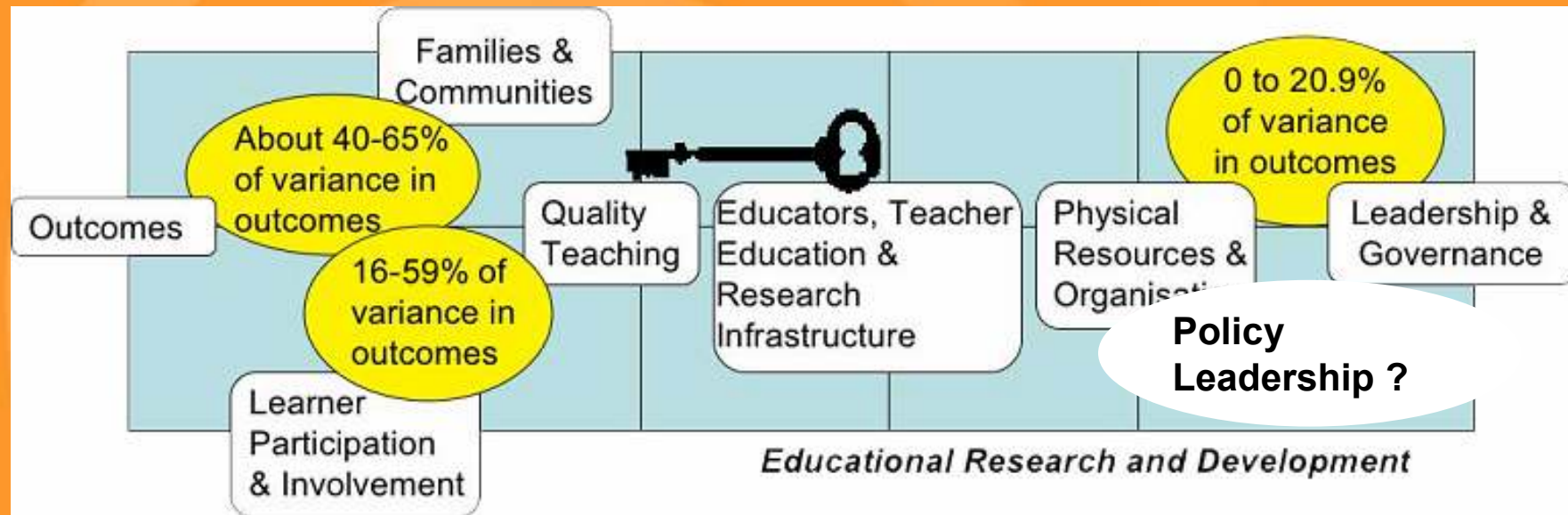


**The New Zealand
Ministry of Education's
Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis
[BES] Programme**

**Value-added
through a series
of iterative & linked BES developments**

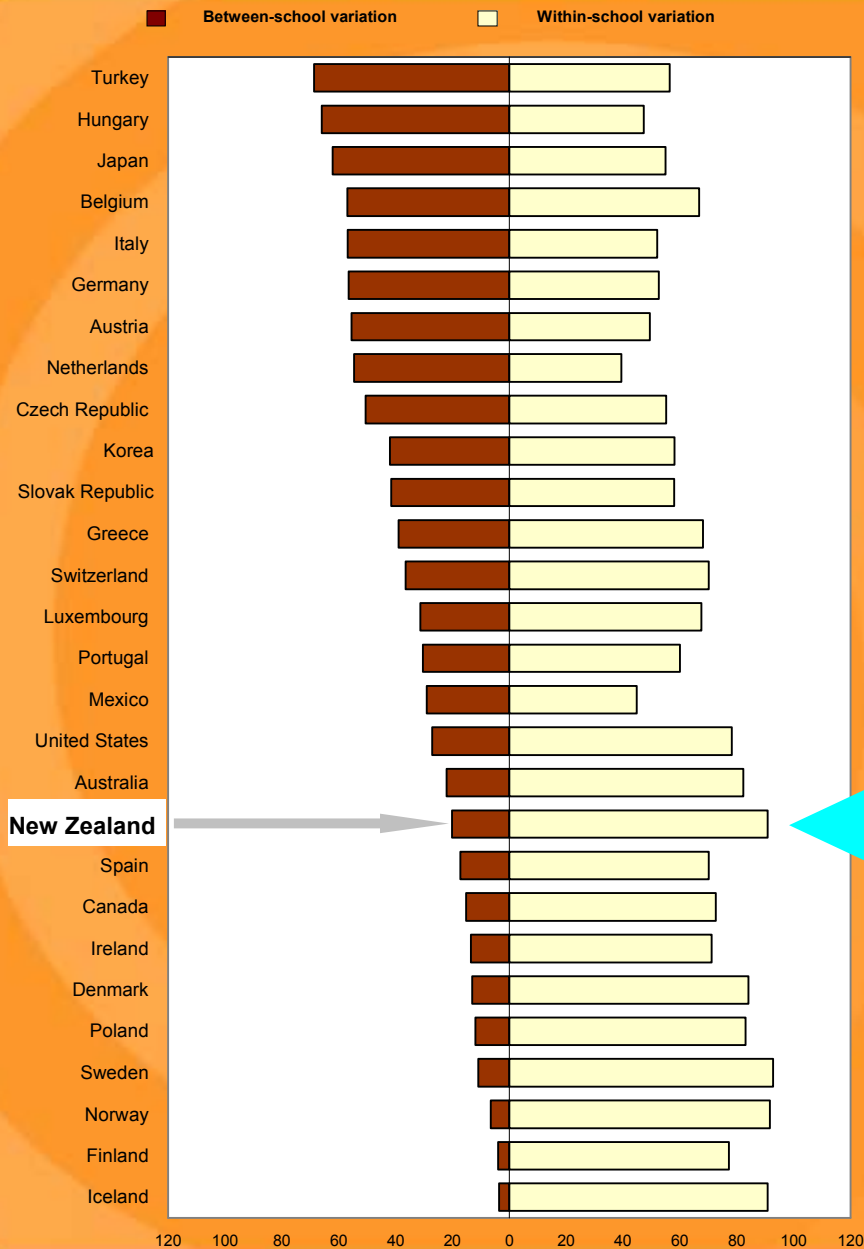
Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee, July 6, 2006

Indicative evidence for the focus on family influences & the focus on teaching as a key system influence (30 multi-level modelling studies + previous lit reviews)



Developing a Health-of-the-System Framework

Building a linked & interactive knowledge base
across key areas of leverage



A shared challenge for policy, research & practice

Between school variance
Within school variance

Building a shared national commitment to addressing the challenge

Iterative

What works
simultaneously?

academic,
social,
& well-being
outcomes

BESS

Why, how
& when?

for diverse
learners?



www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/bestevidencesynthesis

Professor Allan Luke & David Hogan, Centre for Research on Pedagogy and Practice, Singapore (2006)

World Yearbook of Education: Educational Research and Policy.

What is distinctive about the New Zealand approach is its willingness to consider all forms of research evidence regardless of methodological paradigms and ideological rectitude, and its concern in finding contextually effective, appropriate and locally powerful examples of “what works”. Its focus is on capturing and examining the impact of local contextual variables (e.g., population, school, community, linguistic and cultural variables).

Bodies of evidence' – interlinked & updating

Not prescriptive – creates understandings & conjectures

Theoretical coherence – theory as a tool to inform infinitely creative educational practice and ever-changing contexts

Complexity exemplified via case studies

Not 'best' available – BES names gaps & proposes evidence-based processes

Iterative – each BES an iteration inviting further research and development in NZ to feed into future BES iterations

**Dialogue about educational research, policy, and practice:
To what extent is it possible and who should be involved?**

Dialogue isn't necessarily more efficient, but it's more democratic and, therefore, more effective.

...Our preference is also based on the belief that in the long run dialogue and participation by a wide range of stakeholders produce better and more relevant educational research, policy and practice. ...Certainly, it may be easier – and, in that sense, more efficient – for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners in education to engage in action (or even in praxis) in isolation of members of the other groups.

Agreed National Guidelines for Development of a series of Projects - 3 national advisory groups

- Tool to guide policy, research & practice collaboration around BES development
- High level Ministry of Education agreement
- Ongoing formative quality assurance of both BES developments & Guidelines
 - Many contributors to formative quality assurance
- Model for continuous improvement

Professor Paul Cobb Vanderbilt University
winner of Hans Freudenthal medal winner 2005
Formative QA Report – Mathematics BES

The Formative Quality Assessment Seminar held in Auckland on February 13, 2006 exemplified transparency and provided an opportunity for members of a wide range of constituencies to present and debate their views.

The BES Guidelines are outstanding and are clearly grounded in the hard-won experience of synthesizing research findings to inform both policy and practice. Strengths of the Guidelines include...

- The mature view of evidence apparent in the call for theoretical pluralism and methodological pluralism.***
- The consistent call for attention to issues of language and culture.***
- The consistent call for attention to the worth of explanatory theories, including explanatory coherence.***

Ongoing formative evaluation of both syntheses & the programme

- Cobb's advice: Guidelines need
 - *More guidance re multiple audiences*
 - *Better distinctions between causality claims*
 - *Exemplification of Health-of-the-System Framework & systemic analysis*
 - *More consistency in 'Responsiveness to Diversity Framework' & attention to the fluidity and complexity of individual identity*
- Each international quality assurer & advisor assisting with development e.g. Professor Jere Brophy, Dr Lorna Earl, Professor Allan Luke

**Teacher Union Ownership - Judie Alison, Advisory Officer
(Professional Issues) PPTA (Teacher Union) 23 February 2006**

PPTA regards itself as a partner in the BES programme. As the policy adviser at PPTA specialising in professional issues, I have been closely involved with the Best Evidence Synthesis work ever since 2003.

I have served on the advisory groups for the BES on Maths, Pangarau/Social Studies, Professional Learning and Leadership.

We also have a number of PPTA members involved in various ways on reference groups or serving as advisers or quality assurers for the projects.

The President and I were involved in developing strategy around the launch of the Alton-Lee and Biddulph BES work in 2003.

I was part of the reference group which developed the Guidelines.

Judie Alison, Advisory Officer
(Professional Issues) PPTA 23 February 2006

I believe that the BES programme is absolutely committed to promoting social justice, and for that reason our union, like NZEI, has committed itself to working alongside this research programme. The whole diversity framework that is an intrinsic part of BES (see the Guidelines) guides our thinking and our critiquing of work in progress, and the analysis of diversity that is being used is a very sophisticated and sensitive model light years away from the concept of diversity reflected in much other research work. Ensuring that teaching addresses issues of diversity is fundamental to promoting social justice in education.

Added – value?

- BES developments – linked & interactive – attract resources
- Raises quality across projects
- Makes transparent a process of building policy knowledge – less able to be embargoed
- Counters siloing of educational research – national collaboration occurring across educational researchers, across universities across teacher education, and across practice
- Positions research value differently – using triangulation and BES methodology one study can inform many aspects of policy
- Builds understanding across indigenous perspectives – enriches whole knowledge base
- Increases demand for knowledge
- Builds cohesive knowledge base without sacrificing complexity

Added – value?

- Partnerships across policy, research and practice provide focal point for vigorous debate and ongoing communication and contestation – informed by evidence >shared language
- Develops a professional community >commitment to addressing a shared challenge in education >builds pressure for the issues arising to be addressed
- Getting everyone more focussed on diverse learners & a range of valued outcomes – academic, social and cultural identity
- Focuses researchers on teachers as audience & policy as audience – orientation to making a positive difference
- Cumulative effect of a series of BESs – building receptiveness in policy, research, schools, teachers & teacher educators

Being Wary of Magical Thinking about Evidence-Based Knowledge Development

- BES as a catalyst for Research & Development – the ‘Living BES’
- Developing the conditions for use of BES consistent with findings of BESs e.g.
 - evidence about impact of research on practice
 - evidence about conditions supporting teacher learning
 - trialling teacher responses to case studies for cognitive load, learning & preference)
- Evaluation Strategy for BES – Dr Lorna Earl assisting
- Iterative approach is key to value add