest with them” – and have a sense of moral purpose, “that what you're doing is actually bigger than you and it's bigger than your school and the most important thing is the young people”;
- Be part of a team – “as a single person you're limited with what you can achieve, but with a team around you the ground is wide open and you can cover [so much more]”;
- Form your teams with people who are different from you – “people with a different view, or a new view, or [who can] bring something to the school from outside”;
- Make joint decisions by asking for everyone's input, summarising what you heard, then asking people to prioritise their own suggestions to help effect change;
- Recognise the positive things that have been done in the past, let people know that these are important – “Acknowledge the strengths of the organisation you are in before you set about trying to move it in a different place” – a new principal should gather information for a term before making a move. “My worst role model was a principal who had been told she needed to effect change within days of being in a school. Well, what stupid advice! She was actually one of my best role models because I learnt what not to do”;
- Identify the things that need changing – curriculum, pastoral systems, property, etc. – then find your starting point. “Property issues... are a wonderful way of making change... physical changes can make it a different place from before, which is a great opportunity for a principal coming in”;

- Protect people in your workplace who might be vulnerable – be flexible and accommodating – “find a timetable that will fit in with their responsibilities as a mother, for example”; and
- Find networks of like-minded people - form your own if you can't find one.

Conclusion

Marion considers it part of our role as educators “to contribute back to the profession – you take something out, you modify it, and you put it back in.” She has demonstrated this from early teaching days of sharing her classroom resources with her department, and as a principal being sure to invest in training and beginning teachers. It is an intrinsic part of her work now, with ICT as the tool for making the modifications to teaching and learning, and putting it back into a schooling experience for future children.

NETTA

Introduction

Netta is the principal of a co-educational decile six secondary school with a roll of 600, serving a rural community. Our first appointment had to be postponed as her small community was isolated due to the flooding that plagued the area over a very wet winter in 2008. I was able to reach her by phone that morning, and found her alone in her office, having closed the school in order to keep her staff and students safe from treacherous roads and rising flood waters. It was some weeks later when we managed to reschedule – this time on a Sunday afternoon, and again during a day of torrential rain.

Netta's office reflects her interest in research and exploring ideas in education, with bookshelves groaning under piles of texts on educational leadership, reform and transformation. Having recently completed her Masters in Educational Leadership, we were both using similar bodies of theory to underpin our practice, and I felt a sense of solidarity, as life-long learners, in our conversation. She is respectful of the pace of change, yet understands the urgency with which

educational reform must be addressed. She is passionate about the future of the young people in her charge, and is a visionary, big picture thinker.

Indeed, Netta clearly thinks in big pictures. She speaks in metaphors, and has developed a school charter that is represented by graphics and symbols rather than words. Her conversation is rich with visuals, such as:

- “paint a picture for the community”
- “I drop ideas like seed corns”
- “the future looks quite different from the past”
- “our young people are travelling on currents”
- change is like “a dead cow, floating on the river... you can see it going backwards and forwards... sometimes you have to dig a stick into it... but eventually the eels eat it or it washes out to sea [it reaches its logical conclusion]”.

Futures focus

Netta is driven by the need to prepare young people for the future; for a “constantly, relentlessly changing, complex world.” She has explored the work of Hedley Beare – “I’ve heard him speak, and I must admit it was a real eye-opener” – and says this put her “on the path to futures thinking.” Some of the issues that she believes our young people are going to be faced with in their futures are environmental fragility, social complexity – “the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots” -, coping with a multi-ethnic society, and the globalisation of evil through the power of the internet:

All of them are probably way beyond the scope of a principal but they’re still at the back of your mind... well, that really is the reality and so... can you do anything and what could you do to make it so there is hope?

She is concerned that today’s adults are not grasping the significance of how different the world is going to be for our young people, due to its complexity and uncertainty, so feels that it is the school’s role to take leadership in this:

How can we as a school be developing our young people so they can... not just survive but thrive as well, and feel hopeful about it, like they have a sense of purpose and a sense of security in themselves?

At this school a positive approach to the future is explicitly addressed. “You have to believe that when the time comes they [young people] will make sensible decisions, maybe more so than we did, about our environment, how we treat each other, about having respect for difference.” She feels the responsibility to prepare her students, to ensure that they “have the character and the thinking to make the right choices for themselves and their generation”:

We certainly work on it here, [teaching] them that there’s a place for them, if they’re prepared to work for it, think about it and plan for it. If they don’t have that they’ll simply drift and be tossed to and fro; they won’t have any sense of an anchor, or stability or security... and this is hugely important in the sort of world we’re facing.

She believes that young people are increasingly aware that “things aren’t quite right, things are a bit scary, a bit fragile” in the world, but is concerned that no one is talking with them about this – “I don’t mean scare-tactics, but just sort of opening up their minds to issues.” While not every student is going to go on to be a decision-maker at global, or even local, levels, “You keep believing that one person can make a difference”, and this motivates Netta to continue engaging them with questions like, “What does that mean for you and how you conduct your life?”. She believes that, “If enough people do that, you create a critical mass to make a difference.”

Netta feels this responsibility is part of being a principal: “I do believe it is part of our ethical purpose, to ensure that we make a difference where we can.” She describes the role of her school and her teachers as being “to prepare our young people for the future”, and they actively “speak the language of being a futures-focused school.”

The most significant preparation for the future, for Netta, is that of personalised careers education. “We think it is so important that our young people have a very clear sense of direction and purpose... that every student is future focused as well.” To that end, she has recently increased her staffing to include two full-time careers people, believing it is “worth committing time to.” This approach extends to working with the students of contributing primary and intermediate schools, to enable them to come prepared with ideas about their careers and to begin thinking about their futures.

Netta has been leading school-wide conversations around the needs of the school in providing an appropriate education over the next twenty years, and beyond. She identifies ICT as a key area for development, “so there’s more flexibility, so there’s anywhere, anytime, any help learning.” In terms of pedagogy for the future, she has been following the work of Jane Gilbert (Gilbert, 2005; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008):

It’s the concepts that the kids will need to build on, not the content... [so we’re] putting a lot of focus in on what sort of teaching, what sort of pedagogy is now needed so that we’re actually encouraging our kids to think, not just regurgitate.

This paradigm shift involves exploring the future not only with teachers, but with parents and the wider community as well.

Every time I get a chance to talk with parents at a prize-giving, anything like that, it’s painting the picture of what this future looks like and how rapidly our world is changing. The parents were just blown away by the reality of the change that is happening in the world. With our community, [I try to] paint a picture of what this future could look like, not the bleakness - obviously staying away from that - but just the rapid change everything is undergoing.

Motivations

Netta appears to be motivated by a sense of moral purpose to lead her students and community towards a preferred future: “you have to believe that there is a preferred future and we can work towards that.” Again, the work of Hedley Beare has influenced her in framing the future in this way. The fear that, with so many possible bleak prognoses for the future, we could allow society to “just drift towards that” is a key motivator for change.

He [Beare] talks about probable, possible and preferred futures and I guess [it got me] thinking, well if we want a preferred future for our school, for our students, for our community, what does that look like? And I’m actively working towards that. I would guess it’s sort of a mind set of thinking: we can make a difference, we can do something here, we don’t have to drift into this bleak picture.

She takes the theory and ideas of some of the world’s leading educators, and applies them to her own context. Her school’s strategic plan is designed around the nine gateways of David Hargreaves’ work on personalising learning (Hargreaves, 2003). The gateways are interconnected elements of strategic planning, each of which requires attention and development in order to move a school forward in a balanced way. When each of the gateways is aligned the school will be moving towards personalised learning for students. Hargreaves’ gateways are curriculum, workforce development, school organisation and design, student voice, mentoring, learning to learn, assessment for learning, new technologies, and advice and guidance. (2003)

Netta has adapted the gateways to an aquatic image that is relevant to her school’s location, in order to make them relevant to her school community. She has also been influenced by the writings of Andy Hargreaves, Louise Stoll and Jim Collins, while at a local level she has worked with Mark Treadwell, Pam Hooks, and Jane Gilbert and Rachel Bolstad, and read the postings from Secondary Futures. “Their work confirmed what I had been reading, and it was good to see it confirmed in a New Zealand context”:

What we tend to do in here is read stuff like the Secondary Futures, and David Hargreaves, and say, ‘Well what does that mean for us?’ We tend to try and grow it from our own model, but using that to inform us; a direction if you like.

The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) is a key motivator for Netta in leading futures-focused conversations. “I just see this as an amazing opportunity to shift thinking.” She despairs that some school leaders are saying, “‘Oh, it’s not a lot different’”, because for Netta, “It’s like a godsend... the futures-focused themes, the shift from content to concepts...” She has invested time with her staff in exploring ideas around the future, and is excited that “they have taken this on board, that the future looks quite different from what they’ve known in the past.”

Netta also identifies her own disengaging education as a motivation to do better for the young people in her charge:

I can remember sitting at school, I mean I’m talking 40 years ago, thinking, ‘I wonder why we need to learn this’, but never brave enough to ask that question. But too much of what I learnt, I never really found the answer to and that’s not good enough; it is not good enough in the long run.

Changes

Netta prefers to avoid using the word ‘change’; instead she refers to ‘the next step.’ She sees change in education as being initiative-driven, and therefore open to resistance and a move away from the core values of the school:

If it can build on from where we are now, in the direction that we want to go, then it’s not a change initiative, but it becomes the next step. So we try not to use the word ‘change’, but to ask, ‘What’s the next step for us?’

She is strategic and measured in her approach to building next steps in her school, relying on a sound culture of communication and openness to ease her thinking into practice.

I tend to read something, then I might mull it over for several months, and then an opportunity comes up so you introduce it, or you just talk to people strategically... lots of little conversations, so you're just dropping ideas, or dropping what I call 'seed corns', and so you know they've got something to think about.

An example is Netta's strategy for introducing to the thinking around the book *Disciplining and Drafting* (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008):

I liked the 'camping ground' metaphor, and did a lot of thinking about that, and then, over several months I got a few people just to read the book and then to discuss reading it, and [reflect] on it, and then we came up with a proposal... so it was just gradually infiltrating the ideas.

The camping ground described by Netta is Bolstad and Gilbert's alternative model of a twenty-first century education, where each student's journey through schooling is personalised. They can travel along the river of curriculum and qualifications, but at any point they can rest at a camping ground, where their individual learning needs are brokered by mentors and a range of learning providers, both within and beyond the school. The students may then rejoin the river when they are ready to approach rapids – assessments - with skills, knowledge and resilience. This model, Bolstad and Gilbert claim, is in contrast to many existing educational journeys, where some students are left to sink, or fail, because they are all in the same river, despite their individual learning needs, and it this concept that Netta is interested in exploring.

A similar approach to exploring new ideas has been taken with her staff around grasping the significance of the changes that the *New Zealand Curriculum* brings. While she is concerned that some principals are not taking the opportunity to really change how education is delivered in New Zealand – “they don't really

understand the context of the new curriculum, which is very futures-focused... there is a danger in that” – Netta is taking every opportunity to explore the paradigm shifts in her own context. She spent a teacher-only day leading discussions around what the future might look like in twenty years, and then took the responses to a discussion of the curriculum, and how that might look in this future they had described. “Then they could see where it was driving, and that it was driving towards a different world, and I think if we can see that then we’ll start to make headway.”

Some areas needing change, Netta sees, are in the qualifications system, the implementation of the key competencies, the ways in which schools structure their timetables, and pedagogy. In terms of assessment and the NCEA, Netta believes “we haven’t even touched on the possibilities of NCEA, for having programmes of learning that are going to be relevant and engaging for our young people.” She says the current approach to assessment means that “some of our kids sit there bored but they comply, [while] too many of our young people are disengaged, it just does not meet the needs in their world and they know it, and they ask, ‘Why are we learning this?’ and we’re not giving enough answers to that.” Netta considers that “with a little bit of visionary thinking I think we can do a lot around this”, as she believes NCEA can provide a relevant qualification system: “there are possibilities there for really turning education upside down.”

The key competencies (Ministry of Education, 2007) are “going to make the difference”, especially since, as Netta points out, the need to learn knowledge and information is now subordinate to the need for traits such as wisdom. “[Treadwell] has been quite an influence on us, [getting us] thinking our young people are going to need profound wisdom to cope with the world they’re moving into.” She sees further thinking and planning around the key competencies as essential in her school, as while:

...we’ve done a lot of work around the key competencies, I think we’re still only on the surface, you know, I don’t think we really understand what these mean on a profound level and how that will change teaching.

A third area in which Netta is focusing her next steps is in the structure of her school timetable. She has developed a new timetable that is quite a shift from many traditional approaches, in a move that “other principals [thought] it would be too huge for them to try”, as it has become more student-centred than subject-centred. By analysing school-leaver data, and student aspirations, she could see that the subjects offered at her school were meeting only 15% of her students’ needs; those going on to tertiary study:

Now if you were one of those people wanting to go into retail, or to become a plumber, what subjects would you pick on our timetable? And it was really clear we weren’t catering for them. It was still very much that school was for people heading to university and the rest had to just jump off as they ran out by themselves... so we started saying, ‘Okay, if we’re really preparing each one of our young people for their futures, what are we doing for those who want to be a plumber?’

Netta developed a solution that meant she could still offer traditional academic subjects (“chemistry and physics”), while “opening up possibilities by introducing more than twenty new courses for trades and services pathways.” She says she managed this innovation “in a way that hasn’t turned everything upside down, or caused a huge backlash”, but that she is constantly evaluating the change and has already planned some alterations, to ensure that “kids can follow their passion.” She aims to move towards the camping ground metaphor (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008).

The final element requiring leadership of change is in teaching itself: “changing pedagogy is a big one, that’s a really big one.” She is working with her staff to move towards “an inquiry based model, and developing a conceptual framework” for the curriculum. The teachers are now seeking opportunities to make cross-curricular links, and to “see how we can connect the learning for the kids.” In some cases, teachers are now teaching in two learning areas (such as the head of physical education teaching English), which has helped to strengthen these connections. She describes a sense of no turning back in the momentum towards change in how teaching takes place in her school.

Using the model of Hargreaves' nine gateways, as explained above, Netta and her staff can see the areas needing the next steps, because "we just have to keep moving on all nine fronts."

I honestly think staff have just got used to the idea that things will always be evolving, not so much changing, just continuing to 'evolve', which is another word that we're using, and scaffolding of what we've learnt along the way.

She does this by committing time to her staff, so they have opportunities to read, reflect and consider how changing theories might be implemented in practice. "Unless staff really understand and come on board, it's not going to make any difference to the learner."

Despite this measured approach, Netta does experience resistance to change. Surprisingly, she finds students themselves among the most reluctant to face changes. "You would have thought that the young people would be keen to change, but... they have their fixed ideas about how school should be." She attributes this reluctance to the inherent instability, the "sense of security gone", that changes bring for young people. "You have to go carefully with them as well," Netta says. "It's like, just because we're young doesn't mean to say that you're allowed to move my cheese too!"

In order to reassure students, and bring them on board with the changing landscape of schooling, Netta communicates with them regularly:

I think it's really important to explain to young people, and I try to do assemblies a lot, just what the thinking is behind something and why we're doing it, [so they don't] just arrive at school and something's different... the explanation behind it is important. I try to get out every lunch hour and just walk around and just talk to kids, you know, 'How's this going? How's that going? How are you finding something else?' and those informal conversations are really powerful.

While her school has a student council, where more formal feedback from students is provided, Netta says the area of student voice is something with “huge possibilities that, again, we’re only beginning to understand how to use.” She describes it as needing students to “[move] with us, rather than providing barriers, to actually create some momentum.”

Communicating with parents is also a key to building support and momentum around change, as they each have “their own idea of what a good education is.” Netta discusses with parents the intention of the school to meet the needs of their own individual children, and finds this is a successful approach, because:

... every parent wants to think that their child’s needs are being met, whatever type of learner, whatever their likely sphere of work or career, and so that becomes the hook: we’re doing this because we’re trying to meet the needs of your child.

She also does this within the context of communicating with parents about the nature of the world and its changes, which gives them some insights into why the education they received is not going to be appropriate for their children.

[Staff], parents and students need to know, to understand, what the school’s about so that if we go into [a new model of working] it relates to who we are, and once [they] understand that it’s almost like, ‘Oh, that’s fine! It’s not a new initiative, it’s just another understanding we have about what we do... about the direction we want for our kids’.

Leadership

It becomes apparent through listening to Netta that she approaches her leadership role with a sense of moral purpose and the responsibility to lead her school and her community towards a preferred future, that they have defined together. She can see that school leadership reaches far beyond the immediate people in her care, and that her sphere of influence is expanding. “I like to think that some of the things we try to teach our own young people will make a difference

somewhere, sometime.” Inspired by the words of Hedley Beare, at a Sydney conference in 2002, Netta approaches the big issues facing us in the future as personal issues to address today, saying, “I think we can make a difference.”

Netta believes that change comes from looking to the past, and taking the best of what you have today, to move towards the future. She says school leaders need to reflect their own communities, and their aspirations for their young people, while at the same time focusing on the future, “and that’s a fine line at times, to sort of lead as well as follow.” She uses the image of rowers, who are moving forwards but facing backwards. “It’s like taking what’s solid from the past but knowing you’ve got to head to the future with it.” And continuing with the metaphor, she sees the principal as the coxswain, “the little coach on the side.”

Netta values the support of her leadership team, which “allows me to bounce ideas around.” She describes a mistake at the beginning of her principalship:

One of the mistakes I made in the beginning was using staff meetings to bounce ideas off, and I really got a reaction from a number of staff, saying, ‘What’s this got to do with our teaching; it’s too theoretical, the ideas are too woolly – just tell us what to do, forget about the woolly, fluffy stuff behind it.’

Instead, she turned her attention to a group of innovative curriculum leaders, changing their title from Heads of Department to [one that reflects their leadership role in the school]. She found this was a group that was more receptive to discussing new theories in education, and in communicating these in practical contexts to their staff. “That’s been really huge, having that unique group of curriculum leaders... on board.”

Netta has recruited carefully into this leadership group, looking for “someone who is actually interested in student learning, with a future focus, rather than a dogmatic focus on their subject area.” As a result, she says, she may not have the most highly qualified people in terms of subject specialists, but she has managed to bring in curriculum leaders who “are prepared to think outside the square.”

I've used that group in particular as a support group, as a group to give me some pretty honest feedback. I feel I don't have to always battle with [considering new ideas]; I know I can walk into that group and say, 'This is what I'm thinking', and they will consider it seriously. Not that I'm always asking for them to change anything, just to have a critique I guess, around what's out there, which is huge.

She is pleased that the ideas, readings and theories shared in this group are beginning to be generated from a range of sources. At first the group relied on Netta providing the momentum, but now, "the ideas are coming up from all over the place; it's certainly not just my ideas, it's really like a collective critique that moves it forward."

Beyond school, Netta values some key networks to support her leadership and futures focus. The 21st Century Principals Coalition is one that provides further research and theory to her repertoire, and she is also part of a central North Island principals' association. She works with a mentor from School Support Services (University of Waikato) – "she's a really futures-focused thinker, and she's got her eye on the horizon." A local principals' group is one she enjoys.

That one's cool because you can talk about all the barriers and the challenges and set-backs in a real way and know it's not going to go outside; you can have a moan about whatever, get it off your chest, and you can go away again and pick up the pieces.

At a national level, Netta follows the work of several leaders involved with Secondary Futures, and internationally is a member of the group International Networking for Educational Transformation (iNet). "Being part of iNet is really powerful because it gives you the international perspective", and it is also modelled on Hargreaves' nine gateways, so gives Netta a global perspective on other users of this model.

I guess from all of those things, it's like a networks operator, so you're not working in isolation; you can do a lot of damage by going off on a tangent and I've never been a silver bullet person, you know, I don't like to just grab something, and 'That's where we're going troops'; it's got to work in our context and culture. But I'm also mindful now that I'm the sort of person who likes to chuck a ball up in the air and say, 'I wonder where this is going to bounce', and that's not always good for staff; it's fun but not necessarily the easiest way to run the school.

As a leader, Netta has learnt to curb some of her excitement around moving to the 'next step', being more mindful of the space her staff is in.

I do tend to be more of a big picture thinker and know where I want to go, [so I] have to remember that not everybody sees the big picture, a lot of people have their heads down just getting through the next day of their classes.

She says she has learnt to be more careful about working with teachers who are often:

... more interested in the here and now – which is fair enough.

...but I hate to lose that passion for thinking, 'well we could take this somewhere'; I wouldn't like to lose that. I think I'd rather not be a principal than to lose that... I personally think if the new curriculum hadn't come along when it did I quite possibly would have bowed out of being a principal because it just didn't feel like enough scope to move in the system.

She admits that for many principals, leading the curriculum change, with the associated paradigm shifts, "It's massive, and it is really scary." An example Netta gives is when Post Primary Teachers Association [PPTA] industrial issues arise because of new ways of working, which makes leading change even more difficult. "We have to face that challenge as well."

A key to her successful leadership, for Netta, had been her development of a school charter that “lives for us.” This document she explains, is very much the centre of everything the school stands for, and all new understandings and next steps emerge from this.

We call ourselves a ‘charter-driven’ school, and if something new meets or is along the same lines as our charter we will consider it seriously...

It’s painted the big picture of where we’re heading as a school, and it means that everything has to be brought back to that charter. Bringing coherence out of complexity is hugely critical; people need to see how the jigsaw fits together and that there is a coherent picture. We don’t want to become like a ‘Christmas tree’ school, but want people to know there is a coherent game plan... sure, I don’t necessarily know where the school will end up five years from now, but there is a coherent strategy we’re following.

By presenting the charter in graphic form, and using lay terms in its wording, it is owned by the students and the community. She works to make “the vision and the mission very, very clear with our students, they all know it... every prize giving is around the charter [for example].”

Strategies

Netta’s key strategy for leadership of a futures-focused school is the development of a robust charter document, which clearly states the values and aspirations of her school community for its young people. “As we let our understanding of our own charter evolve, we can contribute new meanings and understandings as we learn and grow ourselves as a school community.” It is this document that allows her to be mindful of the past and the present, while having an eye to the future. “We have stated that this is our mission, to prepare our young people for their futures”, and this is our motivation. Within this context, Netta employs a range of strategies for leading futures-focused conversations in her school:

- use student-friendly language and images when communicating big ideas with the school community – work in visuals and graphics;
- be strategic in sharing new ideas with staff – “it’s not good enough to have a great idea, or an idea about where this should go... it’s about how I can get staff thinking about it too;”
- be explicit in leading thinking about the future with teachers, students and parents – get them thinking about the kind of future they want, and how to attain it;
- give people time to think and reflect on big ideas, let the “conversations go around and around, building understanding, and referring back to the charter... our mission to prepare young people for their future;”
- take the best of the past, and the things you are doing now, to build on directions for the future – plan backwards from a preferred future;
- focus on the learner, not the subject; recruit educators, not only specialists;
- make connections – between learning areas; between home and school; between school and the workplace;
- tell people what you’re thinking, and why;
- use a model to guide educational transformation, such as Hargreaves’ nine gateways, and keep each gateway moving forward in steady steps – do not focus on one gateway at the expense of another.

Conclusion

As a principal who dots her conversations with references to “having fun” in her role, and relating funny stories from conversations she has enjoyed, Netta is an inspiration. She is able to keep the big picture in mind, and keep up with reading and reflecting, while also implementing respectful and transformational changes in her school, and at the same time managing all of the day-to-day demands of a principal. Far from feeling daunted by the challenges of implementing the revised curriculum, and leading the subsequent paradigm shifts for her teachers, students and community, Netta has been re-energised by what the curriculum promises for the young people of New Zealand. How does she manage? “You don’t think about it, you just live it.”

MATT

Introduction

Matt has come to his principal role from a varied background in education, including a brief teaching career, management of a small tertiary institution, teaching at a university, and time with the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office (ERO).

His current school is unique in its large size, diverse clientele and the scope of education it provides (early childhood to adult education). There have been challenges in prior leadership, resulting in several attempts at restructuring and re-focusing. On arriving at the school in 2006, Matt was faced with a critical failure rate in his students' NCEA results, and quickly ascertained the degree of change that was required. With a staunch belief in placing the student at the centre of any solution, Matt's changes have been swift, sharp and powerful. Facing strong resistance – even receiving hate mail – Matt remained convinced that the status quo that was failing the students so badly was worth fighting to change.

It is apparent in conversing with Matt that he is a futures-focused, visionary principal who is prepared to work independently and to embrace innovation in order to see his vision realised. He believes strongly in social justice, and since many of his students are those who are otherwise failed by mainstream education, he is not afraid to do what it takes to give them a voice and a successful start in life. He feels a sense of urgency around the need to implement twenty-first century solutions in his school, and acts fast on new initiatives. Our interview takes place in a board room at the school, where three of the walls are of glass; one of the first steps he took in the school was to remove walls and barriers within the organisation. He does not have an office, instead working from a desk on an administration floor in the school - further testimony to his commitment to modelling the kind of school in which he believes.

Matt is a strong oral communicator, preferring not to write, or even engage, with technology if he can avoid it. Instead he values conversations, and the power of the spoken word. His children are speakers of te reo Maori, and he has built

connections with Maori communities and education providers in order to strengthen his own students' learning experiences. Networks within his own organisation and beyond are very important to Matt; further examples of his preference to discuss issues facing education and young people than to read or write about them.

Futures focus

Matt describes his students as including many who are troubled or in trouble, often dropping in and out of school, and who, for many reasons, were “just falling by the way”, yet the structure of his school was a very traditional one, as if the students were actually regular, achieving young people whose failure was anyone's fault but the school's. “The way the place was organised... the maths teachers all sitting together, beavering away marking maths books, and the English teacher didn't have any clue what the social science teacher was doing for this particular individual.” Matt quickly realised that the problem was that the different needs of each student were not being met by a homogenised approach to teaching. His solution was to break down the standard ways of working within subject silos, and physically represent a change in practice by restructuring the teachers' workspaces:

What we've done is broken down all the subject departments, we don't have any departments at all, not even faculties. Every teacher sits in a team of cross-curricular, collaborative groupings, focusing on students in a particular [context]. Each teacher has a 'learning group'... they might have 10 or 15 students for whom they are a 'learning advisor', so they talk to other teachers about what progress they're making. It's very much about putting the student first. The difference is in the conversations and it's the focus on the kids.

The model is similar to that of the 'networked camping ground' in *Disciplining and Drafting* (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008) – “We've had Jane here to talk to the staff a couple of times” - but Matt says the implementation of it at his school at this stage is “far from good at the moment.” He is setting up the new structure incrementally, with one new team put in place at a time. The middle school (a

Years 7-to-10 team) is using an integrated learning approach more successfully than the senior school at present. “One of the things I get accused of ... is trying to make everyone a primary teacher, or undermining secondary specialisation.”

Teacher leadership is no longer based on hierarchies within subjects, but on integrating key initiatives. One such role is that of an e-learning manager, who oversees the development and support of e-learning facilitators across the whole school, placing a facilitator in each team, “in the first instance making sure people are familiar with the technology, and then looking more at the pedagogy of e-learning.” Other teacher leadership roles include “an ‘integrated teaching’ leader, a special education curriculum leader and we also have a senior advisor for Maori education.”

Matt sees *The New Zealand Curriculum* as a potential vehicle for changes such as those he envisions. “I think it’s a really permissive curriculum and you can do virtually what you like there... but it’s still organised around discrete subjects”, and this is one of Matt’s concerns: that the curriculum has to be made relevant and engaging, not simply more of the same. The conflict between the scope for learning inherent in the curriculum and the drive for qualifications frustrates him:

The trouble is that we are in a world of credentialisation, and that’s how employers judge people... [although] we’ve got a far better system than we did that used to fail half the kids... [they] haven’t got a hell of a lot of opportunities without qualifications.

Matt’s frustration is shared in a story of boy he has on work experience with the symphony orchestra, whose job is to be the page turner for the violinist. He will not achieve NCEA credits for this task, but “if you’re looking at the key competencies and interpreting texts he’s way up there, but he’s not getting any qualifications for that.”

The past focus of the teachers has been on preparing students for NCEA, despite the overwhelming lack of achievement at this. “There are all sorts of debates about how this [integrated learning model] is not going to set them up for NCEA

Level 1.” Matt is determined to shift this focus, away from assessment to “how we can get [our senior students] better engaged and motivated... and we’ve still got a lot of thinking to do.” Matt describes, and then shows me, a cross-curricular project one girl did on bridges, where she was allowed to explore all sorts of scientific, mathematical and language concepts around the context of bridges: “She’s totally excited about it and she’ll never look at a bridge the same again.” This is the kind of engagement and motivation he is seeking for every learner. Another cohort of students is working entirely online, working on their own inquiry learning tasks and forming their own network for peer feedback and feed-forward on their findings and processes. The skills of effective questioning, researching and presenting are taught by a facilitator based at the school.

Matt has made structural changes to the administration and corporate side of the school as well, and has implemented creative solutions for communication and meeting among the wider staff. The most significant element of this change, for Matt, is that no matter what your role in the organisation, your core business is about improving student learning. Matt gives an example of a sector of school administration that “couldn’t see how it was helping teachers... it was just administration and couldn’t see how [what they did] was really helpful for learning.” By relocating elements of administration, and bringing subject managers into the leadership of the school, he finds there is a much greater sense of shared purpose, and therefore care and concern for the job.

Another future-focused element to Matt’s leadership is to look at the needs of his Generation Y staff, and how he can retain his most innovative teachers. One example was to encourage a group that proposed to set up their own business in developing, at an international level, an electronic content management system through which teachers can share and access resources. “They were going to leave if I didn’t let them do that, so they work .5 for us and .5 within their own business. We’re so lucky to have clever people like that in the organisation.”

Matt believes that a major contributor to his students’ disengagement is their actual relationship with the school and its place in the community – or not, as the case may be. Matt’s tenet is that the school is not the students’ community; the

community is. “Kids are part of another community, not this one: this is not their community.” To this end, he lists several examples of how he is taking learning to the students, rather than expecting them to come to the learning – and then being punished for their refusal or inability to do so. He has learning facilitators working off site in an office in [another part of] the city. “The next stage is to have teachers that are even more located with the kids.” He also has strong relationships with various Maori educational providers, and those working with disaffected youth in other parts of the country, and contributes teachers and resources to support these programmes. This is all part of Matt’s belief in the tenet of ‘community connectedness’, and goes so far as to build connections for the parents of struggling youth: “now we are able to communicate with them and they can ring each other up and form their own support group.” He has employed the help of community businesses, such as a popular radio station, to promote learning and to get students together in creative ways that do not involve physically being in school, until they are ready to re-engage. He has staff working in the field who have “a hell of a social conscience”, and he appears to be in awe of what they are able to achieve for these young people.

Motivations

Of his own education, Matt says;

I loathed school, I sat in a classroom every day and thought, ‘how much more time?’ and looked at my watch and only five minutes had gone past. I think most kids do that, and the higher up the school the more boredom there is. I didn’t really start enjoying learning until I went to university and I’m just so lucky that I managed to scrape through School Certificate or else I wouldn’t be sitting here. Then I’ve done the most interesting and creative learning because I didn’t get it at school, I’ve had to go and pay enormous amounts of money for it.

This has been a contributing factor in the determination Matt has had throughout his career to make learning engaging for students, and to challenge school management and teachers to make sure it happens. He says he was disillusioned

by his own teaching career - "I wasn't a teacher for very long". He describes his experience:

I was always concerned that what I was teaching, it didn't matter if the kids knew it or not! I used to teach science and I can remember thinking, 'Who cares about the periodic table?' I mean, if you're going to be a chemist well then you're going to need to know the periodic table but at this particular moment, it's just rubbish to most of these kids - I couldn't get passionate about it and make them learn it. I started off doing it and then realised that this is probably not going to impact on anybody's life. I taught maths as well and I thought, 'Calculus, I'll never use calculus in my life'.

He was concerned that the emphasis was on the one or two students in the class who might indeed need to know the periodic table or calculus for their future jobs, while for the rest –including the teacher - it was irrelevant. He is far more positive about the kinds of dispositions students will gain from a focus on the key competencies than on the content-driven focus of before. At his school he caters for adults who need a specific pre-requisite qualification for university or a job, and who can gain this in a matter of weeks or months, rather than needing to complete a full year in a classroom, "just in case."

Another motivation is the educational experience of his own children. Matt explains, "I've got four children, none of whom actually achieved at school." One daughter, who left school without University Entrance, used her confidence and communication skills to secure a good job, and was encouraged by her employer and mentor to "get some qualifications." She went on to complete a degree with a double major, "but nothing at school grabbed her."

Matt appears to be driven by the responsibility and moral purpose of the education sector to serve the children of New Zealand. At his current school he was devastated by the attitude of some teachers that "these kids have got no hope – because they have." This same responsibility served him in his other leadership roles, and while with the Education Review Office [ERO]:

The change and mind shift is that, as a responsible citizen and a recipient of tax payer funds, you have to do the very best thing you can for this child. That was what drove me at ERO too, and the Ministry. The child is the heart of the matter, and while sometimes adults were getting bruised all we were thinking about was, is this child getting a rightful deal? I'm sick and tired of people saying 'it's the parent's problem'; well ok, but it's not the child's problem though. Why should the child have a problem because the parents have got one? So we have to do everything we possibly can.

Changes

Matt's changes to his school's structures, systems and very purpose have been swift and sometimes brutal, but while he is cognisant of many ways he might have done things differently, he is unapologetic in the need for change and in the need to achieve his vision. "People are going on about change, I mean every school is going through change and there's a change every year. This place actually wasn't changing." He says that while the management and administration aspects would change – "people might move their desks around every now and then" – the content and delivery of the curriculum wasn't changing at all – "some of the resource material was so outdated that copyrights had run out!" He said:

We had to fundamentally move people to a different stage in their thinking. I see it as about 30/30: we've got the 30 percent who are totally on board and the 30 percent who don't get it but probably would come on board if they could get it, and the 30 percent who just don't want it and they think they can just not do it; they don't believe it's do-able. That was my estimation, but we had ERO in here two weeks ago and I said that to them too, and they interviewed 40 teachers while they were here and they came back and said that I was too pessimistic, there were more people who were on board than what I was estimating.

The most symbolic representation of changes to come was in the redesign and restructure of teaching and administration spaces in the school buildings. In

forming the integrated-learning teams of teachers, Matt had the teachers all move in to newly designed work spaces together. This involved a massive upheaval of the ways in which people had worked at the school for a very long time, and of the spaces in which they had worked. The first team to move was one that volunteered to do so, and he found that “most of them really love it”, and that concerns raised were mainly technical things, that he could move swiftly to improve. His intention was to manage it incrementally, but the colourful, light and airy work spaces, with modern furniture and plenty of storage space and technology were very popular, and Matt says “we weren’t going to move the last [team] until the end of the year, but it’s been so successful that we are going to move everyone by the end of the term.”

In listening to Matt it appears that he is a leader who ‘walks the talk’ when it comes to change:

The first thing I did here was model change myself, so we remodelled where the senior leadership team went. There were [originally] three big offices with waiting rooms. It was so bureaucratic, and after I was here a month I got the builders in and knocked all the walls down. The leadership team wanted it like that too. It was a mess, a total mess! I knocked all the walls out so there’s nobody in an office. You’ve got little break-out rooms [for interviews, for example].

Basing his motivations for change on sound data has been an important step, but identifying the data was a challenge in itself. “Lots and lots of assessment is going on and some of it’s good and some is not so good. There’s no consistency, there’s no way of getting a snapshot of what’s going on across the school.” He is working on models for building valid data about student achievements, such as e-asttle. Matt also uses surveys, such as one developed by NZCER to measure student engagement in learning, and uses the findings to set targets and goals.

He also uses the ‘appreciative enquiry’ model for exploring change in his organisation. “It’s focusing on the ‘glass half full’...[it comes from] the theory of constructivism, that you construct your view of the future by your experiences of

the past.” He learnt this at ERO: “If you are anticipating badness, you find badness. If you’re anticipating goodness you seem to ignore that badness and just focus on the goodness.” He took his staff through the appreciative enquiry process, and found the experience of bringing cross-curricular and cross-school groups together a very powerful one. The staff’s findings were that;

When you’re working with people in different areas of the school it’s really exciting, and that when we’re connected with families better and we’re focusing on putting the students first, that’s when we feel really good.

The momentum through the first few phases of the appreciative model was positive, and Matt reports feeling that people were enjoying the new conversations and positive atmosphere. But it was when he took these findings (such as those above), and used them as the basis to announce change that the resistance began. “People thought it was [terrible] that we’d used a positive process to create a negative outcome.” Some of the reactions to the changes have been vicious, and there has been a lot of unrest as a result. “Someone put an [offensive] sign on my window, and not only was that offensive to the leadership team, but to Jews.” In another instance, teachers decided to wear black to a meeting, to protest the changes, which was countered by another group who selected bright colours to signal their support. “One woman had arrived at school in black trousers but she was so angry she went and found something [colourful] in lost property so she could demonstrate support.” He realises that this resistance to change often comes because, “teachers are absolutely passionate about their subject, and that’s all they want to focus on”, but he does not accept that this teacher-centred approach is necessarily the best for the students.

Matt does not only experience resistance to change within his school. He’s says for parents, “if you’re not doing things how they remember it at school then it’s not ‘good school’”, and finds those who do take an interest in their children’s education are very quick “to tell us we’re not doing a good job – they think that because they went to school they are qualified to tell us how it’s meant to be done.”

Technology can be another barrier to change, Matt has found. While he has a team of people working hard to implement technology into the teaching and learning at the school, he says it is not always accessible for children beyond the school. He has established relationship with local libraries, where students can go to use computers for learning and communicating with their teachers.

In the face of this challenge to his changes, Mike has had to remain resilient. Again, his experience at the ERO has given him invaluable knowledge and skills. “If you give somebody not a good review it’s pretty personal. We had to deliver some pretty hard messages to the West Coast about education down there and that was a bit terrifying.” Matt recounted a dream he had at the time of announcing some major changes at the school, in which he was a terrorist who detonated an atomic bomb in New Zealand. “I woke up in an absolute sweat thinking, ‘what have I done?’ And I suddenly realised it was the day I was announcing the big moves, and that must be the atomic bomb.” Of the hard times he went through at his current school Matt says:

You start to self doubt, you think, ‘am I right... are we going the right way?’ Now I’m more and more convinced that we are. We announced yesterday the rest of the organisation [changes] and there’s been very little criticism. In fact this morning I bumped into some teachers and they said, ‘it’s so exciting!’

Leadership

As a leader Matt has developed an acute self-awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses, and considers it important for those around him to be aware of these. He uses personality profiles in his leadership teams, as part of a leadership development programme he is using with his managers, team leaders and administrative leaders:

It’s about understanding your personality profile and how the rest of your team works, and how you can work together in a more collaborative way, asking positive questions, how to coach people in a positive way.

He describes his 'innovation profile' as "off the radar", and that people who know him "would never come with detail stuff, they have to come to me with the idea, and then come back with the details. But I'd probably just glance over the details because I get bored very quickly." He says his strengths are in ideas and strategy, and facilitating and presenting, not in operational administration. "Usually the chief executive is quite balanced – most chief executives would look like that. I don't." In another profile he has identified that, "I have no concern about being included... there's some people who think if you don't include them you are actually excluding them. It drives me nuts." His team has mixed feelings about the use of these tools, but says it helps them all to work to their strengths, and Matt is comfortable about handing over the tasks he is not passionate about or in which he is less competent.

Matt admits that one area of weakness is around use of technology – "I'm actually a Philistine when it comes to technology" – with his skills limited to "not much more than emails." He believes the important thing for a leader is to know where you want to go, not to necessarily have all the technical skills to get there yourself – "I wish I did sometimes, it would make it a lot more meaningful for me" – so he surrounds himself with staff who do have the passion and expertise in technology to improve student learning experiences. He is quick to cite examples of the innovative work some of his teachers are doing in maximising the potential for technology to engage students, clearly finding this culture of innovation and excitement inspiring himself. He says that when he or other teachers return from a conference full of exciting new ideas, he is very likely to say, "let's do it... and everyone gets pretty nervous then. I've been banned from going to conferences!"

Matt has the support of a strong Board, and a leadership team that he has formed himself. The school's leadership has also been "completely restructured – one person from the previous team is still here." His leadership team has a vast educational background, including a psychologist who comes from prison education, several who have worked at ERO, a sector leader, a corporate manager from a child welfare agency, and some of the best teachers he could recruit from

other schools. “We’ve got amazing people.” Membership of the Board reads like an equally interesting, varied and experienced group of people.

Matt’s strategy is to build strong connections with all stakeholders in education, and with diverse community representation. His leadership team is spread around key networks:

Our guy in charge of information resources in on the national reference group for capability, and then we’ve got someone else who’s on the national body for e-learning. [Leader] is on the readers’ forum for NCEA, so we’re wired into these things now.

In terms of his own networks, Matt struggles to find other schools with the unique qualities that his has, and has found some organisations in Australia and England that are vaguely similar. However, within his own community he has sat on several boards and is a chief advisor in several contexts. He works closely with Secondary Futures and contributes to on-going discussions about the future of education in New Zealand.

Strategies

Matt’s wealth of experience has led to a wide repertoire of strategies for leading futures focused change in his school. He is quick to express his regret at the pain these essential changes have inevitably brought, and makes it clear that it never gets easier to implement change that will hurt some people. He admits to making mistakes along the way of the process, but has no regrets in the improvements he is already seeing for the children’s learning. Some of his strategies for leading a school for the future include:

- Building a good evidence base, including both quantitative and qualitative data to describe ‘how are we doing’;
- Nurturing your leadership team: “we’ve got some tensions going on because we haven’t spent time on ourselves” – hold regular retreats, so everyone is on the “same page”;

- Recruiting people from a range of backgrounds and experiences who will complement each others' strengths and weaknesses – and finding out what these are (for example, Matt uses the FIRO-B tool for personality testing);
- Working to your strengths;
- Using models for implementing the change process, such as the appreciative enquiry model;
- Knowing what is going on in the community beyond mainstream education – Matt has built relationships with providers of a range of different educational experiences, and this has helped shape the ways he does things at his own school;
- Thinking innovatively about how you can retain and develop the best staff – understanding 'Gen Y teachers';
- Breaking down physical barriers to communication and innovation – no walls, no hierarchies.

Conclusion

Matt's manner of certainty, confidence and conviction in his vision is formidable. He remains entirely child-centred in his explanations and reasons for change, and is unwavering, even in the face of some vicious opposition, in his belief that education of the future must do better than it is now, in serving every child. How he goes about realising this vision is courageous, and draws on enormous reserves of inner strength and self belief:

I think that when you have the fundamental confidence you are a reasonably intelligent person [you start to believe in yourself]. It took me a long time in my life to believe that I was intelligent and no matter what people told me I didn't believe that I was intelligent. I believe I'm intelligent now.

Summary

Despite coming from different backgrounds, educational philosophies and experiences, each of the principals in this study was able to describe their commitment towards a futures-focus in their leadership. There was a range of

theories permeating their practice, and many examples of practical tools and strategies for implementing futures thinking among their teachers, students and communities.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overview

In Chapter Four I presented the findings from the four interviews under six common concepts that emerged from the line of questioning in these interviews. In this chapter I discuss the extent to which there is congruence between the micro level (individual principals' experiences of futures-focused leadership) and the macro level of leadership, futures and educational theory. I do this under five themes which shape my conclusions around leadership of futures-focused thinking in secondary schools. These themes emerged from analysis of the data I gathered from the interviews, and from the literature on national and international considerations of futures focused education. The themes include the motivations for thinking about the future that were identified by the principals; the challenges that are specific to leading futures-focused thinking and action; and the strategies that they have found helpful. The themes are:

1. That futures-focused leaders use the *New Zealand Curriculum* as a current driving force;
2. That futures-focused leaders seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures;
3. That futures-focused leaders regard leading change as a challenge;
4. That futures-focused leaders find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice; and
5. That futures-focused leaders employ models for future thinking.

1. That futures-focused leaders use the *New Zealand Curriculum* as a current driving force.

For the principals I interviewed, the *New Zealand Curriculum* and its mandate for leading learning, curriculum design and assessment for twenty-first century learners is a current driving force. In her foreword to the curriculum document, Secretary of Education Karen Sewell describes it as, “a framework designed to ensure that all young New Zealanders are equipped with the knowledge, competencies, and values they will need to be successful citizens in the twenty-

first century” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4). Secondary Futures goes further in defining the shifts in thinking that are required by this curriculum:

The shifts in thinking include moving from tolerance of failure to a determination that all will succeed; from loyalty to institutions to loyalty to learners; from a system designed for knowledge transfer to one designed to enable learning capability and excitement; from a standardised system to one capable of customising to the needs and preferences of individuals, families and communities; from fragmented, silo-based learning to coherent, community based learning; from compulsion to engagement (Pride & Meek, 2009, p. 11).

This statement, therefore, signals an apparent changing direction in defining the purpose of schooling in this country.

Mark Treadwell claims that “education is in the throes of the greatest paradigm shift ever experienced... [and] how we view education and its role in the community is set to dramatically change within a very short time frame” (Treadwell, 2008, p. 3). He is describing the paradigm shift inherent in the *New Zealand Curriculum*, and its required implementation in New Zealand schools by 2010. Jane Gilbert (2005) describes this paradigm shift in terms of a transformation from the ‘industrial age’ of society and education, to the ‘knowledge age’. In the knowledge age, what knowledge is, how it develops, how it is used and who owns it all look different. While most educational changes involve adding more new things and making slight changes to the existing system, actually transforming the system for the twenty-first century requires a shift in underlying thinking (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008). The *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (2008) model presents a vision for twenty-first century principalship as one “shaped by the rapid change and growth of the world we live in. As society, knowledge and technologies grow and change, so do our students’ learning needs and the way learning is delivered” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 8). The Education Review Office (ERO) has been reviewing schools on their readiness to implement the curriculum by 2010, and has published their first summary of findings from reviews conducted in terms three and four of 2008. In this paper it

has summarised four factors that it believes underline the good progress made by “schools whose preparations are well advanced” (ERO, 2009, p. 4). In these schools, ERO contends:

- the transition process is being well led and communicated;
- all those involved share a common understanding of what the curriculum means in the context of their school;
- there is a planned approach to implementation; and
- good use is made of external development and training and the Ministry of Education implementation materials (ERO, 2009, p. 4).

Of the 43 secondary schools reviewed in this time period, ERO believes that 46% were meeting this standard of ‘good progress.’

The above are some of the driving forces behind the implementation of the revised curriculum that are causing the principals I interviewed to be facing some of the biggest challenges of their careers. Indeed, each of the principals in this study considered the curriculum to have the biggest impact on their futures-focused leadership, with its mandate for transformational change to the way learning looks in New Zealand. They consider this to be an exciting time to be a leader both within schools and their communities. Netta describes the curriculum as “an amazing opportunity to shift thinking” and Matt as “a real permissive curriculum – you can do virtually what you like.” Marion describes the early discussions in her school around the curriculum revision, from its consultation stage in 2002, as “probably some of the most exciting [times] of my career”, and Jo is embracing these discussions now with students, staff and parents: “It was great... they give you such great ideas.” Along with the excitement, the principals reported in the interviews that they are facing some challenges in leading the implementation of the curriculum. Common among these appear to be challenges regarding:

- a) Urgency
- b) Leading learning
- c) Embracing the changes
- d) Many voices: students, teachers, communities
- e) Seeking critical mass and system-level change

a) Urgency

The principals in this study see the paradigm shift as urgent, and they are not alone among international educators. The work of the OECD, in its *Schooling for Tomorrow* (2001) project, implores leaders to begin “thinking [about the future] clearly and rigorously” (OECD, cited in Roberts & Gardiner, 2005, p. 13), and in a 2006 international school leaders’ forum, principals identified a moral purpose to urgently implement a futures-focused mind-set around education (Hopkins & Zhao, 2008). Jo describes the required changes for the curriculum as ‘a chasm to be leapt.’ “Often you can introduce initiatives slowly... but this curriculum is here next year and it has to be delivered! How many teachers are ready for that?” However, while the implementation date for the curriculum may seem to be coming quickly, it has been in consultation and development for a long time, and schools have had the opportunity to “grapple with” ideas around key competencies, crossing subject boundaries, identifying the individual school’s learning contexts and values, and how this all might look different in a classroom, since the draft curriculum was distributed in 2006. This is a point ERO is at pains to reiterate in its initial review of schools’ readiness to implement the curriculum, in statements such as, “in response [to the 2006 draft consultation], the Ministry of Education received more than 10,000 submissions that were analysed and considered during development of the final document” (ERO, 2009, p.6).

b) Leading learning

There is both excitement and urgency around the possibilities of the curriculum experienced by the principals in this study, as they strive to lead, in their own ways, the learning in their schools. The principals all rely on distributed leadership to be able to manage the many elements of school leadership. Jo and Matt, for example, have each established innovation groups, sometimes including both students and teachers, in order to explore elements of school culture and curriculum development. Jo says, “I want them to have the licence and the trust from me that I’m empowering them to go with it”, and Matt creates leadership positions for his inter-curricular innovators who emerge from these groups. Marion’s style as a school leader was to place herself as a member of a ‘team’, preferring democratic leadership models, and “building practices of collaboration” around most aspects of school life.

However, despite being willing to share leadership of learning, each of the principals in this study holds on to clearly articulated theories and understandings about learning, and what is important in terms of leading towards preferred futures. Jo, who has kept leadership of professional development in her own portfolio, believes that “to develop our future thinkers in New Zealand we need to get our teachers equipped and skilled to be able to deliver at the level that they need to”. For Marion, building a capacity for futures thinking in her school was predicated by “building an environment where risk taking is a part of the way things are done, and it’s accepted”. Netta describes the role of her school and her teachers as being “to prepare our young people for the future”, taking every opportunity to share her thoughts about the future with her students and community. Each principal is attempting to lead learning in a way that is consistent with Netta’s point:

It’s the concepts that the kids will need to build on, not the content... [so we’re] putting a lot of focus on what sort of teaching, what sort of pedagogy is now needed so that we’re actually encouraging our kids to think, not just regurgitate.

They each seem to keep themselves closely involved with what is going on in classrooms, the staffroom, and the community, maintaining a realistic connection between the vision and the reality. Jo describes this as “being hands-on,” and Secondary Futures define this as a form of ‘integrity’, where ‘walking the talk’ is part of every aspect of a project:

Principles of equity and empowerment need to be designed into the heart of the processes used, and featured at every level. They cannot be relegated as ‘good intentions’ often promised at the outset then overtaken by busy-ness (Pride & Meek, 2009, p. 6).

In each case, this has involved restructuring how management and teaching is organised, in keeping with Bolstad and Gilbert’s (2008) scenarios for future curriculum design, where “21st century learners do more than reproduce

knowledge – they interact with it” (p. 38). This tenet is physically manifested by Matt, whose move to replace walls and bureaucratic school structures with glass and transparent practices sees him interacting with all members of his school community on a daily basis. Netta focused on increasing the leadership profile of her middle managers, redefining them as ‘curriculum leaders’, and reporting that they became more receptive to discussing new theories in education, and trialling these in practical contexts.

It is through the modelling of such futures-focused practices, perhaps, that the principals in this study are able to lead the learning in their schools towards the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum*.

c) Embracing the changes

The willingness to embrace changing ways of looking at education and learning could be described as inherent traits of these principals. In Caldwell’s (2006) study of ‘exhilarating leadership’, he worked with people who contradict trends in school leadership. He says:

An increasing number of [principals/head teachers] are falling by the wayside, and stress, work intensification and complexity are at an all-time high. Yet there are many school leaders for whom these trends do not apply: they find the work exhilarating (Caldwell, 2006, p. 7).

The journeys of the principals in this study towards – and within – school leadership are each filled with the characteristics of innovation and forward thinking. Marion, for example, was involved in the implementation of NCEA, and has more recently revolved her career around the educational implementation of ICT tools in the improvement of student learning experiences and outcomes. She describes her tendency towards change as being “someone who needs the stimulation of doing things differently... looking back on my career probably every five years I ended up doing something completely different”. Jo believes that her natural tendency to teach using the personalised approach of the curriculum and its key competencies comes from her background in a practical subject, but recognises that this is not the case for many teachers. “So many

teachers just want a prescription – ‘here it is, just deliver it’. That’s just not how it works anymore.” Netta is inspired by the move “to a learner perspective rather than a subject perspective”, as she identifies herself as a life-long learner whose ideas “constantly evolve”. She is building a culture where “we are all learning... the Board is learning... we are not fixed, but on a learning journey”. In fact, she goes so far as to say that, with her passion for learning and thinking about the big picture, “if the new curriculum hadn’t come along when it did I quite possibly would have bowed out of being a principal because there just wasn’t enough scope to move in the system”. Matt is driven by a long career in education where, for him, “the child is at the heart of the matter”, and there are some difficult conversations to be had with people whose thinking may differ. “The changing mind shift is as a responsible citizen and a recipient of tax payer funds you have to do the very best thing you can for this child... that’s what drives me”, says Matt. He explains that this conviction comes from his own experiences of school; “I loathed school”, and a life-long determination to make a difference for others.

Perhaps it is this willingness to embrace changes, to find the challenges of leadership “exhilarating” that are the essence of the qualities of these principals. The *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* model identifies four qualities that it claims “underpin principals’ ability to lead their schools” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 22). They are:

- Manaakitanga: leading with moral purpose;
- Pono: having self-belief;
- Ako: being a learner;
- Awhinatanga: guiding and supporting.

It could be contended, therefore, that futures-focused leaders possess these qualities, and that these are exemplified by the principals in this study.

d) Many voices

The principals in this study are working to include as many voices as possible in their curriculum development processes, including student voice, teacher

leadership groups, and community consultation. They see the importance of forming learning partnerships with everyone involved, where partnerships are of equal power and where there is reciprocity of benefits.

Student voice is a factor in the work of each of the principals in this study, as a strong agent for change and exploring potential for the curriculum to work in their own contexts. Andy Hargreaves' (2008) identifies students as partners in change as a key message. He says, "their voices in educational change matter a lot... if schools sustain a broader vision, and express it in their teaching and curriculum, their students will become more interested in, and committed to, changing the world: teach them, and they will change" (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 32). David Hargreaves (2004) identifies 'student voice' as one of his nine 'gateways' to personalised learning, pointing out that students "have largely remained unconsulted about the many changes that [have affected education and society]", and that "it would be meaningless to say we are personalising learning unless we involve them in the process" (p. 10). The emphasis and value placed on student voice by the futures-focused leaders in this study is in keeping with the literature into making futures-thinking a mandatory part of schooling. Jo, for example, uses student voice in her curriculum development groups, as well as in consultation on elements of school culture. She describes her student representatives as being "my motivator to hopefully get the package of future education looking like it should look like". Netta is less formal in her gathering of student voice, but communicates with her students regularly, aiming to "get out every lunch hour and just walk around and just talk to kids... those informal conversations are really powerful".

Despite the caution from commentators such as Slaughter (2004) and Rance (2006) that young people can see the future as a negative, fearful place where they have no control, it seems that these principals are taking steps to build futures literacy and space for their young people to consider creating a "preferred future" (Beare, 1994). Indeed, "young people are deeply interested in these matters and are ready to play a constructive role; and when they are encouraged to do so, the teachers benefit considerably" (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 10). Netta has found that young people themselves can be reluctant to change, and that "they have their

fixed ideas about how school should be”, but that giving them the language and the permission to reflect on a positive future is helping to shift this attitude in her school.

For these principals, leading the learning in their schools also means building professional learning communities, teacher leadership, and plenty of time on shared readings, speakers and dialogue. Hargreaves (2008) identifies “lively learning communities” as a feature of modern professionalism in teaching, stating that “collaborative cultures are strongly associated with student success and improved retention among new teachers” (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 33), and identifying professional learning communities in schools as having:

sharpened collaborative cultures by adding a clear school focus and providing performance data to guide teachers’ joint reflections, discussions and decisions, and to link them to student achievement (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 34).

Jo describes “reshaping the professional learning” in her school, to try to raise the level of thought, dialogue and action among her staff. She says, “Unless they are going to do things differently in their classrooms we’ve got no chance; our kids have got no chance”. Marion enjoyed the process of empowering teachers to lead dialogue, take risks, and challenge her thinking. “People stepped out of their own areas [of speciality] to help solve problems”, such as timetable alternatives or different ways of structuring the school day. Netta describes a teacher only day that was dedicated to a futures workshop, at the end of which she “knew from the feedback that they had taken this on board that the future looks quite different from what they’ve known in the past”. Matt’s frustration is that, despite being a “permissive curriculum” , the new curriculum is still largely “organised around discrete subjects”, and that in attempting to break these down he is “accused of making everyone into a primary school teacher... undermining secondary specialisation”. At the same time as attempting to shift the pedagogy and practice, he is also attempting to shift the systems and structures in his school that reinforced the traditional ways of delivering a curriculum. Each of the leaders is working in keeping with the findings of the *Best Evidence Synthesis on*

Leadership (publication pending, cited in the Education Gazette, 2007), where successful school leaders learn alongside their staff, participating in professional learning with them. However, these leaders are clearly not alone in their dilemmas in leading staff to rethink their approach to curriculum, as Gilbert (NZCER, 2009) is currently researching the capacity for New Zealand teachers to move from the industrial age model of education in which they were trained, to a future-focused education system.

Within their communities, under the requirements of the revised curriculum –“a clear understanding of the ... values and expectations of the community” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 37) - principals must now consult much more widely about curriculum and learning. Implications of this for futures-focused leaders are discussed further below (4: 2: d), but in terms of the curriculum there are some specific challenges. Jo describes her Parent Teacher Association (PTA) as being “totally focused on being a PTA that raises money and gives it out to kids... not interested in the big picture or educational philosophy”. She sees it as her responsibility to lead the shift in focus with this group, but it is another significant expectation for a busy principal. The current changes can be likened to the implementation of NCEA in the late 1990s, and more recently to the integration of ICT into teaching and learning, and school leaders can learn from the challenges faced by those initiatives. There is an awareness that a great deal has changed in education since the parents of today’s young people were at school, and these principals face difficulty in helping their communities to realise this. Netta reiterates this point: “Parents have their own idea of what a good education is”. This is consistent with Hargreaves’ discussion on public engagement, where he asserts that “anxiety without information makes people nostalgic for past certainties, turns them against progress, and leads them to clutch as test scores as substitutes for richer relationships that concern their own children” (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 30). The importance and value of engaging the community in conversations about a futures-focused curriculum is not lost on these principals, and is also reinforced by the vision of the KLP: “When the community engages with the work of the school, the positive spin-offs invariably benefit both teaching and learning” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 14). The

principals I interviewed work hard to find creative ways of achieving this, despite the obstacles they encounter, as outlined below (in 2:d).

e) Seeking a critical mass and system-level change

The principals in this study are concerned that not all school leaders share the urgency and significance of the paradigm shift to be made with the curriculum. Jo is wondering, “How many New Zealand principals are thinking at the high level that this curriculum gives us the freedom to think at?” Netta says, “it’s interesting, some of the school leaders saying ‘oh, it’s not a lot different’, but it is, and for me it is a godsend to say, ‘we’ve got this new curriculum: now what?’” This is consistent with the findings of the initial ERO report into readiness to implement the curriculum. In the 46% of secondary schools reviewed in terms three and four of 2008 deemed to be making good progress in implementing the curriculum,

Committed professional leadership is a key factor in secondary schools that have made good progress. The principal does not necessarily lead the planning and preparation processes but his or her support is visible and active, and there are evident and well-communicated lines of delegation (ERO, 2009, p. 10).

The new ideas for learning that are inherent in the curriculum, as Marion points out, have been promoted and consulted about for quite some time. There are several bodies that have been encouraging the education sector to look to the future: Secondary Futures was established in 2003; the draft *New Zealand Curriculum* was launched in 2006 for consultation; and the Ministry of Education’s *Schooling Strategy 2005 – 2010* is now almost at its end. That there is still cynicism and inertia around exploring the future in education – and in this case, acting to implement an effective twenty-first century curriculum – is a frustration shared by the principals in this study, and reflected in the work of education leaders in New Zealand such as Mason Durie. “Education continues to fail our young people,” Durie states. “In the more sophisticated economy of the future, New Zealand will no longer be able to afford this wasted human potential” (Durie, 2008). That educational leaders in New Zealand are lacking in the

strategies, resources and support to rise to this challenge is addressed through a recommendation in Chapter Five.

2. That future-focused leaders seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures.

In this study I have worked with futures-focused leaders who seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures, in local, national and global contexts. They each are taking time to reflect on the trends and issues facing young people in their future jobs, society, environment, and world. Jo describes bringing together people who “want to think creatively about the future” and asserts that “I couldn’t be a principal if I didn’t have opportunities to think about what learning should look like in the future”. Durie (2006) asserted that exploring the future is restricted by the impression that the world will be basically the same as it is now, or that the future is so unpredictable that there is little point guessing at what it might bring; however, these school leaders are “thinking constructively about the future” (Miller, 2003, p. 7), and how to lead to a preferred future for their young people. Analysis of the four interviews suggests that these principals are doing this through a range of strategies, including:

- a) Networks
- b) Research
- c) Secondary Futures
- d) Community awareness

a) Networks

Each of the principals interviewed is connected with a variety of networks, within and beyond education, throughout New Zealand and overseas, which help to shape their understanding of futures-focused education. Hargreaves’ (2008) ‘Fourth Way’ of educational leadership has as one of its tenets the importance of networking, which is “about building new relationships as much as disseminating or replicating new knowledge” (p. 14). New Zealand’s widely varied school contexts, as identified in the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* document (Ministry of Education, 2008), can make it difficult to identify schools or districts that have enough in common to form a network, a problem further exacerbated by the

competitive education market currently experienced in New Zealand. Hargreaves, however, claims that networks can “bring schools together to pursue a common mission, despite their differences” and that “the point of networks is to spread innovation, stimulate learning, increase professional motivation, and reduce inequities” (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 15). The principals in this study have sought not only like-minded leaders and schools with which to network, but also those that they can help, including other social and education providers who are working to support the young people in their communities, such as local libraries, Maori support groups, polytechnics, primary schools and businesses. “We are getting a much more networked approach” Matt says of the growing connections he is forming, and the shared understandings being developed around the future for these young people.

Marion describes networking of schools as being part of a larger, moral picture. As a principal in a high decile school, she says would ask herself of a new initiative, “Is this good for my school, for other schools in [city], for schools in the country?” But networking also helps these principals at a personal professional level. Marion radiated naturally towards forming her own networks in education, one being a group of women educators with whom she worked in the 1980s, and with whom she maintains a lasting relationship. For Marion, the PPTA is a supportive and powerful network, working to improve conditions for teaching and learning, and she was always a member of her subject association, enjoying the collaboration and sharing that took place there: “I wanted to have input from different people, to know how I could do things better”. Netta and Jo are both members of selected principals’ network groups, which they have each identified as being futures-focused and able to stimulate thought, dialogue and action. Netta is also a member of iNet (International Networking for Educational Transformation) which she describes as “powerful... it gives you an international perspective”, and travelled to a recent iNet conference in England. Jo is also planning to travel, visiting schools in Canada for some new perspectives, and both Marion and Matt have travelled extensively in their careers, forming relationships and networks with other innovative educators around the world.

b) Research

Hargreaves asserts that “teachers and schools learn best not by reading research reports, listening to speeches or attending workshops, but by watching, listening to, and learning from each other. Experience counts: theory doesn’t” (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 36). A challenge for futures-focused leaders in New Zealand is to find samples of theory-in-action, as demanded by Hargreaves. Netta, Jo and Marion are all prolific readers of educational material, and have each begun or completed study towards Masters level education qualifications. Their conversations are peppered with the titles and authors of works they have recently studied, and professional reading is a clear expectation of all of their staff. Matt, like the other principals, likes to have motivational and challenging speakers in to work with his staff, leading to informed conversations and decision making, especially around the future. The recent work of Jane Gilbert is universally the most influential on these futures-focused leaders, as it has helped to shape their thinking and provide a foundation for thinking about the future in their own contexts. *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The knowledge society and the future of education* (Gilbert, 2005) and *Disciplining and Drafting or 21st century learning? Rethinking the senior secondary curriculum for the future* (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008) were both referred to for their relevance to New Zealand practice, and their appropriateness for sharing with staff as professional readings. Netta describes “building on Jane Gilbert’s work, putting a lot of focus in on what sort of pedagogy is needed so we’re actually encouraging our kids to think, not just regurgitate” (p. 2). In several instances, Gilbert has worked in these principals’ schools, and has been an insightful contributor to building a perspective on twenty-first century education. Gilbert is also cited in several foundation documents for the future of New Zealand educational leadership, such as *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*, lending a sense of relevance and congruity to the New Zealand experience. These leaders are also likely to be part of the forefront of those to whom others in New Zealand will look for evidence of theory-into-practice in the future.

c) Secondary Futures

While not all of the principals in this study have worked specifically with the Secondary Futures project, they are all familiar with the research and resources that have come from this organisation. Netta says, “The Secondary Futures work

confirmed what I had been reading from other sources, and made me think, ‘well that’s good to see this theory confirmed in a New Zealand context’”. Jo considers the Secondary Futures group, especially the CEO, to be a great support for what she is trying to achieve, and uses their first theme ‘Students First’ as the focus for her school prospectus. Matt is a regular contributor to forums held by Secondary Futures, lending his experience to describing what the future might look like for education. This is consistent with the findings of the Roberts and Gardiner (2005) report on outcomes of Secondary Futures workshops, where “those who had [already] adopted a futures lens often reinforced and extended their thinking” (p. 36). However, the Robert and Gardiner report also identified a general pattern of workshop participants not following through with their intentions to take action: conversely, the principals in this study have each taken theory and discussion into action around the future, and have also contributed to the wider leadership perspective of preferred futures through education and beyond.

d) Community awareness

In order to take theory, international perspectives, and abstract ideas through into action, the principals in this study have each had to make themselves very aware of the context in which they are working, and understand the needs and aspirations of their communities. For Netta, a key is careers education. She explains that for students to be “individually future focused” they must have a “very clear sense of direction and purpose”. She has invested heavily in careers education, and links with contributing schools as well as local vocational providers and businesses to ensure the whole community is speaking the same language. “We’re constantly talking about our role here as to prepare young people for the future, so we speak the language of a future-focused school”. She is also exploring the potential of ICT to assist with providing the kind of twenty-first century learning she envisions, “so there’s more flexibility, so there’s anywhere, anytime, anyhow kinds of learning”. In keeping with the requirements of the new curriculum – “Schools should explore not only how ICT can supplement traditional ways of teaching but also how it can open up new and different ways of learning” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 34) - Marion and Matt are also committed to exploring and expanding the potential for ICT to meet the twenty-first learning needs and aspirations of their learners, through making learning

engaging, relevant and seamless, despite being very different in their personal skill levels with computers. Young people in their communities are engaging heavily with technology, including computers, and the pedagogy of Web 2.0 is an area that is being heavily invested in by these principals.

It can also be said that a key for each of these principals to looking to the future is to understand and nurture the culture, values and pasts of their schools, which means listening to their wider communities. The *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* describes this as “Culture: what we value around here” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 18), and this is also in keeping with futures proponents who cite the importance of valuing the past in order to make the best of the future (such as Beare, 2001; Durie, 2006; and Friedman, 2006). For Jo, this meant working with her school community to establish a clear ‘respect code’ that can underpin future developments in learning and living at her school; for Netta it is about the foundation of her school charter, which she keeps as a living document, presented in images, that “not only says ‘who we are’, but also gives the direction for ‘where we are going’.” Netta points out that, “What [one of the charter statements] meant four years ago can mean something more now... we are constantly going to evolve”. Matt is approaching the major restructuring of his school design by using an appreciative enquiry model; “it’s focusing on ‘glass half full’... constructing your view of the future by your experiences of the past”. It is in this way that he has learned what his school’s community values and considers it is doing well, and it is from this angle that he can facilitate change that builds on strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses.

3. That future-focused leaders regard leading change as a challenge.

The *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* document states that, “supporting students to explore values, develop competencies and build the knowledge and skills identified in the New Zealand curriculum will require principals to identify areas for change in their schools, consider the focus for this change, and how the change can be stimulated and sustained” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16). This reiterates Fullan’s (2005) claim that, “to lead change in schools, principals need knowledge and insight into the complex processes of change and the key drivers

that make for successful change” (cited in Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16). Therefore, it is not surprising that the major issue facing the principals in this study, as they seek to implement a twenty-first century curriculum in the light of a futures-focused context, is leading change. Marion has a word of advice to principals new to a school, and wanting to implement change:

There are three prongs to find out where the school is really at [staff, students and community]... you can't move into a school and expect to do what you did at your previous school, or saw another principal do. You have to move into a school, sense the culture [of the three prongs] and then identify, where do we need to go from here? I think principals who don't do that do so at their peril.

Each of the principals outlined some of the strategies and consequences they had encountered in trying to change the status quo in their schools, and told the tales of mistakes and triumphs along the way. From the data it appears that new ways of looking at education were generally led by these principals on three fronts:

- a) Teachers
- b) Students
- c) Communities

a) Teachers

Each of the principals has faced leading change with their teachers in different ways. Netta has had the opportunity to work with her staff over a long period of time, building a critical mass of innovative management and teachers, and infusing futures-focused readings and language into her professional conversations, providing a context from which new ideas can emerge. In light of a new reading or model, Netta's staff will ask, “what does this mean for us?” We will then try and grow it from our own model, using that to inform a direction”. In order to introduce a new idea, Netta describes her strategy:

I tend to read something, then I might mull it over for several months, and then an opportunity comes up so you drop it into conversations... talk to people strategically... just gradually infiltrating the ideas... then discussing

[the idea] with the senior leadership team first, then curriculum leaders meeting, then it will be taken to a whole staff meeting, back to departments, back to senior leadership teams. We keep the conversations going around and building the understanding as we go.

As a consequence, Netta feels that she has staff who are much more willing to make changes. “Staff are taking it on board, they know we’re moving to something quite, quite different”. Netta admits she didn’t always get it right – “a mistake I made in the beginning was using staff meetings to bounce ideas off”, which made teachers confused, and worried that every new idea was going to become a *fait accompli*. It was at this point that she created the curriculum leaders group as a forum for innovative thinking, and a buffer for the staff. The implementation of a cycle of thinking, dialogue, and action – similar to that described in the *Secondary Futures* review (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005) – appears to be a successful one in Netta’s school. “Unless staff really understand and come on board it’s not going to make any difference to the learner, so that means giving staff plenty of time to think about things, to understand the future”. As stated in the *Best Evidence Synthesis on Leadership – Schooling* (cited in the NZ Education Gazette, 2007), “the closer leadership gets to the core business of teaching and learning, the more impact leaders have on valued student outcomes” (p. 12). Netta makes it her business to be a leader of learning, and this could be contributing to her change leadership success. Netta identifies some major areas for further development in her school, such as the use of NCEA as an assessment tool to support twenty-first century learning, and the further unpacking of the key competencies.

Both Marion and Netta have sought ways to support their staff in overcoming obstacles to engaging in the kinds of thinking they wanted in their school, and found solutions to ensure the time, resources and technology were in place to achieve this. By eliciting from staff the factors they saw as barriers, and identifying “their worst fears”, Marion felt she was able to “respond to their needs”, and that this was valuable in leading change because “when you’re building the bigger picture, the vision comes from everyone, it doesn’t come from any one person”. Netta says, “We try not to use the word ‘change’ so much as

‘what’s the next step for us?’” All of the principals see themselves very much as a member of the team at their schools, and as learning alongside the staff. The key to effective change is the leadership, says Marion; “leadership that has the good understanding of human nature and will put in the emotional support for people to help them make change”. This is in keeping with the findings of *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*, which state that “a principal’s ability to establish relational trust among all members of the school community contributes to building a collaborative learning culture that can help bring the school community together” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16). Inevitably there are those members of staff who “aren’t going to move at all... there are pathways there for people who are unsuited because they are unprepared to change and need to move on”, and are no longer able to fully serve the young people. Marion’s advice is to work with the PPTA, which has “good guidelines and procedures” for supporting people in this difficult situation.

Matt and Jo have both been through turbulent times of change in their schools, shifting the very values and foundations of their institutions in order to turn around what have been described by some as cultures of failure and negativity. This has been done as new leaders, and in a very quick timeframe, so the repercussions have been significant for them. Both share an unwavering commitment to the right and potential of every young person to experience success in their learning, and neither was willing to take the slower approach, in light of another year of students coming through with poor engagement with, and outcomes from, school. Jo says, “I have such a strong fundamental belief that all kids can get success that drives me to want to make it better”. This is also in keeping with the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals’* conclusions on leading change, where “the greater the challenge of the school context, the greater the need for a deliberate leadership focus on student learning and well-being” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 16). Both Matt and Jo have led change in pedagogy, curriculum design, values statements, school design, academic and non-teaching staff structures, and leadership teams. Where possible they have done this from a place of appreciative enquiry, consultation, a range of evidence, and shared visioning, using staff retreats, visiting speakers, staff forums and professional readings to help shape rationale and direction for change. Matt recalls, “When we

announced the change last year I had hate mail”, and Jo reflects, “It’s amazing how you can get it right for one culture [her previous school] and you can get it so wrong in another culture because of where people sit”. While each principal is quick to admit mistakes they may have made in the change process, both maintain a commitment to, and passion for, educating young people for their futures.

b) Students

Netta reports being surprised at the initial reluctance of her students to change when confronted with a new way of organising their learning:

You would have thought that the students would have been keen to change but in fact they don’t always adjust to change easily... just because they’re young doesn’t mean [they’ll just adapt]. They have their fixed ideas about how school should be!

She says change in school for young people can bring a sense of insecurity, at a time when security is often what they crave in a rapidly changing world. Netta approaches changes with students the same way she does with staff – by explaining alternative concepts, exploring ideas, dropping possible new ideas into conversations and assemblies, and spending lots of time with them in informal settings. She wants student voice to “help create momentum” for change in how their education looks. Jo also engages student voice, and has found some of the best ideas for futures-focused initiatives have come from her ‘futures group’ forum. “They have become my motivator to hopefully get the package of future education looking like it should”, but she has also experienced strong resistance to change from students, who on the whole expect schooling to look like it did for their own parents. They each describe next-step strategies for developing student voice, especially around encouraging students to imagine different ways of learning, and different systems for schooling.

Matt has found that the demands of technology in accessing education today can be a challenge to some students. He has had to work with young people in creative ways to encourage them to use computers to enhance their learning, particularly where this is not a typical expectation in the home. By building a relationship with

local libraries Matt has found safe, comfortable places for his students to access computers.

c) Community

While shifting the thinking of teachers and students may be daunting aspects of a futures-focused principal's change leadership, it is engaging the community in such conversations that could be considered the most challenging. All of the principals in this study expressed their frustration at the limited understanding among the parents of their communities regarding the significance of the twenty-first century 'knowledge economy', the curriculum, and the subsequent need for education to change in order to prepare young people for unknown futures. As Netta says, "parents have their own idea of what a good education is so I guess we have a huge role of communicating with parents about the nature of the world and how it's changing, how education's changing". The principals recognise and value their roles as educational leaders within their communities, and that the responsibility to educate and consult with parents regarding the future of education in their own communities is theirs; but they also need the message to be communicated by other sectors of New Zealand, including local and national government, business and other social organisations. This required support is discussed as a recommendation in Chapter Five. Suffice it to say, the principals I interviewed have employed many strategies for leading change among their parent bodies. The most successful seems to be that of approaching parents from the perspective of trying to do the best for their own children, and to use every opportunity to describe and discuss with parents "a picture of what this future looks like and how rapidly your world is changing", as described by Netta. Assemblies, prize-givings and informal conversations are all opportunities to express the need to explore the future and to change, to "lead people, educate them, on how things are different now to what we may have been through at school".

Each principal has worked to build a culture of community engagement that was not so essential before, but commonly find that parents "who take an interest in their kids' education are very quick to tell us we're not doing a very good job...

because they've all been to school and can all tell you how it's 'meant to be done'". Jo explains,

The expectation of the community does not marry with what good future thinking development we need to be doing with young kids to get them to the level to be able to lead the knowledge economy. Parents aren't in that mindset so it's a real mission to educate the community.

The fact that community disengagement, and parental barriers to understanding the changing world of education, can be played out in the media, undermining the professional and personal character of a principal, means that there remains tension in this aspect of several of the principals' work, and is an area needing attention. Miller and Bentley (2002) question the extent to which schools can "be at the vanguard of societal change" (p. 44), and this is a challenge that is explored further in Chapter Five.

4. That futures-focused leaders find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice.

Initial findings from the *Best Evidence Synthesis on Leadership – Schooling* indicate that 50% of a New Zealand principal's time was spent on administration, and that this was above the international average, so the tension between wanting to look to the future with vision and consultation, and some urgency, while living with the daily pressures of running a school, may be a challenge for these leaders, yet it seems that they do find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice.

Pride and Meek cite the following instance: "I'd like to think about the future but we're too busy doing our strategic planning at the moment so we'll leave thinking about the future until next year" (Pride & Meek, 2009, p. 8). This principal's voice, captured from a Secondary Futures workshop, encapsulates the reality for so many principals who would like to – and indeed, know they ought to – include futures thinking and planning in their school operations, but simply do not have

the time, resources or motivation to do so. The principals in this study, therefore, are examples of leaders who strive to overcome such barriers, and keep futures thinking at the forefront of their work, even within the perspective of more operational activities such as communication, planning, professional development, financial management, resourcing and staffing, and within the context of compliance and Ministry administration.

Matt manages this by surrounding himself with a highly competent leadership team, and distributing leadership to a wide group of curriculum leaders. This enables him to build a critical mass of innovative, creative thinkers – “we’re so lucky to have people like that in the organisation” - who are the decision makers at his school, and who work ‘at the chalk face’ with his teachers, students and community. He uses tools such as psychometric testing in order to analyse the strengths of each member of his leadership team. This has enabled him to build a leadership team that complements his own leadership style, and that can bring some balance to his strength of “innovation and strategy – my strength is not in operational stuff”. To that end, he has restructured his leadership team to include operations managers, leaving him, to a certain extent, free to focus on his core business, which is leading learning, and communicating with his staff, students and community. Matt does not have an office, instead sharing a corner desk on an administration floor, and is therefore a visible presence in the teaching and operations of the school. He describes this as both a practical and “symbolic” move, as he breaks down hierarchies, bureaucracies and non-transparent practices throughout the school, and models what he considers to be a collaborative twenty-first century workplace.

Marion also worked to break down hierarchies, seeing this as counter to her futures-focused work, and considers herself as a member of a team who was open to ideas from everyone. In terms of managing the practicalities of running a school, Marion says one of the biggest issues is around resourcing, but that it is a matter of looking at what you do have, given that New Zealand spends a significant amount on public education, and then thinking creatively about using it. She says, “How you cut the cloth differently is actually the question, not, ‘do we have enough to do this?’” Another perspective on operations, on which

Marion has a futures-focused view, is that of recruiting and appointing staff. She says, “I always thought that appointing staff was the most important job I had, and I would never give that away for other people to do. If you give that role away you’re giving away your strongest ability to make a difference in the school”.

Netta approaches her day-to-day operations from the perspective of the big picture: her charter. This helps her to prioritise, plan, and delegate. By using the charter, which is, as previously described, based on Hargreaves’ (2004) nine ‘gateways’, she is able to ensure each gateway is receiving equitable attention both in strategic planning and day-to-day operations. She describes it as, “it’s like keeping everything moving slowly forward... staff have just got used to the idea that things will always be evolving, not so much changing, just continuing to evolve”. Regarding her passion for reading and research, Netta flies in the face of conventional perspectives of the principal’s workload, saying, “I’ve got more time I guess [than her staff, to read], by being so much more interested in it”, and so she is carefully considerate of how quickly to feed new ideas in to her leadership teams and staff. In this respect, she enjoys debate and discussion with other forums of principals and networks that are committed to this kind of thinking, as a balance to the day-to-day operations of the school.

Jo’s strategy for running the day-to-day operation of her school from a futures perspective is to “backward design” from her vision to what is happening at a daily level, “but then you can spend ages looking at vision and not get down to the nuts and bolts, so it’s about marrying the two together”. Jo uses a range of data and evidence to inform her decisions about what needs to be done ‘today’ in order to move towards the vision, such as assessment results, survey findings, self review, and her own observations and conversations. In the busy school week Jo factors in time for her leadership team, and the entire staff, to undertake professional readings and debate them, as professional up-skilling is a commitment for her. An operational challenge that Jo faces, however, is the willingness of “Generation Y” and “union-driven” staff to commit to the time and thinking it will take to be futures-focused around their pedagogy and curriculum. She describes a culture where “thirty staff drive out of here at 3.30pm every day, and it’s over for them... [these people] will have a lot to answer for in terms of

whether future education is going to prepare our kids to lead the economy and to look after their families, be good citizens”. She is looking at revising the appraisal processes so that builds on expectations of “reflective” professional learning and practices. While the other principals in this study have balanced distributed leadership with frequent day-to-day interactions with teachers and students, Jo found herself in a school culture where the principal appeared to have been removed from the classroom, and has struggled to shift that culture. “They were used to having a principal that was not hands-on at all, the kids never saw them out in the grounds, it was the DPs that fronted the school, whereas I want to be among it!”

5. That futures-focused leaders employ models for future thinking.

The futures-focused leaders in this study move forward on several fronts, employing models for futures thinking, and attempting to nurture all aspects that lead to improved student learning outcomes and experiences.

The use of models to shape vision, strategic planning and futures thinking is a common feature of these principals’ work. Those discussed here are:

- a) The nine gateways
- b) Secondary Futures
- c) The networked camping ground

a) The nine gateways

Published as a series of pamphlets on personalising learning through the Specialist Schools Trust (England) in 2004, the aim of this series was “to show how the teaching profession can take the lead in personalising learning through nine gateways, each of which provides a distinctive angle on personalising learning by ensuring that teaching and support are shaped around student needs” (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 1). Emerging from conversations with 250 school leaders, researcher David Hargreaves concluded that personalised teaching and learning is realised through nine interconnected gateways, which are curriculum, workforce

development, school organisation and design, student voice, mentoring, learning to learn, assessment for learning, new technologies and advice and guidance.

Personalisation, Hargreaves claims, is the concept of “meeting the learning needs of *all* students” (p. 5), and is part of the move towards a society where nineteenth century industrial models of ‘one size fits all’ learning is replaced by a ‘knowledge society’, where “innovation is user-driven, the better to meet [the learners’] needs and aspirations” (p. 5). Rather than focusing the ideal of personalising learning on just one factor, such as reducing class sizes, Hargreaves proposes looking at personalising learning from these nine complementary perspectives. Each of the gateways must be explored, developed and moved forward with equitable emphasis, and this process lends itself to “strong... distributed leadership” (p. 6), so that energy and motivation is sustained. A further important element of the gateways is that of networking between leaders, schools and other agencies, in order to ensure that “best practices are made available to, and usable by, all those who might wish to adopt them. These processes concern development and research, innovation, the dissemination of practice, and the transfer of professional knowledge.” (p. 10)

Netta is a proponent of the nine gateways, and has developed her school charter around these tenets. “Our strategic plan is the nine gateways... and every year it’s just, ‘what is the next step’ in each of the nine areas, [so we are] moving towards a more personalised, purposeful education”. At Netta’s school the gateways are re-labelled in terms that are relevant to her particular location, and they are represented in symbolic images as well as words, so that everyone can recognise and identify with them. Her leadership team is organised around leading elements of the gateways, and strategic thinking is about identifying the next steps for each gateway. Networking, for Netta, is important at local, national and international levels. As someone who is committed to dissemination of practice and the transfer of professional knowledge, Netta is generous of her time and resources in working with her own community, and the education community in New Zealand, to tell her story, albeit in a humble way. Of her journey to this point she says, “I wouldn’t like to undermine [the work of others] that’s gone on in the background... it’s just a whole lot of stuff that’s coming together”. Recently Netta

attended an international conference with iNet, the home of the nine gateways, and worked with a widening network on her vision for futures-focused leadership.

b) Secondary Futures

Each of the principals in this study has been familiar with the work of Secondary Futures, and has to some extent factored their model into their thinking. For Secondary Futures, the five themes of schooling for the future are students first, inspiring teachers, social effects, community connectedness and technology.

Each of the principals in this study appears to be highly student-centred in their motivation and their work. For Jo, the tenet ‘students first’ is the very foundation of her work, and is the theme statement of her school prospectus. However, this was a shift in culture to the extent that her teachers felt threatened: “they know I put the students first and [they think that means] I don’t value them”, so she is seeking to balance a sense of ‘inspiring’ her teachers, at the same time as leading them to understand that student success will come from having inspiring teachers working and learning with them. Jo and Netta both read the work that comes from Secondary Futures, and then ask themselves, “What does this mean for us... how can we use it to inform our direction?” Matt, as someone who has been involved with Secondary Futures dialogue for some time, has clear elements of this model in the areas of focus in his school. In a complete restructure of his school design he too was seeking a focus on ‘students first’, and reflected that having been through this “the difference is in the conversations, and it’s the focus on the kids”. He has actively recruited inspiring teachers from a vast range of backgrounds and experiences, and has invested heavily in technology. His awareness of the social effects on his student cohort is significant, which has led to a strong commitment to building community connectedness. Matt sees a key to his role as connecting young people with all elements of their community in meaningful and productive ways. He has a repertoire of strategies for doing this, especially through building networks with local agencies, social services, businesses and other education providers. Personalising learning, therefore, goes beyond the explicit curriculum, for Matt’s students, and is about making them active citizens who will contribute to the future of their community in a positive way.

c) *The networked camping ground*

Another model being explored by these futures-focused leaders is that of the networked camping ground (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008). The principals in this study, all of whom closely associate with Gilbert's work, are working to explore ways in which this might shape learning in their schools. The essence of this model is that each learner, travelling on the river of mainstream education, may have structured and personalised opportunities to step out of the river and into a camping ground, where their learning is developed through many possible contexts, such as vocational experts, learning in other countries via internet links, work experience, community service, following their passions, and gaining qualifications in cross-domain contexts. Netta explicitly used the book *Disciplining and Drafting or 21st century learning? Rethinking the senior secondary curriculum for the future* (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008) with her staff, as a starting point for exploring developments to the teaching and learning programme at her school. She says, "I liked the 'camping ground' metaphor and did a lot of thinking about that... I got a few people to read the book... and then we came up with a proposal". Marion worked closely with Bolstad and Gilbert towards the end of her time as a principal, building the foundations of what she hoped would be innovative structural and curriculum changes at her school, but she left before seeing this model embedded into the school's practice. Jo is supporting a pilot programme in her school that is consistent with the networked camping ground, with its focus on each child succeeding. The pilot is one where a small group of teachers is collaborating on an integrated programme for a class, and which she hopes will bring achievement for each student in the programme. Matt has built his camping ground around the wider community of his school by engaging local businesses, other education providers, libraries, and social agencies in helping to meet the learning needs and interests of each of his students. An example, recounted by Matt, is of a boy with learning difficulties who is doing work experience with the symphony orchestra, as a page turner for the violinist. Although frustrated that the boy cannot gain NCEA credits for this experience, Matt is convinced that he is gaining valuable key competencies through this 'camping ground' experience. He will be ready to rejoin the 'river' of mainstream education better equipped having had this opportunity.

This model is similar to one of the OECD's *Schooling for Tomorrow* (2001) project's 'scenarios for schooling', described as 're-schooling'. In this model, like the 'networked camping ground', "a range of co-operative arrangements between schools and other agencies, institutions and organisations would be evident" (Caldwell, 2006, p. 12), impacting on leadership structures, resources, the look of the teaching profession, and the role of the community. At a time when each principal in this study is prepared to re-examine and re-structure not only the curriculum and *what* is delivered, but also the systems and *how* it is delivered, the 'networked camping ground' is seen as one that could be a starting point. A key to this model, certainly, is the understanding of the parents and wider community, that learning must look different in the twenty-first century, and, as identified throughout this study, this may be the greatest obstacle to implementing a futures-focused education.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the general themes relating to futures-focused leadership that emerged from analysis of the interviews, and explored these in relation to national and international perspectives on leadership, futures and educational theory. The five themes collectively summarise the motivations, challenges and strategies employed by these futures-focused leaders, and seek to provide an indication of both the theories underpinning their work and the outcomes of their actions.

While each school leader in this study differs in school location, cohort and type, and in background and experience, there is a congruity in their determination to make a difference for each young person in their care. What I had not expected in approaching this study was to discover the extent of the personal and professional cost experienced by these school leaders in attempting to shift their communities towards a learner-centred, futures-focused approach, where "failure is not an option" (Durie, 2008). That there needs to be greater systems-level support for futures-focused leaders to achieve this outcome is the basis of the recommendations made in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Conclusion

This study has sought to explore the implications of looking to the future, for secondary school principals. Through emerging understandings of the world as it is, and as it could be anticipated to be like in the future, it would seem that we are on the threshold of what could be significant changes to our social, economic, linguistic, technological, natural and educational world. For schools this means preparing young people for a world that is not only very different to the one in which we grew up, but that may work in ways that we cannot yet anticipate. Schools, teachers and principals have traditionally held the balance of power in terms of knowledge, and who receives that knowledge and when; this is a rapidly changing phenomenon in these times of instant access to knowledge, and a demand for customised definitions of learning and success for all students.

Writings about the changing face of our world – the ‘knowledge society’, as described by Gilbert (2005) or the ‘flat world’ presented by Friedman (2006), for example – from an international perspective and within the New Zealand context are proliferating. There is also a growing exploration of what education needs to look like in a student-centred system where success for all is the expectation. The *New Zealand Curriculum* is a founding document for this, and teachers across the country are currently grappling with their understandings of the degree to which this curriculum can meet the objectives of the changing world.

In terms of New Zealand school leadership, and the role of the principal in all of this, there appears to be little guidance to date. *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (KLP) and the *Best Evidence Synthesis* on leadership may be beginning blueprints for the role of a principal in the twenty-first century, but it would appear that these have not yet been thoroughly unpacked, and none of the principals in this study referred to either document in their interviews. In this study I have asked, how **do** principals lead towards the future in their schools, communities and the education system in New Zealand, and I have found some real contexts and some practical

strategies to overlay the likes of the KLP, along with some challenges to school leaders in their attempts to be futures-focused.

As I found in reflecting on the interview data (Chapter Four), six common themes emerged from the interviews with four futures-focused principals. They were:

1. That each leader has a clear futures-focus in his or her work;
2. That futures-focused leaders are motivated by a range of personal and professional experiences;
3. That leadership of change is a significant aspect of their work;
4. That specific, yet different, leadership styles are established;
5. That futures-focused leaders use a range of strategies and tools to guide their work; and
6. That the work of these leaders is grounded in theory, and theory permeates their practice.

These themes allowed me to explore some different ways in which school leaders are attempting to bring together their understanding of the changing world with the current reality of schools and their often traditional and conservative communities. They describe the difficulties – including cases of vicious attacks on their personal and professional integrity by members of school communities – in the face of implementing futures-focused initiatives, and yet there is an overarching sense of optimism and excitement around their work. Far from being daunted or intimidated by the task ahead, these leaders are energised and passionate about what is to come. Driven by a sense of moral and social purpose, as is supported by international perspectives on systems leadership, these school leaders believe they can make a difference in the lives of young people, and that they have an obligation to prepare every young person for the changing world that they face.

In Chapter Five I discussed these findings under five generalisations, which emerged as conclusions from the four interviews. They were:

1. That futures-focused leaders use the *New Zealand Curriculum* as a current driving force;

2. That futures-focused leaders seek to understand the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures;
3. That futures-focused leaders regard leading change as a challenge;
4. That futures-focused leaders find ways of keeping creativity and innovation at the forefront of their practice and
5. That futures-focused leaders employ models for thinking about the future.

These themes are helpful in describing and analysing the work of these principals in particular, but also, possibly, futures-focused leaders in general. They are themes that describe both practical steps for operating with a futures-focus, and optimism for practising in this way. From these themes emerge the following recommendations, and implications for further research:

Recommendations

1. *Futures-focused principals need support in engaging their communities.*

The principals in this study are working on instinct, courage and theory, often in the face of isolation and opposition, to do the work that is required by the *New Zealand Curriculum* and by the rapidly changing world around us. As experienced principals they have many strategies for leading curriculum development and change management within schools, in working with teachers and students. Such school-based development is well within their mandate, and they are engaging combinations of conventional and innovative ways of leading thinking, talking and action about the future.

It is beyond the school gates where some of the difficulty arises. A key element of decision-making about the curriculum, and of the KLP, is community engagement in forming a context for each school's curriculum and wider development. This does not mean 'consultation' in the old sense of the word (such as that described in the early *Tomorrow's Schools* document, *Curriculum Review Research and Schools Project* (cited in Ramsay, et al., 1989)): it means true collaboration and co-construction of learning for the young people of particular communities. These principals endorse this sentiment, and strive to find creative ways in which to enter into meaningful engagement with parents and other stakeholders. However, they often find themselves alone in trying to lead their communities into the future

as well as their schools. They face challenges from the media, the teachers' union, parents and other members of the community in attempting to lead change.

Principals need the support of local government and businesses to help communities to understand what it means to be a New Zealander in the twenty-first century, and how that is likely to be different to when we were growing up. Further, they need the support of central government, national social and business organisations, and national principals' networks to build some critical mass around these understandings. The urgency is in the implementation of the curriculum by 2010, and the implications of the true paradigm shift inherent in this document. If more agencies and certain individuals do not take responsibility for supporting this shift, then the curriculum is likely to do no more than reinforce a status quo that is not meeting the needs of today's New Zealand children. There is a need for greater shared responsibility for preparing young people for the world they will encounter on leaving school, and for helping young people to contribute to the creation of a positive and affirming world.

2. Principals need specific and pragmatic strategies for thinking about the future and leading developments in learning.

As listed in Chapter Three, the principals in this study each has a repertoire of strategies and tools for engaging in futures thinking and leading change. These have developed from a combination of past experience, theory, trial, and from sharing practice with others. They exemplify the "Kiwi can-do attitude" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 6), and they value their autonomy to develop their own ways of doing things. However, they are also concerned about the isolation of their role, and the potential to 'go off on a tangent' – to 'get it wrong', in the face of limited support and mechanisms through which to share strategies.

The principals in this study have each sought or developed their own networks of leaders, both within and beyond education, citing a frustration in some instances with the networks already in place. While this is consistent with research into the development of a successful network, they do feel disappointed that the groups – locally and nationally - that have been established to support principals are not doing enough to challenge the status quo and move dialogue into action.

The work of Secondary Futures has attempted to reach as many New Zealanders – again, both within and beyond education – as possible over the past five years, but arguably the responsibility for this kind of work, and for taking the thinking and talking into action, must also move beyond that organisation and into the practice of others in the community. There is scope for local councils, business groups and principals’ networks to pick up the mantle and plan strategically around how entire communities can work to prepare themselves and their young people for the future.

The KLP is a model with lofty ideals and demanding scope, which attempts to present the very “qualities, knowledge and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 5), but it does not suggest how the time and resources will be put into recruiting, supporting and retaining these twenty-first century leaders. Moving from thinking and talking about the future to taking action and making a difference requires pragmatic strategies and tools, which many leaders of our school and local communities already have. We now need the commitment and momentum to share these.

Further research

Each of the five themes identified in this study could lend itself to further research from a futures perspective. I am left wondering:

1. To what extent are the current, and next, generation of school leaders - trained, practised and experienced in the twentieth-century industrial age model of education - willing or able to make the changes that are inherent in the new curriculum, as leaders?
2. To what extent is there congruence between the understandings of the trends and issues that will face young people in their futures, and the positioning of schools and communities today?
3. Who else could be involved in leading change, and building a critical mass in support of, instead of resistance to, futures-focused principals?
4. How can the role of principal be better managed, so that creativity and innovation are priorities, and who can help that to happen?

5. Which models of futures-focused education design can be best developed in the New Zealand context, and how could this be shared?

A final word

As I have stated throughout this research, I have felt privileged to gain a brief insight into the busy and complex world of four principals, whose work I consider to be extraordinary in terms of their passion, creativity and learning. They are each committed to placing the child at the heart of their work, and are committing their own lives to the betterment of the future for young people. They each face challenges and enormous workloads, yet remain excited and energised by what they do on a daily basis. As an aspiring school leader I feel that this is the most affirming message I have gained from this experience: that the role does not have to be a constant grind of day-to-day reactivity and negativity, as is so often portrayed; but that the role of principal can be exciting and innovative, and can – indeed, should - make a difference for the future.

Juliette Hayes
11 Lockhart Place
Hamilton

Ph 0272915474
Email jhayes@waikatodiocesan.school.nz

4 July 2008

Information for Participants

Dear ----

I am following up on the phone call that I made this afternoon, to thank you for initially agreeing to take part in my research project. The purpose of this letter is to let you know a little more (formally!) about me, and to re-cap the purpose of the research and your role in it. As an outcome of this letter I hope you will feel prepared to sign the Informed Consent form, and to begin making arrangements for our first meeting.

About me

I am currently Deputy Principal at Waikato Diocesan School for Girls, with a portfolio focusing on the development of curriculum, teaching and learning. I work closely from a 'student voice' perspective, and enjoy collaborating with students and staff on future-making projects.

I trained as an English teacher at the University of Canterbury, and have loved a teaching career at Taumarunui High School, Tauranga Girls' College and Mt Maunganui College.

The centre of my life is my family – my husband and two little girls – and we enjoy time together learning and playing. We especially love to ski and travel, and have recently discovered the joys of Saturday morning sport, with the children having taken up hockey!

I have been working towards my Masters of Education through the University of Waikato for the past two years, and have been building towards the thesis topic of 'leading futures thinking in secondary schools' for some time. Both my areas of study in leadership, and my involvement in wider educational networks such as Secondary Futures and iNet, have helped me understand the significance – indeed urgency – of working from a futures focus, while also recognising that schools are not always places where such thinking is encouraged or enabled.

I am therefore delighted to have the opportunity to work with you – a practitioner who does lead futures thinking in your school – to help me take theory into

practice in our New Zealand context, and to share with the profession some of the proven strategies and tools that you engage.

My research question

To guide my research I am asking,

How is thinking about the future being led in secondary schools?

In my interview I will discuss this with you, and build on a series of further questions that I have developed. For your reference, I have attached these questions.

Your involvement

I am hoping that you will be able to spend approximately two hours with me, in an interview context, to answer and discuss my interview questions. I will ask to record our interview on audio tape, and will also take written notes. Prior to the meeting you will have seen the interview questions, and you may ask anything about the process.

Following the interview I may have some further questions or some things to clarify. I would like to be able to email you such follow-up questions, and hope you might choose to respond by email message or telephone. I understand that you are busy, and will certainly limit such on-going contact.

I will send to you the typed transcripts of our conversation. You will have the right to add or delete any part of this transcript.

I would like to arrange for this interview to take place between July and September (Term 3) of 2008, at a venue and time that best suits you.

Outcome of the research

Your contribution to my research will help to inform our profession of possible and practical ways to approach thinking about the future, and will hopefully motivate others to be involved in this exciting process. The information you share with me will form the basis of my Masters of Education thesis, and with your permission I will share my findings with the *Secondary Futures* project, and possibly in further journal articles and conference papers.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be respected at all times. All the information you share with me (on tape, written notes or emails) will be securely stored. Please be mindful of the lack of privacy and anonymity in some email communications, and help me to protect the confidentiality of our interactions in this context. In the final written thesis, articles and conference papers you will not be identified, and pseudonyms will be used. However, as New Zealand has a relatively small education community, there is some possibility that, based on some details included in my writing, such as school demographics or examples of your innovative work, others may be able to identify you or your school.

Informed consent

I will ask you to sign a form, giving your permission to be part of this research. I will also be asking your permission to share the outcomes of my research, and

your contribution, with the profession through journal articles, conference papers and presentations, should the opportunity arise. Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any stage up to the first phase of data analysis (November, 2008), at which point I will be summarising, coding and categorising the points in each individual transcript. You may choose not to answer any particular questions, and ask any further questions about the research which occur to you during the participation. You will be given a copy of the final thesis on its completion.

If at any stage you have concerns about the research please do not hesitate to contact me, using the contact details at the beginning of this letter. If you have reason to believe I have breached the terms agreed in the consent form please contact my supervisor, Catherine Lang, at the School of Education, University of Waikato, phone 07 838 4466 ext 7836, or email cmlang@waikato.ac.nz.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Juliette Hayes

Juliette Hayes

11 Lockhart Place

Hamilton

Phone 0272915474

Email jhayes@waikatodiocesan.school.nz

Consent Form

I have read the information sheet for this research and have clarified the details of the study to an extent with which I am satisfied. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until the beginning of the initial data analysis (November 2008), or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

I give permission for data gathered through my contribution to this study to be used in the researcher's thesis, and in any subsequent journal articles, conference papers or presentations.

I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signed: _____

Name (please print) _____

Date: _____

Contact details:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

You will be given a photocopy of this completed form for your records and reference.

Thank you very much,

Juliette

Juliette Hayes

11 Lockhart Place

Hamilton

Phone 0272915474

Email jhayes@waikatodiocesan.school.nz

Interview Questions

The overarching question guiding this research is:

- How is thinking about the future being led in secondary schools?

The questions I would like to discuss with you during our interview are:

- What are the motivations for leading thinking about the future in secondary schools?
- Which bodies of theory are informing the conversations?
- What are the contexts?
- What are the barriers to these conversations?
- What happens as a result?
- What support is available to leaders of these conversations?
- What are some successful leadership techniques and strategies in facilitating thinking conversations?

Other questions will occur as we meet and talk together.

REFERENCES

Bateman, D., Gidley, J. & Smith, C. (2006). Futures in education. *Professional Educator*. ACER, 5 (1), 14 – 20. Retrieved on February 29, 2008 from A+ Journal Catalogue.

Beare, H. (2001). *Creating the Future School*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Beare, H. & Slaughter, R. (1993). *Education for the twenty-first century*. London: Routledge.

Bishop, R. (1997). Interviewing as collaborative storying. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 24(1), 33 – 37.

Bolstad, R. & Gilbert, J. (2008). *Disciplining and drafting or 21st Century Learning? Rethinking the senior secondary curriculum for the future*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER.

Bray, P. (1999). Leadership for the next century. *The Practicing Administrator*. (4), 10 – 14. Retrieved on February 29, 2008 from A+ Journal Catalogue.

Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In S. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy, (Eds) *Approaches to Qualitative Research* (496 – 520). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). Chapter 15: Interviews. In L. Cohen, L. Manion, & K. Morrison, (Eds). *Research Methods in Education*. (5th ed). (120 – 275). London: Routledge Falmer.

Collins, J. (2001). Good to Great. Retrieved on March 23, 2009 from <http://www.jimcollins.com/lib/articles.html#>.

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

Dunoon, D. (2004). Leadership communities: developing leader-managers for the 21st century. *Training and Development in Australia*. (June).

Durie, M. (2005). Leadership 2025: Transforming capability. Wellington, New Zealand: Secondary Futures. Retrieved on March 3, 2008 from www.secondaryfutures.co.nz.

Durie, M. (2006). Maori Education 2026. PPTA Conference. Wellington. Retrieved on March 3, 2008 from www.secondaryfutures.co.nz.

Durie, M. (2008). Community connectedness. *Secondary Futures symposium*. Wellington, New Zealand. July 25, 2008.

Education Review Office (2009). National areas for review. Retrieved on March 23, 2008 from www.ero.govt.nz.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J. (2003). The interview: From structured question to negotiated text. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, (Eds). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. (2nd ed). California, USA: Sage Publications.

Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability: System thinkers in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Friedman, T. (2006). *The World is Flat*. Australia: Penguin.

Gilbert, J. (2005). *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The knowledge society and the future of education*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER

Goldman, E. (2007). Strategic thinking at the top. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Summer. 48 (4). 74 – 81.

Hargreaves, A. (2008). The fourth way of leadership and change. *NZEALS conference paper*. March 9, 2009.

Hargreaves, A. & Fink, D. (2006). The ripple effect. *Education Leadership*. 63 (8).

Hargreaves, D. (2004). *Personalising learning: next steps in working laterally*. London: SSAT.

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

Hines, A. (2006). Strategic foresight: the state of the art. *The Futurist*. 40 (5). 18 – 21. Academic Research Library.

Hopkins, D. & Zhao, Y. (2008). The Prospect. *Transformation and Innovation: System leaders in the global age*. London: SSAT.

James, N. & Busher, H. (2007). Ethical issues in online research: protecting privacy, establishing authenticity in email interviewing. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*. 30(1). 101 – 113.

Jones, B. (2001, August 11). We need scholars not dullards. *Waikato Times*. B6.

McKenzie, J. (2007). *Leading Questions: Managing complexity in the public and private sectors*. Seattle: FNO Press.

Ministry of Education. (2005). *Making a bigger difference for all students: Schooling Strategy 2005 – 2010*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Kiwi Leadership for Principals*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Miller, R. (2003). *Where schools might fit in a future learning society*. (Vol. 129). Melbourne, Australia: Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria.

Miller, R. & Bentley, T. (2002). *Unique Creation*. London: NCSL.

Pride, S. & Meek, N. (2009). A question of voice: Secondary Futures as an experiment in democratising education design. *International Congress for Schooling Effectiveness and Improvement*, Canada, January 2009.

Ramsay, P., Hawk, K., Harold, B., Kaai, T., Marriott, R., Poskett, J. (1989). *Towards Success: Some examples of improved school-community relationships*. Occasional Paper No. 5. CRRISP. Hamilton, NZ: The University of Waikato.

Rance, C. (2006). Forward thinking. *Australian Educator*. Winter. 10 – 13.

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

Roberts, J. & Gardiner, B. (2005). Exploring possibilities: An evaluation of the short term effectiveness of the Secondary Futures project. Wellington, New Zealand: NCZER. Retrieved May 1, 2008 from www.secondaryfutures.co.nz.

Robinson, V. & Timperley, H. (2007). The leadership of the improvement of teaching and learning: Lessons from initiatives with positive outcomes for students. *Australian Journal of Education*. ACER. November.

Rogers, E. (2003). *Diffusion of innovation*. (5th ed). New York: Free Press.

Sarantakos, S. (1993). *Social research*. South Melbourne, Australia: MacMillan Education Australia.

Secondary Futures (2003). Home page. Retrieved on May 26, 2008 from www.secondaryfutures.co.nz.

The World Future Society. Home page. Retrieved on May 11, 2009 from www.wfs.org.

Tringham, K. (2007). School Leadership Examined. *New Zealand Education Gazette*. 9 July. 11 – 13.

Toffler, A. (1970). *Future shock*. London: Pan Books.

Treadwell, M. (2008). Whatever next: A global curriculum framework for the twenty-first century. Tauranga, New Zealand: www.schoolv2.net.

Wagner, C. (2007). Thinking globally, acting locally, living personally. *The Futurist*. Nov – Dec. 54 – 58.

Yin, R. (2006). Case Study Methods. *Handbook of Complimentary Methods in Education Research*. (Green, J., Camilli, G. & Elmore, P. Eds). Lawrence Erlbaum: Washington DC. AERA.

Yin, R. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks:

