

Evaluating Education:
Normative Systems and Institutional Practices

Martin Thrupp

The Search for Better Educational Standards

A Cautionary Tale

With Responses from
Bob Lingard, Meg Maguire and
David Hursh

 Springer

Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices

Series editors

Sharon Rider, Department of Philosophy Science and Technology Studies Center,
Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Michael Peters, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

This series addresses the normative implications of and assumptions behind schemes for assessing and assuring the quality of education at all levels and the role of education in the knowledge society. Educational assessment in most countries has become a standardized function of governments and funders, raising concerns that the distinctive aims of different parts of the educational system and their inherent values base will be eroded over time. Moreover, contemporary education research tends to be compartmentalized, having limited contact with relevant research in philosophy, sociology, history, economics and management studies. This series seeks to rectify this situation by:- examining the historical development, theoretical underpinnings and implicit conceptual assumptions of different regulatory and evaluative regimes and making these explicit - investigating the implicit or explicit values exemplified in and buttressed by policy, and studying its implications in practice - proposing and developing models for alternative practices for realizing goals and promoting norms tied to different conceptions of the purposes of public education and the mission of the university. The series will focus on the pragmatic as well as the theoretical aspects of valuation activities in education and foster dialogue between different approaches within the field, taking as a starting point the fact that processes of valuation are not always quantitative and that these regularly involve a variety of interests and actors. Thus the series will address the diversity of valuation practices, measurements and techniques in education in general at all levels – primary, secondary, tertiary and postgraduate, as well as adult and continuing education –, and higher education in particular, especially regarding potential sources of dispute or controversy. The series will also deal with the consequences of valuation practices in higher education, exploring the ways they resolve, engender or conceal conflicts of values, goals or interests. By bringing forward the normative and institutional dimensions, the series opens the prospect of providing more integrative coverage. This will be of benefit to scholars in the humanities and social sciences, and especially to evaluation researchers and people training to be academic and school administrators. Viewing the field through a philosophical, sociological and historical lens, while incorporating empirical research into the institutions of education and its instruments of assessment, the series seeks to establish and enrich understanding of links between values, pedagogy and evaluation.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/11809>

Martin Thrupp

The Search for Better Educational Standards

A Cautionary Tale

With Responses from

Bob Lingard, Meg Maguire and David Hursh



Springer

Martin Thrupp
W. Malcolm Institute of Educational
Research
University of Waikato
Hamilton, Waikato, New Zealand

Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices
ISBN 978-3-319-61957-6 ISBN 978-3-319-61959-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-61959-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017947204

© Springer International Publishing AG 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

This should have been an easy book to write because I had such a wealth of material to work with. But it took almost two years to write because I needed to work through a lot of details while my working life as a university Head of School was distracting. Whenever I came back to the book, I seemed to be revisiting and correcting the material rather than adding to it. Now where did I get to again?

New Zealand's National Standards were introduced in 2008 by the National Coalition government led by John Key, and I inserted myself enthusiastically into debates from the outset. But by the time I started this book in 2015, the National-led Government was into its third three-year term and was as popular as ever despite undermining public services.¹ It was hard not to be discouraged at times. As described by Liz Gordon, herself an unceasing campaigner for public education, the politics of education in New Zealand had become an 'inexorable grind'. Redundancies in my university faculty rounded out the gloomy picture. In the end it was only the realisation that the writing itself would be a way through that spurred me into completing the book.

Some parts of this book draw on the three Research, Analysis and Insight into National Standards (RAINS) research reports.² There is also material previously published in *Assessment Matters*,³ the *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*,⁴ and the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*.⁵ The overview of New Zealand education in Chap. 1 draws on material previously published in *The Palgrave International Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Social Justice*⁶ and by the Centro de Estudios de Políticas y Prácticas en Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.⁷ Chapter 2 uses material originally included in a chapter with David Hursh in *Education, Globalization, and Social Change*.⁸ Chapter 8 draws on an article in *Policy Futures in Education*.⁹

The RAINS research programme was funded by NZEI Te Riu Roa, New Zealand's largest education union and a powerful advocate for quality public education. RAINS was also supported by supplementary funding from the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research at the University of Waikato. I thank New Zealand's Quality Public Education Coalition, the New Zealand Association for Research in Education, the Graham Nuthall Classroom Research Trust, the New

Zealand Principals' Federation and Save our Schools NZ for New Zealand opportunities to disseminate the research. The RAINS research has also been presented in seminars at the Universities of Arizona, Rochester, Manchester, Bath, and Sydney, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Queen's University Belfast and King's College London.

There are many people I want to acknowledge and thank. Anne Easter and Michelle White worked on the RAINS project in 2011 and 2013 respectively, especially undertaking interviews with parents and children. Michelle White also did much of the analysis of these and parts of Chap. 7 draw on her work. I thank all the teachers, principals, board members, support staff, children, parents and Education Review Office reviewers and managers who cannot be named but participated in various ways in the RAINS project. We could not have done the research without you. The RAINS advisory groups comprised Sue Dymock, Deborah Fraser, Ngarewa Hawera, Mary Hill, Margie Hohepa, Terry Locke, Clive McGee, Logan Moss, Cathy Wylie, Stephen Ball, David Berliner, David Hursh, Meg Maguire, Diane Reay and Bob Lingard. I thank David Hursh, Meg and Bob for their responses here also. Bronwen Cowie, Director of the Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, was tirelessly supportive. NZEI staff, National Executive and teacher, principal and support staff members – too many to mention – were wonderful advocates for the research also. Others who contributed in particular ways include Noeline Alcorn, Wayne Asplin, Sussi Bell, Tamara Bibby, Roseanna Bourke, Debbie Bright, Cathy Bunting, Alejandro Carrasco, Barbara Comber, Bill Courtney, Terry Crooks, Nikki Crutchley, Cathy Dewes, Margaret Drummond, Warwick Elley, Kylee Edwards, Helen Findlay, Lester Flockton, Alison Gilmore, Denyse Graham, Sandra Grey, Ann Harlow, John Hattie, Carolyn Jones, Alister Jones, Masaaki Katsuno, Dianne Khan, Tracey Lowndes, Ruth Lupton, Hugh Lauder, Judith Loveridge, Roger Moltzen, Peter O'Connor, John O'Neill, Pat Poland, Piia Seppänen and Maretta Taylor. Many thanks are due to Annemarie Keur of Springer and the series editors, Michael Peters and Sharon Rider. My partner Marika Karshagen, herself a primary school teacher, has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

Hamilton, New Zealand
April 2017

Martin Thrupp

Notes

1. In December 2016, John Key resigned and leadership of this Government was passed on to Bill English who had been the deputy prime minister.
2. Thrupp, M., and A. Easter. 2012. Research, analysis and insight into National Standards (RAINS) project: First report: *Researching schools' enactments of New Zealand's National Standards Policy*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZEI. Thrupp, M. 2013. Research, analysis and insight into National Standards (RAINS) project: Second report: *Understanding New Zealand's very local*

- National Standards*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZEI. Thrupp, M., and M. White. 2013. Research, analysis and insight into National Standards (RAINS) Project. Final report: *National Standards and the Damage Done*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZEI.
3. Thrupp, M., and A. Easter. 2013. 'Tell me about your school': Researching local responses to New Zealand's National Standards policy. *Assessment Matters*, 5, 94–115.
 4. Thrupp, M. 2013. National Standards for student achievement: Is New Zealand's idiosyncratic approach any better? *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 36(2), 99–110.
 5. Thrupp, M. 2014. At the eye of the storm: Researching schools and their communities enacting National Standards. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 49(1), 6–20.
 6. Thrupp, M. 2016. The political rhetoric and everyday realities of citizenship in New Zealand society and schools. In *The Palgrave international handbook of education for citizenship and social justice*, Ed. A. Peterson, R. Hattam, M. Zembylas and J. Arthur. London: Palgrave.
 7. Thrupp, M. 2015. 'Privatisation: The New Zealand experience'. Address given at public seminar on 'Privatisation and public education' Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Santiago, Chile, 22 January. Retrieved from http://www.ceppe.cl/images/stories/agenda/2015/Enero/Thrupp_presentation_in_English.pdf
 8. Thrupp M. and D. Hursh. 2006. The limits of managerialist school reform: The case of target-setting in England and the USA. In *Education, Globalization, and Social Change*, ed. H. Lauder, Philip Brown, Jo-Anne Dillabough and A.H. Halsey. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 9. Thrupp, M. 2013. Researching amidst the heat and noise of political debate. *Policy Futures in Education*, 11(6), 723–733.

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
	About New Zealand and its Education System.....	5
	Notes	13
2	High Stakes Assessment: Global Pressures and Local Responses	19
	High-Stakes National Assessment Systems	21
	England	21
	The USA.....	23
	Australia	25
	High-Stakes National Assessment Systems:	
	The New Zealand Response.....	26
	Large-Scale Assessments and Data Infrastructure	30
	Large-Scale Assessments: The New Zealand Response	33
	Notes	35
3	The Kiwi Standards, Whanaketanga and the Available Research	43
	The Kiwi Standards.....	44
	Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori	50
	The RAINS Project	51
	The MTL Research	57
	Other Studies of the Kiwi Standards.....	60
	Notes	62
4	The Contested Introduction of the Kiwi Standards.....	69
	The Announcement and Legislation	70
	Development of the Kiwi Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori	72
	Pre-launch Justifications for the Kiwi Standards and the Growing Opposition	76
	Media Coverage	80
	Early Days of the Kiwi Standards 2010–2011	82

	Government Responses in the Early Days 2010–11	87
	Greater Acceptance of the Kiwi Standards After 2012.....	90
	Notes	95
5	Neither National nor Standard	105
	Scope for Differences Across New Zealand	107
	The Trajectories of the RAINS Schools.....	111
	Further Variation Between the Schools.....	119
	Sources of Variation at the Classroom Level	125
	Notes	126
6	Public Achievement Information and the Progress and Consistency Tool	129
	The Lead-Up to Releasing the Kiwi Standards Data	130
	The Release of the Data	132
	The Release of the Data and the RAINS Schools.....	134
	The Aftermath of the Release	139
	Subsequent Releases of Kiwi Standards Data 2013–2015	142
	The Release of Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori.....	144
	PaCT	145
	Notes	149
7	The Impact of the Kiwi Standards	157
	The Convergence of the RAINS Schools.....	158
	Intensification of Staff Workloads.....	161
	Curriculum and Curriculum Narrowing.....	162
	Positioning and Labelling of Children	165
	Other Effects of Kiwi Standards Data and Targets	170
	Weighing Up Evidence from the RAINS Schools.....	170
	More About the Perspectives of Parents	172
	More About the Interviews with Children	173
	ERO and the Work of Reviewers in the RAINS Schools.....	175
	Notes	179
8	The Politics of Research	181
	Background.....	182
	Research-Informed Debates Over the Kiwi Standards	183
	Undertaking and Reporting the RAINS Research	187
	Continuing Commentary and Activism	193
	Notes	195
9	The Kiwi Standards a Decade On: What Were They All About?	201
	A Decade On.....	202
	The New ‘Social Investment’ Concerns with the Kiwi Standards.....	205
	Privatisation Associated with the Kiwi Standards	206
	The Kiwi Standards and Wider Changes in New Zealand Life	208
	Notes	209

10 International Responses: Bob Lingard, Meg Maguire and David Hursh	213
Bob Lingard: An Australian, Global and Policy Perspective.....	213
Introduction	213
Neighbours	215
Policy Issues.....	216
Global Effects.....	218
Concluding Comment	219
Meg Maguire: An English Perspective	220
Policy and Policy Contexts	220
The Culture of Primary Schooling and Primary Teachers	222
Reconstructing the Primary School Teacher	223
Towards a Conclusion	224
David Hursh: People or Data? Lessons from New Zealand	224
Notes	227

Acronyms

AIMS	Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools
AP	Assistant Principal
ARB	Assessment Resource Bank
asTTle	Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning
BOT	Board of Trustees (also referred to as ‘Boards’)
BTAC	Boards Taking Action Coalition
CPA	Catholic Principals’ Association
DP	Deputy Principal
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELL	English language learner
ERO	Education Review Office
ESOL	English Speakers of Other Languages
FRSSNZ	Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools in New Zealand
GATE	Gifted and Talented Education
GERM	Global Education Reform Movement
GloSS	Global Strategy Stage (numeracy assessment tool)
IKAN	Individual Knowledge Assessment for Numeracy
LSA	Large-scale assessment
LSM	Limited Statutory Manager
MCSFoRA	Ministerial Cross-Sector Forum on Raising Achievement
MoE	Ministry of Education (also referred to as ‘the Ministry’)
MTL	NZ Maths Technology Ltd
NAG	National Administration Guideline
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEMP	National Education Monitoring Project
NETS	National Evaluation Topics
NMSSA	National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement
NSADAG	National Standards Aggregate Data Advisory Group
NSIAG	National Standards Independent Advisory Group
NSSAG	National Standards Sector Advisory Group

NZC	The New Zealand Curriculum ¹
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZEI	New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa
NZPA	New Zealand Press Association
NZPF	New Zealand Principals' Federation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIA	Official Information Act
OTJ	Overall Teacher Judgement
PaCT	Progress and Consistency Tool
PAI	Public Achievement Information
PAT	Progressive Achievement Test
PB4L	Positive Behaviour for Learning
PD	Professional development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLD	Professional learning and development
PPTA	Post Primary Teachers Association
QPEC	Quality Public Education Coalition
RAINS	Research, Analysis and Insight into National Standards
RFP	Request for proposal
RTTT	Race to the Top
SAP	Student Achievement Practitioner
SES	Socio-economic status
SMS	Student Management System
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STA	School Trustees Association
STAR	Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading
TKI	Te Kete Ipurangi (the Ministry's portal website)

¹ Ministry of Education. 2007. *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Abstract Around the world it has become widely recognised that high-stakes assessment brings numerous problems to schools and the populations they serve. Against this background, this book offers a cautionary tale about the ‘Kiwi Standards’ system for assessing student achievement that has been mandatory in New Zealand primary (elementary) schools since 2010. It warns of the absolute importance of how any assessment policy gets introduced and carried out. Underestimating the impact of local differences between schools has been a major problem with the Kiwi Standards. They also illustrate just how difficult it is to avoid the performativity culture in schools associated with high-stakes assessment. The rest of this introductory chapter outlines the chapters in the book and provides some background for international readers about New Zealand and its education system.

Around the world it has become widely recognised that high-stakes assessment brings numerous problems to schools and the populations they serve. National and international assessment systems become high-stakes wherever ‘inadequate’ levels of student achievement have far-reaching consequences for individuals, institutions or indeed nations. The term ‘high-stakes’ is most often used when referring to national testing. Research from England, the USA, Australia and other countries shows a wide range of negative impacts of national tests on teaching and curricula. These include ‘teaching to the test’ and the fabrication of results, narrowing of the school curriculum, an increasingly instrumental view of teaching, the valuing of some students over others, and damaging effects on students’ conceptions of themselves as learners.¹

It is not only tests that bring these various problems in education. Alongside national testing, some countries have developed national standards for various aspects of education, including the assessment of student achievement. As a general concern, the claim of ‘standards’ has become central to the rhetorical claims of many politicians, policymakers and other commentators in relation to education policy and practice. Such claims often imply a level that a population might reach but failing to achieve: ‘our standards are slipping’. Improving a nation’s standards of education will always be a popular goal, for who could disagree? But chiming with this broad standards rhetoric have been specific national standards approaches

that seek to allow judgements about student achievement through the development of particular assessment systems. These may create performance cultures that have damaging effects in a similar way to national testing. The USA's Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have become the best-known example. To Kevin Weiner, director of the National Education Policy Center, these are a “foundational element to further entrenchment of a system that also includes new assessments, augmented accountability regimes, and marketplaces of new materials, testing supports, and professional development”.²

Another way to state the problem is that all forms of high-stakes assessment tend to bring *performativity* to the fore.³ When performative pressure is placed on teachers and students, assessment tends to become less genuine and less educational. This is true whether what is being discussed is entry testing for admission into schools and universities, professional standards for teachers, curriculum standards for student achievement or even the way that countries respond to international testing programmes.

Realising this, researchers have called for alternatives such as sampling a population rather than census testing all students within it, or so-called ‘intelligent accountability’ that involves more trusting and contextually-relevant forms of assessment.⁴ But these ideas get little traction with reforming neo-liberal governments that are more animated by educational outcomes than authentic processes. They want to use tests and set standards as a means of making claims about the performance of teachers and schools and for demonstrating improvements in the achievement of all students. This is just part of a wider data-driven approach to monitoring public services that has become common across OECD member countries in particular.

Against this international background, this book offers a cautionary tale about a system for assessing student achievement that has been mandatory in New Zealand primary (elementary) schools since 2010.⁵ This system is confusingly named ‘National Standards’ as if national standards are the same the world over, but actually this New Zealand assessment system is very particular and idiosyncratic. So here I refer to it as ‘Kiwi Standards’ to distinguish these national standards from other national standards systems. (The Kiwi is a flightless bird found in New Zealand and ‘Kiwi’ has become a frequently-used colloquialism for matters to do with New Zealand and New Zealanders). It is only in quoted material that I use the nomenclature used in New Zealand—‘National Standards’ or just ‘the Standards’. Responding to the indigenous culture of Aotearoa (New Zealand), there is also a Māori version called Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori, which I often just refer to here as ‘Whanaketanga’.⁶

One part of the cautionary tale from the Kiwi Standards for readers around the globe is the absolute importance of how any assessment policy gets introduced and carried out. The Kiwi Standards were introduced through a rushed political process and without sufficient consultation, information or safeguards. The policy received strong push-back from teachers and school leaders. The National Coalition Government led by John Key that brought in the Kiwi Standards in 2008 got its way but had to take some heavy-handed and cynical actions in order to proceed. It was

hardly the finest moment in an education system with a long history of practitioners and government working together constructively. The Kiwi Standards policy has also been extended in ways that weren't clear at the outset. This seems an attempt to address lack of consistency between schools in their response to the Kiwi Standards and it may reinforce accountabilities that had been intended all along.

The lack of consistency came about because the Kiwi Standards policy badly underestimated the impact of local differences between schools. This is another part of the cautionary tale provided by the Kiwi Standards for educators everywhere. Politicians and policymakers have tended to see the Kiwi Standards as merely a problem in policy 'implementation'.⁷ They thought that those in schools would put the intended policy into practice in similar ways. In fact, a policy like the Kiwi Standards is translated and reinterpreted by individuals and groups in schools in different ways and to varying extents amidst the messy complexities and uncertainties of diverse settings and against the background of other education policies and wider social and political contexts. This is what Stephen Ball and colleagues refer to as 'policy enactment'.⁸ In the case of the Kiwi Standards it means that every New Zealand school has likely approached them in different ways. This is well illustrated by the Research, Analysis and Insight into National Standards (RAINS) research featured in this book.

A third part of the cautionary tale provided by the Kiwi Standards for international readers is just how difficult it is to avoid the performativity culture, and how a nation's education system can become tied up in knots in the attempt to do so. Indeed, the Kiwi Standards have been a fascinating attempt by a small nation to have its cake and eat it too. It was an approach intended to monitor achievement and set targets for every school and for the system as a whole in a similar way to other countries, but which would avoid the problems of testing and standards already mentioned through being less prescriptive. Most standards approaches start by creating tests to assess against to decide whether students reach the standard. This is the approach taken, for instance, by the CCSS in the USA. In contrast, the Kiwi Standards involve a more holistic assessment, an 'Overall Teacher Judgement' (OTJ) of student achievement against broad curriculum levels within a previously existing curriculum. Mary Chamberlain, then a senior official in the New Zealand Ministry of Education, provided a sense of the aspiration to avoid the performative effects of national assessment found in other education systems:

New Zealand has taken a different approach to the rest of the world. We have used our national curriculum to determine the standard of achievement that needs to be reached at the end of each year. Other countries' approach to standards has been to set them in relation to how students have actually performed on national tests. This approach could lead to narrowing the curriculum, and mediocre outcomes. Our approach has been bolder, to look to the future, and to determine what our students need to know in order for them to succeed. It's not just about where we are today—but where we can be in the future.⁹

Unfortunately the research discussed in this book suggests the impact of the Kiwi Standards is turning out to be just a variant on the international theme, with some of the same problems and some different ones. While the Kiwi Standards may be having some favourable impacts in areas that include teacher understanding of

curriculum levels, motivation of some teachers and children and some improved targeting of interventions, such gains are overshadowed by damage being done through the intensification of staff workloads, curriculum narrowing and the reinforcement of a two-tier curriculum, the positioning and labelling of children, and unproductive new tensions amongst school staff. These problems have come about despite a system that still cannot deliver a national picture of achievement because the Kiwi Standards have not been nationally moderated.

A further concern is that debate around such assessment policies distracts from more serious problems facing education systems and indeed the wider societies they are part of. In this sense, my account connects with a book by Ted Fiske and Helen Ladd that drew another ‘cautionary tale’ from New Zealand education in the 1990s, entitled *When Schools Compete*.¹⁰ The educationally polarised situation they described has continued to deteriorate over the past two decades.¹¹ There is no sign that introducing the Kiwi Standards will do anything to combat the education problems that stem from school polarisation and the wider social inequalities it reflects. The threat of privatisation also hangs over the New Zealand education system, connecting to other national developments and international concerns.¹² The Kiwi Standards are playing some part in privatisation but may also be helping to keep teachers (and parents) too busy to notice that it is happening.

The book as a whole offers an unusually worked-through account of a policy from political origins through design to enactment in schools. It provides a great example to be used by policymakers and students concerned with social policies of any kind, not just in education.

The initial chapters of this book set the scene. This introductory chapter provides some essentials for international readers about New Zealand and its education system, especially schools. There is a chapter on global assessment pressures and the local response in New Zealand (Chap. 2) while Chap. 3 provides a description of the Kiwi Standards and Whanaketanga and introduces the available research about them, including the RAINS research. All of these chapters provide necessary background to make sense of the rest of the book. For instance, the Kiwi Standards partly drew on the pre-existing culture of formative assessment practices, but at the same time it was the commitment of teachers to the same culture of formative assessment that often led them to question the Kiwi Standards.

I then turn to the introduction of the Kiwi Standards and their contestation by teachers and their organisations (Chap. 4). Various conditions lined up to create something of a perfect storm for making the Kiwi Standards the most debated development in New Zealand education for decades. These included the Government ‘hanging its hat’ on this particular reform, the many problems of the policy itself, and united leadership within teacher unions and professional associations that represented a very high proportion of primary teachers and school leaders.

Chapter 5 moves to how the schools in the RAINS project illustrate different enactments of the Kiwi Standards policy in a way that suggests every school would have a different interpretation. Importantly, this reflects the contexts and trajectories of schools; it is not just a matter of individual teachers getting better at making judgements against the Kiwi Standards. Chapter 6 returns to later phases in the

‘rolling out’ of the policy with the release and continuing development of Public Achievement Information and the development and release of an online moderation tool for teachers: the Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT).

Chapter 7 looks at the impact of the Kiwi Standards in schools as raised by the RAINS research. It looks at why the schools started to come around to engaging with the Kiwi Standards and at the pros and cons of the Kiwi Standards as reflected in the experiences of RAINS schools and their teachers, senior staff and Board members. The perspectives of parents, children and Education Review Office (ERO) reviewers are also explored in this chapter.

Finally, the book offers a range of conclusions and reflections. Chapter 8 considers the politics of research around the Kiwi Standards, both the place of educational research in the Kiwi Standards debate in general, and the author’s experiences in particular. Chapter 9 provides a recent view of the Kiwi Standards and looks to the future. Today there is some support for the Kiwi Standards but also widespread recognition in schools and policy circles that there is nothing national or standard about the Kiwi Standards approach. For the Government, hope for more dependable data has become invested in PaCT, while hope for addressing educational inequalities is now increasingly given over to a ‘social investment’ approach. Improved (i.e., PaCT-informed) Kiwi Standards would seem to have a role to play in social investment as an outcome measure. The Kiwi Standards have also become a site of for-profit activity in education.

I conclude by suggesting that debates over Kiwi Standards and PaCT have become sidelined by other developments that have become clearer in the Key Government’s third term. These include wider privatisation, reduced government funding of public services and more obvious social inequalities. Taking this broader perspective on New Zealand society and politics, by 2016 the Kiwi Standards seem more like a distraction from a wider malaise.

In Chap. 10, Bob Lingard, Meg Maguire and David Hursh bring comparisons with their home settings of Australia, England and the US, respectively. Apart from their academic expertise, they have all been visiting academics in New Zealand over the last few years and are well positioned to comment.

About New Zealand and its Education System

The rest of this chapter provides some context around the social, political, economic and educational context into which Kiwi Standards were introduced. As well as being broadly descriptive of New Zealand, I focus especially on social inequalities and the privatisation of education. As indicated above, these seem to be the most pressing issues that lie behind the Kiwi Standards and which they have also ended up distracting from.

New Zealand is a country in the South Pacific, about the same geographic size as the United Kingdom but with fewer than five million people. This results in small cities and towns, apart from Auckland, which is the main urban settlement and

international gateway where about a third of the population live. Around 65% of New Zealand's population is of European descent, but this *Pākehā* population is ageing, and there are increasing proportions of the indigenous Māori people, as well as people originating from Asian countries and from Pacific island nations such as Western Samoa, Tonga and Niue.

To understand why there are Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori it is necessary to understand something of the importance of Māori culture and politics in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Māori are thought to have arrived from Polynesia about 1300 AD, living closely with the natural landscape and developing a rich and complex language and culture. However the subsequent, mainly British, colonisation had devastating effects. At the time of James Cook's circumnavigation of the country in 1769, Māori numbered around 110,000, but disease, war, land confiscation, loss of resources and discrimination saw the Māori population plunge to just over 40,000 by 1896.¹³ Although the population then recovered somewhat (today those who identify as Māori comprise about 600,000 or 15% of the New Zealand population), colonisation has had far-reaching implications. Māori have been significantly over-represented in poor social, economic and educational indicators since the nineteenth century despite numerous reports and social interventions. Indeed, on most measures, the gap between *Pākehā* and Māori has widened over the last decade. A recent study of 21 indicators, including measures of health, standard of living, knowledge and skills, employment, cultural identity and social connectedness found that:

The majority of the indicators...suggest worsening outcomes for Māori and Pacific people in the form of increasing gaps in indicators when compared to the European population. Moreover, some of the indicators that produce improving outcomes still retain large gaps between the European population and Māori or Pacific people.¹⁴

Given this situation, Māori self-determination (*tino rangatiratanga*) has become very important in New Zealand, and central to this are Māori rights and aspirations under the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the (then) British Crown and Māori in 1840, and although its exact interpretation remains contested, clearly guaranteed Māori important rights of citizenship and self-determination. After many decades of struggle by Māori to have the Treaty of Waitangi honoured, the last few decades have seen significant redress. In 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to hear historic grievances, and since that time there have been numerous settlements between the New Zealand Government and various *iwi* (Māori tribes), while other cases are continuing. Settlements generally involved an apology from the Crown, the return of crown-owned land where feasible as well as a financial settlement.¹⁵ An example is that when the Crown reached a NZ\$170 million settlement in 1995 for the land confiscated from the Waikato-Tainui *iwi*, it expressed "profound regret and apologise[d] unreservedly for the loss of lives because of the hostilities arising from its invasion and at the devastation of property and social life which resulted".¹⁶ Despite problems with some of its investments, by 2014 Waikato-Tainui had assets worth NZ\$1.1 billion. To keep such positive outcomes of the Treaty settlements in perspective, land that had been confiscated from Tainui was worth approximately NZ\$12 billion at the time of the settlement in 1995.¹⁷

Despite the Treaty settlements, many Māori are in low socio-economic positions disproportionately burdened by recent neo-liberal policies, as discussed shortly. Racism also continues to be an issue, and although New Zealand society is slowly moving away from the European dominance of previous decades, the revitalisation of Māori and Pacific languages is a gradual and tenuous process. For instance, a recent analysis suggested that national news coverage still "...repeats and reinforces negative themes about Māori that date from the earliest days of colonisation".¹⁸ This also raises a key 'vernacular' feature of the New Zealand context which is how Māori academics, politicians and commentators often recast teachers' recognition of the impact of poverty and socio-economic constraints on Māori students as 'deficit theorising'.¹⁹ It is likely that some Māori regard the Kiwi Standards as a means to ensure the predominately Pākehā teaching workforce does not hold low expectations of Māori students, rather than seeing it as a policy that may require teachers to disproportionately label Māori students as failing. To what extent this outlook has reduced Māori opposition to the Kiwi Standards over and above the effects of the general saturation of New Zealand society by neo-liberal values is unknown.

There are also social justice issues facing people from small Pacific island nations as non-indigenous minorities in New Zealand. From the late 1950s people from Pacific nations moved to New Zealand as economic migrants on work permits, finding plentiful work, mainly in factories. But in the 1970s with New Zealand unemployment rising, such workers were often no longer welcome, and there were infamous 'dawn raids' to round up 'overstayers'. Greater legal rights for Pacific families to be New Zealand citizens were subsequently secured, but the socio-economic position of New Zealanders with Pacific backgrounds is often precarious.²⁰ There have also been racist policies and incidents mainly involving Chinese and Indian citizens. In the past these ethnic groups were small and marginalised, but today the proportion of the New Zealand population from Asian backgrounds is over 12% and growing.

There were significant social class inequalities within the European settler society, although these were not as obvious as in many other countries. A self-conscious egalitarianism developed in New Zealand in reaction to the nineteenth century Britain most of the early colonists left behind. As Stevan Eldred-Grigg put it, "...the [19th century] boast of New Zealanders, and the boast of Americans, Australians, and Argentinians was that people were more free to rise in the new world than in the old".²¹ Even by the 1990s Hugh Lauder and David Hughes noted that "New Zealand has often been seen as a classless society in contrast to Britain which has been regarded as the epitome of a class society".²² While New Zealand's supposed egalitarianism was partly a myth, New Zealand life did have features that allowed class differences to be relatively muted. These included low population pressure, small settlements and few areas of urban deprivation. There was little 'old money' and the labour market also acted to blur class distinctions. For instance, farmers were a major occupational group that varied widely in their resources and class backgrounds. The postwar period was a time of widespread prosperity based on agricultural exports and even by the 1980s New Zealand was still one of the most

equal countries outside of the Nordic nations as shown by OECD Gini co-efficient data.²³

It was also in the 1980s that neo-liberal ideas started to dominate New Zealand politics and policymaking. Deregulation of the public sector towards privatisation moved very fast under the Fourth Labour Government of 1984–1990 and has continued in various guises and with varying emphases under subsequent governments.²⁴ Most recently, the National-led Government that has been in power since 2008 has re-emphasised a business approach to government policy in numerous ways. At the same time, the programme of neo-liberal reform that started in New Zealand in the 1980s resulted in social inequality growing at the fastest rate of all OECD countries from the late 1980s to early 1990s. As in other countries, social benefits were cut sharply and managerial developments in the labour market led to greater income disparities and more work insecurity. New Zealand fell in the Gini co-efficient rankings from being one of the most equal OECD countries in the early 1980s to being around 23rd out of 34 by 2013.²⁵ There was a small improvement (decline in the Gini co-efficient) during the Labour-led governments of 1999–2008 because of tax credits for low income workers. Subsequently “[y]ear-on-year income inequality figures have been volatile...with the GFC shock impacting on investment returns, employment and wages [and]... no conclusive evidence of any sustained rise or fall in income inequality using the Gini measure since the mid 1990s”²⁶

While statistical analyses of whether New Zealand has been becoming more unequal or not in recent years may have been inconclusive, there has certainly been a sharp increase in wealth for about 10% of the population.²⁷ In part this is due to the way executive and managerial salaries have become detached from other incomes and an upper tax bracket of only 33% above NZ\$70,000, reduced from 38% in 2010. Increases in wealth will also be due to a run-away housing market, as New Zealand doesn’t have any capital gains tax on property. By 2016 the average house price in Auckland was NZ\$1 million and the effects were spreading out quickly into the surrounding provinces.²⁸ Rapidly rising house prices are therefore leading to huge increases in personal wealth for those who own houses in the relevant areas, but meanwhile the poor struggle to get into accommodation and to afford much else once accommodation has been paid for.

There has been much concern about such inequality, especially the most obvious manifestations such as families sleeping in cars or children going to school without breakfast or lunch. But after more than three decades of neo-liberal politics, there is also much public acceptance of it, with wealth and poverty often being seen to reflect the strengths or failings of individuals and an often punitive view of the poor. This view reflects government policy too. Darren Hodgetts and colleagues describe the ‘conditionality’ of welfare reform in New Zealand where financial support is becoming harder for the poor to access because it requires increasing compliance with obligations such as ‘work readiness’.²⁹ But such policies create considerable distress at the local level; for instance, people who are required to attend a budgeting course before accessing welfare funds may face a two to three week wait before getting into a course.³⁰ The market orientation of policy also allows the predatory

activities of instant finance companies and mobile shops that sell overpriced goods in poorer communities.

Such social problems stemming from inequality have also impacted on New Zealand's education system. During the century after the Education Act was passed in 1877, New Zealand developed a strong public education system. Since the 1990s a more privatised approach has been developing, although this is still embryonic compared to many other countries. Only about 4% of children and young people attend private schools (sometimes referred to as 'independent' schools), another 11% attend state-integrated schools (some of these could be regarded as semi-private, discussed below). Nevertheless, the public system has been able to successfully incorporate ethnic and pedagogical differences and it also caters for families across the socio-economic spectrum, rich and poor. Teachers and general staff, such as teacher aides, throughout the country are paid on national scales and the same is true of principals' base salaries (which are mainly related to the size of their schools). The buildings and environment of schools, whether in richer or poorer areas, are typically well maintained, again according to national arrangements and priorities. There has been some compensatory funding to schools in poorer areas depending on the level of poverty; this funding has been allocated by socio-economic 'deciles' based on national census data.³¹

There is both a national curriculum, the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and an indigenous national curriculum used in Māori-medium settings, Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.³² These are both broad and progressive frameworks that involved a lot of consultation with teachers. Over the last 50 years there has also been the development of a strong culture of child-centred teaching. New Zealand teachers are professionalised into this culture through initial and continuing teacher education and by their colleagues.³³ Primary teachers are represented by a single union, the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), which represents more than 50,000 primary and early childhood education (ECE) teachers, support staff, special education and school advisory staff. There is also only one main organisation for primary principals, the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF), representing over 2300 principals in a country with only about 2500 schools. These organisations are closely interconnected as the NZEI has a Principals' Council and around 95% of primary principals are also NZEI members. Secondary teachers and principals are also well organised but not quite so connected.³⁴ As discussed in the next chapter, assessment approaches have often been quite progressive as well. There are various forms of national and local governance. There has been a tradition of school inspection but since the 1990s the Education Review Office (ERO) has undertaken reviews with a managerialist emphasis (see also Chap. 7).

The National-led Government elected in 2008 has often argued that while the system works well for many children, about one in five children are not succeeding. (The origins of this argument are discussed in Chap. 2). However, the Government is coy about how this problem of unequal achievement and life chances is linked to New Zealand's neo-liberal policies and socio-economic inequalities, including the increasingly segregated nature of New Zealand's schools. It seems likely that New Zealand is only able to have a mainly public

education system because state (public) education in New Zealand allows for middle class advantage. The schools are heavily influenced by the socio-economic makeup of the families they draw on. So there is school segregation that reflects residential segregation, poorer and richer state schools and the achievement results of the schools strongly reflect this inequality. The richer schools offering the most positional advantage are popular and oversubscribed and these schools are then allowed to have enrolment zones.

The impact of this zoning is that it is mostly the children of families who can afford to live in zone who attend these schools ('selection by mortgage'). Being in the zone of a popular school (rather than, say, just across the road) can add considerably to the price of a house. Such schools are often willing and able to collect more funding from their wealthier intakes and communities, including larger 'donations' (which are more or less expected to be paid in many New Zealand schools). Popular middle class schools also often earn more from enrolling international students than schools serving lower socio-economic areas. In the 1990s New Zealand experimented with increasing school choice and competition through first requiring all schools to greatly increase the number of students they would take and then removing home zones for all except the most oversubscribed schools. But as Ted Fiske and Helen Ladd warned in their book mentioned earlier,³⁵ this only accelerated the social segregation between schools. Legislation introduced in 2000 involved the return to zoning and was supposed to represent a turning back from the market. But New Zealand schools requiring enrolment zones are able to mostly draw them up themselves and target middle class families in the way they do this.³⁶

There are quite a few kinds of regular state or public schools (boys, girls, primary, intermediate, secondary, years 1–13 composite schools etc.) but especially worth mentioning are the Māori-medium kura schools and there are about 70 of them, both Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kura ā Iwi. Kura were a grassroots indigenous initiative that the state system incorporated (and there is quite a story to tell about this process), but again kura have not entirely escaped the socio-economic disparities of other kinds of schools, as there are wealthier and poorer kura as well. It seems that middle class Māori and Pacific parents tend to seek out middle class schools for their children in a similar way to middle class Pākehā and Asian parents.³⁷ More generally though it is Pākehā and Asian families that are typically middle class, and it is these groups that tend to dominate New Zealand's middle class schools while the lower socio-economic schools tend to be dominated by Māori and/or Pacific students.

As well as the regular state schools, around 11% of New Zealand children attend what are called state-integrated (or just 'integrated') schools. These are mainly Catholic schools that, following legislation passed in 1975, were able to become state schools, while retaining their special religious or other character. The policy was initially intended to help the Catholic school system as this had run into serious financial problems. Under the integration agreement, the Government pays teachers' salaries and principals' salaries on the same national scales as for regular state schools. The Government does not own school land or buildings (thus maintaining separation of church and state) so 'proprietors' of the integrated schools are able to

charge ‘attendance dues’ to cover costs and any debts in this area. They are not allowed to charge other compulsory fees but usually request a ‘donation’ with a strong expectation that parents will pay it. Today the integrated schools are still mostly Catholic schools, but they also include other kinds of denominational and non-denominational Christian schools, other religions, Montessori and Waldorf (Steiner).

The integration policy has, in many respects, been very successful for incorporating different groups into public school provision in New Zealand. But again there are socio-economic differences amongst the state integrated schools and many promote middle class advantage. Middle class integrated schools are often popular with the middle classes because being able to use their special character to choose students, along with attendance dues and donations, allows these schools to be somewhat selective, even compared to middle class regular state schools. Additionally, a small number of historically socially elite private schools that charge much higher ‘donations’ than most schools have become integrated and kept their high fees. What is happening with such cases may be seen as a kind of privatisation, the government sponsoring private schools.

Over recent decades, the New Zealand’s education system has also been affected by endogenous privatisation involving ‘the importing of ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector in order to make the public sector more like business and more business-like’.³⁸ Early childhood centres, schools, universities and other tertiary institutions and the education agencies of central government have all become dominated by managerialism and its various accountability demands. The emphasis is on outputs, target-setting, information systems, big data, devolution, contestability, contractualism, user-pays, marketing, corporate strategy, vision and the like.

The support of the National Coalition Government led by John Key for such policy directions was predictable for at least three reasons.³⁹ First, there was National’s previous record in education in the 1990s which had seen ‘bulk-funding’ of teacher salaries, less regulated school enrolment policies and a heavy emphasis on external accountability through the Education Review Office. Second, although the intervening nine years of Labour under Prime Minister Helen Clark had involved some turning away from neo-liberalism, this was limited. Labour did not so much undo the neo-liberal project in New Zealand education as take some of the rough edges off it, producing neo-liberalism with a social conscience. Third, the Key Government had right-wing coalition partners to keep onside. The ACT party was clearly neo-liberal. The same could not be said of the other party, the Māori Party, but there was more potential for alignment than perhaps first apparent. ‘Choice’ policies had in some ways worked for Māori in the 1990s, allowing the establishment of the Maori-medium kura schools as an alternative form of Māori education. The election manifesto of the Māori Party, although not overtly neo-liberal, included elements which could chime with a neo-liberal emphasis on educational choice and competition e.g., “The public needs to be provided with better information on school performance, including Māori and Pacific achievement.”⁴⁰