

# NZCER Shifting Thinking Conference: Quizzical Quandaries

Below are seven quizzical quandaries that emerged from our thinking and talking and from the conversations on the [Shiftingthinking.org](http://Shiftingthinking.org) site. We asked conference participants to tell us which one interested them the most, and we used that information to put participants into learning groups for day two of the conference.

**Quandary A: Parading purposes:** You've heard today about the various purposes of schooling and how those purposes need to shift and change to keep up with the changing world. What purpose should schools have in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What purposes do we need to let go of? What would this mean?

**Quandary B: All hands on deck:** Many [shiftingthinking.org](http://shiftingthinking.org) readers were puzzled by what schools should do to expand the range of people who help educate young people in some way. What is the role of those people who are not official, qualified teachers? How do they relate to the official teachers?

**Quandary C: Building the plane in the air:** How do we keep schools running and heading in a safe and useful direction while simultaneously changing towards new forms of education?

**Quandary D: Self-managing change:** In a system like New Zealand's where the schools are expected to be self-managing, where does the impetus for change come from? How can we ensure that the changes happen across the whole system? Does that even matter?

**Quandary E: Growing wise:** Right now, schools struggle to meet the needs of our young people. Whose responsibility should it be to support people to become wise over the course of their lives? How would we do this?

**Quandary F: Teaching and testing:** There is a raging debate about what content students need and how they'll be assessed on that content. Do we want to keep the subject matter designations? Should there be a whole new way of organising curricula? What knowledge is powerful knowledge? Should students determine their own curriculum or are there certain ideas and/or subject areas all students need exposure to? How will we measure what students have learnt?

**Quandary G: Equitable for all:** Schools are funded by—and for—*everyone*. They are supposed to develop everyone's ability to *be* who they want to be, and to extend the range of possibilities for what that might be. Taking this seriously raises a number of issues - e.g. students learn different things, and/or have different goals. How could a public education system deal with this?



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