

**A SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE REFERENCE GROUP**

*Curriculum Stocktake
Learning and Evaluation Policy
January 2001*

(I) GUIDE TO THE SUMMARY

1. This summary is derived from the feedback received from the Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group during the first meeting held on 29-30 November 2000.
2. The Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group is comprised of teacher and principal representatives nominated by the main unions and professional organisations, as well as from Te Akatea, TEFANZ, STA, NZVCC, and the Employers' Federation. The Director of NZCER is an invited member and membership was broadened to ensure regional representation. A list of current Reference Group Members is provided below:

CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE REFERENCE GROUP		
Name	Represents	Affiliation
Debi Marshall-Lobb	Te Akatea	Te Kura Kaupapa O Manawatu
Tricia Chapman	STA	WCE
Professor Clive McGee	TEFANZ	University of Waikato
Brother Pat Lynch	APIS	Catholic Education Office
Tim Oughton	Independent Schools Council	St Andrews' College
Jenny Earle	NZPF	Hampden Street School
Kelvin Squire	NZPF	Stratford Primary School
Margaret McLeod	SPANZ	Wellington Girls' College
Graham Stoop	SPANZ	Burnside High School
Marilyn Davies	NZEF	Education and Training Advisor
Gerald Koberstein	Area Schools Association	Mangakahia Area School
Graeme Aitken	NZVCC	University of Auckland
Frances Nelson	NZEI	Northcote Primary School
Hone Niwa	NZEI	New Plymouth School Support Services
Andrew Kear	PPTA	PPTA Head Office
Jenny McCutcheon	PPTA	President
Robyn Baker	NZCER	NZCER
Raewyn Gregory		Principal, Kaingaroa School

The Reference Group Meeting Record

3. Reference Group members were invited to bring a list of key strengths and key weaknesses of the national curriculum, and the positive changes and negative changes it has brought about. Each member presented key points, and discussion about issues raised was recorded also. Some Reference Group members pointed out that their submissions reflected contrary views from within their sector.
4. As Reference Group members spoke their comments were typed. Reference Group members were invited to synthesize their key issues in small groups and an overall summary of key issues raised was produced by the whole reference group and is available as part of the transcript. A transcript was made of the 759 submission and discussion points made.

Summary Approach

5. The varied feedback has been sorted by topic. The topics were generated from the feedback. The following summaries were derived from an analysis of the frequency of mention and the degree of sector group **consensus**. Raw numbers in brackets after points summarized indicate the number of mentions which, together with information about the degree of sector group **consensus**, assist in representing the priorities identified by the Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group at their initial meeting. **Consensus** is used to reflect the status of feedback when all members of the Reference Group made the same point in their submissions. **Consensus** is also used when, although initially only a few members raised the issue, the whole Reference Group agreed that the issue was a priority at the end of the Reference Group discussions. Accordingly the raw numbers in brackets indicate the kind of consensus reached. An Executive Summary is provided at the outset.

Use of the Summary

6. The Curriculum Stocktake will include a range of strategies to obtain information about the effectiveness of the national curriculum in practice and a strategic direction for ongoing review and renewal. The Reference Group Summary provides an initial point of reference for feedback from the sector groups. The summary helps the Ministry of Education to identify issues of particular concern and will inform the Curriculum Stocktake priorities and work programme. This document will be placed on the Curriculum Stocktake Kete on Te Kete Ipurangi. The paper may also assist Reference Group members in their consultation with the sector groups. A school sampling study will be designed to provide a national perspective on issues raised.
7. The Reference Group made a number of direct suggestions about approach to Curriculum Stocktake that are being taken up in the Curriculum Stocktake process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(I) GUIDE TO THE SUMMARY	2
(II) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FEEDBACK FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE REFERENCE GROUP.....	5
1. NATIONAL CURRICULUM CONTENT AND DOCUMENTS (367)	8
1.1 <i>General Feedback (158)</i>	8
1.2 <i>Essential Skills (32)</i>	8
1.3 <i>Attitudes (7)</i>	9
1.4 <i>Essential Learning Areas: Overview</i>	9
1.5 <i>Technology (28)</i>	9
1.6 <i>Science/ Pūtaiao (20)</i>	10
1.7 <i>Language and Languages (15)</i>	10
1.8 <i>Arts (12)</i>	10
1.9 <i>Social Sciences (10)</i>	11
1.10 <i>Mathematics (7)</i>	11
1.11 <i>Health and Physical Education (6)</i>	11
1.12 <i>The Curriculum Documents (72)</i>	11
2. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (171)	12
2.1 <i>Overview of Feedback</i>	12
2.2 <i>The Initial Approach to National Curriculum Development (48)</i>	12
2.3 <i>Curriculum Support and Resourcing (89)</i>	13
2.4 <i>Teacher and School Self-Review Practices (9)</i>	14
2.5 <i>Property and Equipment Concerns (17)</i>	14
2.6 <i>School Structure and Timetabling Issues (8)</i>	14
3. ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES, ASSESSMENT, LEVELS, COMPLIANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY & MANDATING ISSUES (139).....	15
3.1 <i>Achievement Objectives, Assessment and Levels (95)</i>	15
3.2 <i>Compliance Culture (25)</i>	15
3.1 <i>Mandating Issues (19)</i>	16
4. TEACHERS, TEACHER CAPABILITY AND TEACHER EDUCATION (98)	16
4.1 <i>Pre-service Teacher Education (28)</i>	16
4.1 <i>Teacher Capability and Professional Development (70)</i>	16
5. LEARNING, TEACHING, PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM INTEGRATION (89).....	17
5.1 <i>Learning, Teaching, and Pedagogy (40)</i>	17
5.2 <i>Best practice (13)</i>	17
5.3 <i>Curriculum Integration (36)</i>	17
6. NGĀ MARAUTANGA (77).....	18
6.1 <i>Overview</i>	18
6.2 <i>Specific Feedback</i>	18
7. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS (36).....	18
7.1 <i>Impact on Students (16)</i>	18
7.2 <i>Implications for Diverse Students (20)</i>	19
8. EXPLICIT FEEDBACK AND ADVICE ABOUT APPROACH TO THE CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE (28)	19

(II) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FEEDBACK FROM THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE REFERENCE GROUP

National Curriculum Content and Documents

- Over one third of the feedback concerned the national curriculum content and documents. The sector group representatives were in consensus that having a national curriculum is positive and an affirmation of a unique New Zealand perspective within a global focus. The documents were valued as a hands-on planning resource for teachers. Ngā Marautanga are valued as a long-awaited taonga.
- The Reference Group was in consensus that the national curriculum is overcrowded, that depth is sacrificed for breadth and that there are negative implications of the overcrowding for student learning and teacher workload. The overcrowding creates conflict between national and local curricula. The revised NAGs and increased emphasis on numeracy and literacy are seen to have addressed this issue positively but insufficiently. The Reference Group is seeking core content to be clarified and they wish the role of national curriculum to be clarified in education beyond Year 10.
- The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* is a valued document. The Reference Group was in consensus that there needs to be a reconsideration of the place of the framework and the philosophy underpinning it. The Reference Group is seeking a consideration of the option of mandating a revised framework rather than the curriculum statements.
- The Reference Group is seeking an evaluation of the functioning of the curriculum structure in practice.
- The Reference Group was in consensus about the need to consider the match between the essential learning areas and the essential skills, and the need to explore the effectiveness of teaching of the essential skills in practice. There was debate about the relative importance of skills and conceptual understanding.
- Technology was the essential learning area that received the most feedback of any essential learning area and an area where the Reference Group reached consensus about their concern. While technology was seen as a potential strength of the national curriculum, there was reported confusion and difficulty about the integration of technology across the national curriculum.
- The Reference Group reached consensus about the need to consider the impact of the national curriculum on the teaching of second languages. New Zealand history and civics were also identified as areas needing more prescription and emphasis. These were the only three areas of national curriculum content omission identified in the feedback.
- **Implementation Issues**
 - Almost a fifth of the total feedback from the Reference Group concerned implementation and support issues. The Reference Group was in consensus that there have been insufficient resources provided to assist teachers to teach the national curriculum. The resource constraints were seen to be exacerbated for Ngā Marautanga. Over a quarter of the negative feedback about curriculum implementation was focussed on the early process of implementation of the national curriculum. The Reference Group was in consensus that the competitive market model was seen to be a barrier to the implementation of the national curriculum. Recent developments such as closer links between policy and implementation and Te Kete Ipurangi were reported to be very positive for effective implementation.

- The Reference Group was in consensus about the failure of property provisions and staffing formulae to be responsive to resourcing needs of the national curriculum. Specific areas of concern were primary science, technology, drama, arts and language and languages. Issues of time-tabling and school structure constraints on implementing the national curriculum were also raised.
- The national curriculum was seen to have had a positive impact on self-review practices by schools and teachers.
- The Reference Group was in consensus about the need for consolidation and national co-ordination of curriculum support for the national curriculum. A recurring theme and area of consensus was the need for sharing of best practice.

Achievement Objectives, Assessment, Levels, Compliance, Accountability and Mandating Issues

- The third most frequent source of feedback was the area of assessment and compliance. This topic gave rise to the greatest proportion of concern. While a number of potential strengths and positive changes were seen to arise out of the outcomes focus in the national curriculum, the Reference Group was in consensus that assessment practices are undermining learning and teaching in the national curriculum.
- The Reference Group was in consensus in their concern about the impact of ERO in influencing an environment of over-compliance. Teachers were reported to be constrained to assess student performance against too many outcomes. In particular Reference Group members were concerned that ERO has used the achievement objectives as audit tools whereas teachers perceived these as planning tools.
- Much concern was associated with the perceived mismatch between the levels and learning processes of students. Reference Group members were not seeking to abandon the 8 levels. Rather there was disparate feedback about the advantages and disadvantages of the levels structure and a request for a rationale for the 8 level structure, and more information about the impact of the levels in practice.
- The revision of the NAGs was seen to be the single most positive change in mandating. However, this revision was considered to be insufficient to address issues of overcrowding. Reference Group members are seeking a resolution to the overcrowding issue.

Teachers, Teacher Capability and Teacher Education

- Over 10% of the feedback received concerned teacher capability and teacher education issues. The Reference Group was in consensus about the unpreparedness of beginning teachers to teach the national curriculum. They emphasized the additional pressures experienced by schools in supporting beginning teachers and are seeking improved pre-service training. Teacher subject-knowledge in mathematics, science and technology were areas of particular concern.
- The Reference Group was in consensus in their concern about delays in the provision of, and inadequacy of the nature and extent of, professional development support. Positive changes in the level of MOE support were appreciated but more is reported to be needed. Primary teachers were seen to have benefited from their cross-curricular involvement although there were additional workload pressures associated with the intensive development they had participated in across the essential learning areas.

Learning, Teaching, Pedagogy and Curriculum Integration

- The national curriculum was seen to have increased teachers' understanding of learning and teaching, increased debate about pedagogy and increased the focus on students. These positive outcomes are perceived to have been constrained by the assessment and compliance emphasis.
- The pedagogical issue of most concern to the Reference Group was curriculum integration. The Reference Group emphasized the potential for curriculum integration but perceived that constraints upon integration had occurred in the implementation process. The Reference Group was in consensus about the need for support for curriculum integration across the curriculum and in technology particularly.
- **Ngā Marautanga**
 - The feedback about Ngā Marautanga reflected the valuing of the Māori medium curriculum as a long-awaited taonga that has had a positive impact on students and communities in the face of significant and long-standing resourcing difficulties.
 - The lack of fluent and qualified Māori teachers is a concern for implementation. Lack of associated resources in Te Reo, lack of access to experts, insufficient opportunities for professional development, lack of facilities and curriculum support are causing significant problems in the implementation of Ngā Marautanga. While there was still seen to be a paucity of resourcing for Ngā Marautanga, the perception was that there had been a marked increase in support provided by the Ministry of Education recently.
 - Primary schools were seen to provide a better environment for the implementation of Ngā Marautanga when all teachers worked to support development of Te Reo. Secondary Māori language teachers are experiencing isolation and compartmentalization.
 - The need for more research on the impact of Ngā Marautanga was emphasized.

Implications for Students

- The national curriculum is seen to be more responsive to the needs of diverse students. Reference Group members are concerned that compliance and overcrowding issues are undermining the potential benefits for students. The Reference Group is seeking more evidence about the impact of the national curriculum on students and consideration of the needs of students who are still failing.

Explicit Feedback and Advice about Approach to the Curriculum Stocktake

- Over and above the general implications of the Reference Group feedback for the Curriculum Stocktake, explicit suggestions were made for the process used in the Curriculum Stocktake. These included the need for effective consultation, and the need for communication to reach every school. The Reference Group is seeking a focus on consolidation and co-ordination nationally and a focus on practice. Specific issues are the need for early childhood links and further research. Formal discussion papers are sought, particularly a paper on curriculum overcrowdedness. The Reference Group is seeking information about who might be involved in the Māori medium Curriculum Stocktake.

1. NATIONAL CURRICULUM CONTENT AND DOCUMENTS (367)

1.1 General Feedback (158)

There was a **consensus** from the Reference Group representatives that having a New Zealand national curriculum is positive (33). Key reasons given were the significance and usefulness of a statement of valued cultural knowledge, skills attitudes and values, the potential for consistency and flexibility to meet local needs, the affirmation of a unique New Zealand perspective within a global focus, the cohesive framework and the greater involvement of Māori.

There was **consensus** amongst the Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group that the national curriculum is overcrowded, that depth is sacrificed for breadth and that there are serious negative implications of curriculum overcrowding for student learning and teacher workload (37). The practices of, or perceived impact of, ERO auditing against achievement objectives, are considered to be exacerbating the problem of overcrowdedness. The Reference Group feedback included expression of concern about what curriculum content is actually taught in educational practice (4).

A negative outcome of the overcrowding was seen by the whole Reference Group to be the loss of emphasis on local needs (9). The Reference Group was in **consensus** in their concern about the conflict between national and local curricula. The overcrowding is seen to be compromising the positive potential of flexibility and responsiveness inherent in the curriculum (9). The revised NAGS and greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy were seen to have addressed this issue positively but insufficiently (5). Substantial debate occurred within the Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group about the rationale for the essential core of the curriculum content and the relative significance of knowledge or skills (29). The Reference Group was in **consensus** about the need for core content to be clarified. Also the Reference Group reached **consensus** that they wished to further explore issues of national curriculum in education beyond 10 (7).

The Reference Group members were agreed that they were seeking a more explicit statement of the epistemology and philosophy explaining the structure and approach to the national curriculum content (3). There was uncertainty and concern expressed about the rationale for the curriculum structure but affirmation of the focus on learning areas, skills, attitudes and values (9).

There was **consensus** reached in the overall group session about the negative impact of the national curriculum on 2nd language learning (7).

Other issues raised by individual members of the Reference Group in this category were:

- the failure to adequately value co-curricular activities such as sport, drama and cultural activities offered by the school outside the formal curriculum (1),
- the conflict between curriculum content and the secondary school structure(1),
- the lack of attention to the transition from ECE and Te Whāriki(2), and
- concern about students disenfranchised from curriculum content (2).

1.2 Essential Skills (32)

The primary and most widespread feedback about essential skills was the perceived disconnection and mismatch between essential skills and essential learning areas (12). The Reference Group was in **consensus** about their concern about essential skills although SPANZ reported there to be more focus on skills in practice since 1992 as a result of the national curriculum. A strength of the curriculum was seen to be the approach to enhance skill

development for all students. However, essential skill development was seen not to be understood clearly or addressed properly in practice. Problems of continuity from early childhood (1), and skills integration and transfer across the curriculum were mentioned specifically. The skills emphasis of the national curriculum structure was seen to be subverted in practice by the compliance focus on achievement objectives and ERO's influence. The revision of the NAGs was seen to have been a positive influence in increasing the focus on skill development in the primary sector (3).

The focus on and acknowledgement of essential skills were seen to be a strength of the national curriculum by SPANZ, the New Zealand Principals' Federation and the Employers' Federation (3). The Employers' Federation emphasized skills as desirable to employers and reported concern about the loss in 1993 of the Record of Achievement that had been designed and trialled to report upon skill and knowledge development (1).

The Reference Group engaged in debate about the value and emphasis that should be placed upon essential skills (12). Skills development was alternatively argued to be a primary concern for employers, and a low level focus that would be less enduring for later employment needs than a strong conceptual base. Reference Group members are seeking further exploration of this debate.

1.3 Attitudes (7)

The focus on attitudes and values is seen to be a strength of the national curriculum (3). However, the feedback given was that there is a need for more emphasis given to attitudes and values across the curriculum in practice (4).

1.4 Essential Learning Areas: Overview

The Reference Group was primarily concerned about the way the whole national curriculum is working in practice. Accordingly particular learning areas were less of a focus of discussion than overall curricular issues. However, Technology was an exception and was the essential learning area that generated most concern followed by Science and Language and Languages. Least comment was received about Health and Physical Education. The feedback reflected the recency of curriculum developments in Health and Physical Education and the Arts. Apart from comment about Pūtaiao, comment about the ELAs was directed towards the English medium curriculum. Feedback about Ngā Marautanga is chiefly reported in section 6 of this summary.

1.5 Technology (28)

The Reference Group representatives were in **consensus** that technology was the essential learning area of most concern. Technology was also the focus of substantially more feedback than any other essential learning area.

The primary area of concern was confusion and difficulties experienced in integrating technology across the curriculum and in generating links to other essential learning areas (12). Disintegration rather than integration was reported to have occurred. The Reference Group considered issues of integration to require focus, support and resources. Problems and constraints reported focussed on teacher capability; inadequate facilities for mandated curriculum, structures, timetabling and inadequate resources (12). Concern about the clash between the curriculum integration model and the expertise of home economics disciplinary training was reported. Concern was expressed that technology is taught as a one off activity rather than an educational programme. Feedback was given that the technology curriculum should not be an independent curriculum statement but interwoven across the other essential learning area statements (1).

Feedback was also received that technology is seen as a strength of the new curriculum that has changed teaching styles and approaches and challenged teachers to move out of their comfort zone (3).

1.6 Science/ Pūtaiao (20)

The national curriculum was reported to have led to more science teaching in primary schools (1). The theme of 'environment' offers a rich opportunity for curriculum integration (1).

The most frequently expressed concerns about the science curriculum were the inadequate property and equipment provisions (5) and the inadequate teacher subject matter knowledge to teach science in primary and intermediate sectors (4). Fluency in the technical language of, and understanding of Pūtaiao are particular resource concerns for teacher education. Comment was made that the science curriculum support needs were different for chemistry and biology, and specific to the nature of the science being taught and the school sector context (2). Lack of equipment and appropriate property provisions were particular concerns for teaching of chemistry in the primary sector.

Research evidence of resistance to change from older male teachers, curriculum overcrowding, and the lack of sequenced prescription of the achievement objectives in science were identified as other areas of concern (3). Concern was also expressed that science curriculum was being used to train scientists prohibiting students from starting science training at tertiary level as is possible for other professional and vocational subjects (1).

A question was raised about the need for a technology strand in the science curriculum, which appears repetitive now that the technology statement is available (1).

Although the national curriculum development in science was seen to be more inclusive of teachers (1), many in the science community had felt disenfranchised (1).

1.7 Language and Languages (15)

The Reference Group reached **consensus** that an issue of concern is the constraints upon second language learning in the national curriculum (6). The issue was raised by SPANZ and supported by the Area Schools Association and NZCER. The claim was made that the overcrowded curriculum militates against introducing second language learning at the junior level when research indicates students are best able to learn other languages. The lack of qualified staff, resources and time were specified as constraints. Concern was expressed that New Zealand is an exception in an international pattern of more emphasis on second language learning.

Feedback was positive about the impact of the revised NAGs on literacy learning (1) but there was concern expressed about literacy for year 7 and 8 students, and at secondary school level where many students did not bring adequate literacy skills to their learning across the curriculum (4). There was concern expressed about resourcing of this essential learning area (1), the need for professional development in literacy and numeracy rather than literacy or numeracy (1), and the need for more integration of literacy learning across the curriculum (1).

Feedback was received that the levels reflect a development of progressively more difficult text (1).

1.8 Arts (12)

Reference Group Members noted the recency of the introduction of the Arts statement and the newness of the document (3). Schools were reported to be grappling with the new curriculum and slowing implementation to manage workload concerns.

The PPTA expressed concern about the lack of consultative process reporting that the Art Teachers Association did not see their submission reflected in the document (1). Another concern was property issues, particularly the lack of facilities for teaching drama (2)

There was seen to be a heavy demand on schools' professional development budgets for the implementation of the arts curriculum, particularly for teacher release time (2). There was reported to be a reduction in emphasis on skills-based learning in arts (1). One suggestion from the Association of Proprietors of Independent Schools was that there should be more choice in arts to relieve issues of overcrowding (1).

A query about assessment in the arts curriculum was raised in the light of ERO's report that New Zealand teachers are unnecessarily gathering a huge amount of data on students' art performance (1). NZEI asked whether it is appropriate to make hierarchical judgements about student performance in the arts (1).

1.9 Social Sciences (10)

The feedback about the social sciences learning area was diverse. Concern was expressed about the insufficient specification of New Zealand history in the document, and the insufficient emphasis on civics (3). However, more choice in social studies was suggested as a strategy for lessening the overcrowding of curriculum (2).

There was concern expressed about the levels structure and progression, and the existence of too many strands at each level (3). More critical thinking was reported to be needed in social studies (1). The interface between home economics and social studies was seen to be an area of staffing concern (1).

1.10 Mathematics (7)

NZEI gave positive feedback on the linear progression working well in the mathematics curriculum (1) but the NZ Principals' Federation was concerned about the lack of sequenced prescription and break down of the achievement objectives (1). The revised NAGs were seen to have supported renewed emphasis on mathematics (1). There was concern expressed that mathematics could be crowded too much by other curriculum areas (1).

Two areas of concern expressed were the inadequate mathematics backgrounds of pre-service teachers (1) and the paramount need for professional development in mathematics (1). Schools were concerned that they had been told that teachers could not take part in both the early numeracy and literacy professional development programmes (1).

1.11 Health and Physical Education (6)

Acknowledgement was made of the recency of the Health and Physical Education curriculum and teachers in primary particularly were reported to be grappling with the new statements (2). Particular concern was expressed about Health, Physical Education and Home Economics integration issues (3). APIS submitted that one way to resolve the problems of overcrowdedness would be to promote more choice in the Health and PE curriculum to promote in-depth learning in to enable more emphasis on literacy numeracy and science (1).

1.12 The Curriculum Documents (72)

The feedback in this category often overlapped with that given in other categories. However, there was substantial specific mention of the curriculum statements and documents that warranted a consideration of the feedback from this perspective.

With reference to the NZCF and the curriculum statements, the Reference Group reached **consensus** over two areas of focus for the Curriculum Stocktake. One area of **consensus** was

that there needs to be a reconsideration of the place of the NZCF and the philosophy underpinning it (9). The other area of **consensus** was about the need for an evaluation of the curriculum structure (16). The Reference Group raised the possibility that the New Zealand Curriculum Framework, which they held in high regard, should be updated and then mandated rather than the curriculum statements.

The feedback received across sectors was valuing of the documents as ‘hands-on’ (17). The statements were seen to be ready reference functional resources for teachers, particularly valued for teacher planning (1). Ngā Marautanga were valued as long awaited taonga. The documents were valued for their inclusiveness and the celebration of the unique position of Māori through Ngā Marautanga (3). However, the resourcing of schools to teach Ngā Marautanga statements was a major concern (3).

There was acknowledgement of the inevitability of difficulties associated with gains in taking on a new national curriculum (2). Concern was expressed about the early stages of the progressive implementation of the national curriculum statements and the initial absence of adequate curricular support and resources to supplement the documents (5). Particular concerns about the statements were the verbosity of early documents, insufficient detail in documents, lack of clarity, inconsistencies of terminology, and unnecessary complexity. The issue of the appropriateness of the technology statement being a stand-alone statement was raised. A further concern was the unintelligibility of the documents to parents (1). The documents were seen to be weakened by immediate resourcing problems such as teacher subject-knowledge (1). The documents themselves are a valued planning mechanism (1) but the links between the documents and compliance practices required of ERO are a source of concern (2).

Primary/secondary differences gave rise to considerable comment (6). Primary teachers were seen to be more familiar with the national curriculum structure because of their use of multiple statements and more likely to be selective in their focus. Several points of feedback emphasized difficulties in translating the documents into teaching practice (5). There was a call for research to reveal how New Zealand teachers are using the documents in practice.

2. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES (171)

2.1 Overview of Feedback

This topic elicited strong **consensus** from the Reference Group. Almost two thirds of the feedback on curriculum implementation was focussed on problems in the initial implementation approach, the lack of adequate resourcing of, support for, and barriers to, teaching of the national curriculum (116). Twelve per cent of the feedback in this category identified positive developments in resourcing and support and school self-review practices (21). A particular focus of the feedback in this category was the areas of need identified by the Reference Group (30). There was also further discussion, clarification and explanation of issues discussed in this category that was neutral rather than evaluative (4).

2.2 The Initial Approach to National Curriculum Development (48)

Over a quarter of the negative feedback about curriculum implementation received from the Reference Group was about the early process of the national curriculum development.

Many of the problems reported in the implementation of the national curriculum were considered by the Reference Group representatives to have arisen out of the political process that occurred in the early 1990s (16). The process was seen to be politically motivated and exclusive of teachers – although the degree of consultation with teachers was perceived to have varied for

different essential learning areas. The second major problem identified was the rapid pace of the early implementation that proceeded with insufficient research and trialling. The rapid pace was seen to have brought about negative changes in educational practice (16). The slowness of the provision of resources and support was also seen to have weakened the implementation of the curriculum (7). The staggered introduction was reported to have advantages and disadvantages. The chief disadvantage was the difficulty caused for curriculum integration by staggered implementation.

Two positive changes identified as arising out of the change and implementation process from the outset were seen to be the increased focus on teaching and learning, and the focus on full school development (2).

The Reference Group advised that the key implication of their feedback was the need for intensive consultation that gave the Ministry of Education credibility (7). By contrast with processes used in the early 1990s, QDG was seen to have used an approach over the development of NCEA that enabled a greatly strengthened process of development to occur with positive benefits for all concerned.

2.3 Curriculum Support and Resourcing (89)

Inadequate resourcing of, and support for curriculum change were areas of particular focus and concern for the Reference Group. Several issues and needs were often identified within a single sentence. Accordingly, it has been more difficult to summarize sub-categories of this feedback by raw numbers.

There was Reference Group **consensus** that there have been insufficient resources provided to assist teachers to teach the national curriculum (27). Specific concerns were expressed about inadequate teacher subject knowledge, insufficient teacher development, inadequate short-term provision of professional development, inadequate advisory support and the demands on school budgets associated with teacher development and relief to support national curriculum implementation. Feedback was given that a major obstacle for implementation had been staffing and available staff expertise (4). For some schools staffing levels had been lowered as new curriculum changes were implemented. The rapid pace of early curriculum reform, insufficient trialling, the slow arrival of written support, and the separation of policy and implementation were seen to have been particularly problematic.

The paucity of written guides as support for Māori medium curriculum was a particular concern (10). Issues of insufficient curriculum support were seen to be exacerbated for Ngā Marautanga. The lack of availability of non-fiction support materials was specified as a particular weakness for teaching Ngā Marau Māori. In the absence of adequate support, teachers were spending much time 'reinventing the wheel' (4).

There was a need reported for early and sustained provision of comprehensive curriculum guides, including resources to support teacher subject knowledge development (6).

The transition from primary to secondary was seen to create a difficult transition for the implementation of the national curriculum and occasioned much discussion amongst the Reference Group (9). Primary approaches to whole school planning were seen to be assisting implementation of the national curriculum. Student literacy levels were seen to be a barrier to access to the national curriculum implementation particularly at senior levels (3). Feedback was received about the difficulties of providing literacy support at secondary level.

The Reference Group was in **consensus** that the competitive market model was seen to have been a barrier to the implementation of the national curriculum (3). The contractual process used

was seen to be linked to inadequate resourcing (1). Problems identified in the initial process of national curriculum development were seen to have disenfranchised teachers leading to insufficient levels of teacher ownership of the national curriculum development (3).

Boards of Trustees were reported to be seeking to be informed by teachers about needs for curriculum support (1).

Positive feedback was given about recent developments in high quality curriculum support for both Māori and English medium documents (5). Resources such as 'Making Better Sense of Science' were seen to be making a big difference. Recent provision of support documents with new national curriculum statements has been a particular strength and valued change. The Te Kete Ipurangi initiative is seen to be a breakthrough in the provision of resource support (2). Positive feedback was also given about the slowing down of the timetable of curriculum implementation. However, concern was expressed that curriculum support may lessen now the English medium Arts statement has been published (1).

One submission from the Independent Schools' Council reported that the national curriculum has brought improved professional development opportunities for teachers than were available previously (1).

The Reference Group representatives were in **consensus** about the need for consolidation and national co-ordination of curriculum support (1). A recurring theme and area of **consensus** was the need for greater opportunities for best practice to be shared (6). The need for information about best practice was expressed unequivocally as an immediate need. There was also a call for more research into practice to help produce valid information about best practice (1). The Reference Group was in **consensus** about seeking better information for parents about the national curriculum in order to support effective implementation (1).

2.4 Teacher and School Self-Review Practices (9)

The positive outcome of the national curriculum implementation that was most frequently and widely reported was the potential for and increase in systemic self-review by schools and teachers (9). This feedback was received from the PPTA, the Independent Schools Council, the Area Schools Association, and the New Zealand Principals' Federation. This change was seen to have had a positive impact on the quality of practice. The professional leadership of the principal was seen to be central to interpreting and effectively implementing curriculum, particularly in primary schools.

2.5 Property and Equipment Concerns (17)

The Reference Group representatives were in **consensus** about the failure of property provisions and staffing formulae to be responsive to the resourcing needs of the national curriculum and the need for resourcing formulae to be linked to curriculum needs (7). Issues of property were seen to be 'central to the curriculum' for schools in general but a particular concern for primary science and rural schools (1). The mismatch between property and equipment provisions and the expectations for students implicit in the documents was highlighted in group discussion. Technology was the curriculum area causing the most concern (4). Inadequate facilities and provisions for science teaching (2), drama teaching, arts (2) and language and languages curriculum were also specified (1).

2.6 School Structure and Timetabling Issues (8)

Contrary views were offered that the curriculum does not require structural changes in schools (1), and that effective teaching requires different approaches to timetabling (6), to enable

curriculum integration. Structural issues about intermediate, middle and senior secondary schools were briefly debated. As recorded in the feedback about assessment issues there was concern expressed about discontinuities in the interface between the primary and secondary sectors (1).

3. ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES, ASSESSMENT, LEVELS, COMPLIANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY & MANDATING ISSUES (139)

The sector representatives valued the potential offered by the outcomes focussed curriculum but the potential is seen to be undermined by a range of constraints impacting on the curriculum in practice. While there was recognition of positive outcomes, particular by secondary sector groups (16% of feedback) the overwhelming weight of feedback (over 70%) reflected **consensus** in the concern expressed about assessment and compliance issues in practice.

3.1 Achievement Objectives, Assessment and Levels (95)

A number of potential strengths and positive changes were seen to be associated with the outcomes focus in the national curriculum (16). Strengths reported were that curriculum policy is linked to assessment policy, that the focus on assessment focuses on the learning goals and emphasizes the needs of learners who are having difficulty. The outcomes focus and achievement objectives were seen to strengthen the quality of assessment, and offer a potential strength in reporting on what students can do. The strengths were identified primarily in the submissions from secondary sector and other representatives, but this perspective was not generally shared by primary representatives.

The Reference Group representatives reported a substantial number of weaknesses and negative changes in assessment associated with the national curriculum (31). Specific concerns were that assessing against a large number of outcomes is a problem, that the artificial structuring of achievement objectives and levels do not match the realities of learning and teaching, and that teachers are being less creative because of the number of objectives. Achievement objectives, rather than student needs, are reported to be driving programmes. There is reported to be a lack of connectedness between assessment methodologies (E.g. SEA, NEMP, and PAT).

The Reference Group members were in **consensus** over three issues. These issues were that: the ways in which assessment against multiple outcomes constrains teaching and learning in practice is a negative; that assessment information does not transfer in the interface of primary and secondary sectors; and that curriculum levels are not really levels. Much concern was associated with the arbitrary nature of the levels and the mismatch between the levels and the learning process for students (36). Reference Group members were not, however, seeking to abandon the 8 levels. Rather, the tenor of the discussion indicated widespread uncertainty about the levels and the need for more information about the rationale for, and the impact of, the levels in practice. The potential of the levels to assist teachers to identify expected standards of achievement, and the ability to multi-level' students were reported to be positives (5).

Other concerns expressed were: the difficulties the level structure generated for reporting to parents (5), and the problems generated by the competitive market model that accompanied the early implementation of the national curriculum (2).

3.2 Compliance Culture (25)

Much of the concern expressed about the impact of assessment was linked to the compliance culture the Reference Group attributed to the influence of ERO (25). Although members

reported some variation in ERO practices, there was **consensus** in the Reference Group in their concern about 'ERO overcompliance'. In particular, the Reference Group members were concerned about the use of the achievement objectives in the national curriculum statements as audit rather than planning tools.

3.1 Mandating Issues (19)

The revision of the NAGs was seen to be the single most positive change in mandating (6). While NZEI supported the revision of the NAGs concern was also expressed about the implications for the balanced curriculum from NZEI and STA (2). While the value of having a mandated national curriculum was noted (2) the Reference Group was concerned about the implications of over-mandating for teaching and learning (3).

The concern about the negative effects of over-mandating and compliance culture was expressed by the Employers' Federation and sector groups. The Employers' Federation expressed a need for more enabling legislation and regulations. Both the New Zealand Principals' Federation and the PPTA asked for a consideration of an alternative approach to address the overcrowding and compliance issues; that the New Zealand Curriculum Framework be mandated rather than the curriculum statements. In each case the proposal was expressed as a query needing careful consideration (5)

Feedback was received from the STA representative that there is a need for more New Zealand history to be included within mandated curriculum (1).

4. TEACHERS, TEACHER CAPABILITY AND TEACHER EDUCATION (98)

4.1 Pre-service Teacher Education (28)

Concern about the quality of pre-service teacher education was highlighted in the overall Reference Group **consensus**, and small group summaries as well as in discussion amongst Reference Group Members (24). There was a focus on the unpreparedness of beginning teachers to teach the national curriculum and the additional workload required of schools and experienced teachers to support new teachers. Inadequate teacher subject knowledge was identified as a particular concern (4). The problem of inadequate preparation of teachers to teach Ngā Marautanga was seen to be a serious issue linked to the delays in provision of Māori language immersion programmes for primary, secondary and pre-service students.

4.1 Teacher Capability and Professional Development (70)

There was also Reference Group **consensus** about delays in provision of, and inadequacy in the nature and extent of professional development support and provision (14). Feedback was received that positive changes in the level of MOE support were appreciated (1) but more is needed. There was considerable cross-sector feedback (14) reflecting the view that the national curriculum itself, had brought about positive change through increasing teacher and school self-review practices. One outcome was seen to be that the teaching professions were more positively disposed towards addressing disparities (1).

Other points made about teacher capability were that the initial process of curriculum development, the under-resourcing of the change process, lack of professional development to address existing skill sets, and the reduction in staffing levels concurrent with new curriculum development had led to disaffection amongst teachers (16). The overcrowdedness of curriculum had exacerbated workload issues for primary teachers in particular (6). Secondary and primary

sector differences were discussed and primary teachers were seen to have benefited from their involvement across the curriculum and their shared planning practices (7).

The Reference Group reported that the compliance culture had constrained teacher professionalism and innovative practice (4).

The Reference Group reached **consensus** about the need for the Curriculum Stocktake to address future needs for teacher education (1). The Reference Group emphasized the need to share and examine 'best practice' (2). The point was made that research in this area is needed (3).

The STA representative highlighted the need for teachers to communicate to Boards of Trustees their needs for support to teach the national curriculum (1).

5. LEARNING, TEACHING, PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM INTEGRATION (89)

5.1 Learning, Teaching, and Pedagogy (40)

Increased understanding of learning and teaching, more debate about pedagogy, increased focus on students and student outcomes, increased creativity and increased community input were seen to be (potential) strengths, and positive changes in educational practice occurring as a result of the national curriculum development (19). The strengths of the national curriculum documents and framework as planning mechanisms were emphasized (4). However, the compliance culture, assessment practices, excessive workload, lack of teacher reflection time, problems with the levels structure, teachers' lack of subject matter pedagogy and lack of clarity about skills teaching were seen to be weakening the potential of the curriculum implementation (17).

5.2 Best practice (13)

The Reference Group was in **consensus** about their priority for identifying and sharing best practice (13). The feedback emphasized diverse needs to maximise the use of effective pedagogy in the teaching of the national curriculum. For example, the Reference Group feedback specified needs for more explicit statements about the nature of effective teaching, more access to detailed examples of learning experiences and assessment examples, more focus on student creativity, more varied use of different kinds of small group, individual and whole class learning contexts, and less curriculum breadth in order to support more in-depth learning.

5.3 Curriculum Integration (36)

Over 40% of Reference Group feedback about the impact of the national curriculum on learning and teaching was focussed on curriculum integration (36). The Reference Group emphasized the potential for curriculum integration and was in **consensus** about the need for support for curriculum integration (18). However, they saw that constraints upon integration had occurred in the implementation of the national curriculum (5). A further area of **consensus** within the Reference Group was their concern about the implementation of the technology curriculum and barriers to curriculum integration (12). One comment was made that the national curriculum had strengthened subject teaching which was a positive change in the face of some 'wishy washy' curriculum integration that had been occurring previously (1).

6. NGĀ MARAUTANGA (77)

6.1 Overview

The feedback about Ngā Marautanga reflected the valuing of the Māori medium curriculum as a long awaited taonga (4) and the positive impact that Ngā Marautanga has had on students and communities (18) in the face of the significant and long-standing resourcing difficulties that constrain the curriculum in practice. Although recent professional development and resourcing support received from the Ministry of Education was welcomed (4), over half of the submission points and associated discussion (38) reflected difficulties encountered in translating Ngā Marautanga into practice. Other feedback (9) focused on needs and questions. A particular area of concern was the insufficient provision of programmes to support Ngā Marautanga and Māori language at secondary and senior secondary level (4).

6.2 Specific Feedback

Constraints such the lack of fluent and qualified Māori teachers, the lack of associated resources in Te Reo, the lack of access to experts, insufficient opportunities for professional development and lack of facilities and curriculum support are causing significant problems in the implementation of Ngā Marautanga. Feedback was received about the impact on Māori teachers' workloads. A comment was made about the guilt experienced by overworked Māori teachers as they strive to overcome the difficulties faced because of insufficient resourcing.

Concern about the initial development such as the speed of change, lack of trialling, confusion about what had to be done, the impact of compliance requirements, overcrowding and user unfriendly documents were also raised. A particular concern was the lack of early childhood marau statements.

While there was still seen to be a paucity of resourcing for Ngā Marautanga, the perception was that there had been a marked increase in the support provided by the Ministry of Education recently. Support material introduced at the same time as the documents was seen to be particularly helpful. Nan Gray's contribution from the Ministry of Education was reported to be particularly valued by schools.

Feedback indicated that primary schools provided a better environment for implementation of Ngā Marautanga when all teachers worked to support development. Secondary Māori language teachers are facing isolation and compartmentalization. Non-Māori teachers reinforcing the vocabulary throughout the school day was seen to be critical to the success of Māori language teaching.

Feedback indicated that schools are seeking and paying for more specialist knowledge to support teaching of Ngā Marautanga; seeking more whanau involvement, and looking to strengthen subject teaching and curriculum integration.

Feedback for future needs emphasized the need for more research on the impact of Ngā Marautanga on students.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS (36)

7.1 Impact on Students (16)

NZEI called for much more evidence about the impact of the curriculum on students and there was a question raised about the role of the curriculum in student outcomes (7). The national curriculum was considered to have had a positive impact on students and led to a more student-centred focus (4) although there was debate about this issue and some feedback was given that

students are more pressured (5). One positive outcome expressed was that elders in Taranaki reported their delight at hearing kōrero from children in the streets of Taranaki.

7.2 Implications for Diverse Students (20)

Strengths of the national curriculum were seen to be its responsiveness to student diversity (7) and to Māori (6). Having statements in Te Reo was seen to be a strength by SPANZ. Feedback from Te Akatea was that Ngā Marautanga have the potential to celebrate uniqueness and the documents support Māori as tangata whenua. The documents are cause for celebration. The point was made that with Ngā Marau one size does not fit all students (1) and that teachers should keep linking curriculum to the diverse prior experiences of learners (1).

Secondary school timetables were seen to pose a barrier to meeting the learning needs of diverse students (1).

The Reference Group expressed concern that a number of students are still failing and that there are marked gaps for Māori and Pacific students (3). There was a call for lessening curriculum coverage requirements to enable teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners (1).

8. EXPLICIT FEEDBACK AND ADVICE ABOUT APPROACH TO THE CURRICULUM STOCKTAKE (28)

The priorities evident in the Reference Group feedback summarized above and areas of consensus reached by the Curriculum Stocktake Reference Group have general implications for the Curriculum Stocktake. Over and above, these priorities, however, the Reference Group gave feedback about, and made specific recommendations about, the process of Curriculum Stocktake. These are listed below:

- **Communication about the Curriculum Stocktake must go into every school (2)**
 - Schools need to know the names of the Reference Group members (1)
 - Teachers need a chance to talk to Reference Group members face-to-face (1)
 - The Curriculum Stocktake has to include consideration of issues for tomorrow's world (1)
 - A focus on consolidation and co-ordination nationally is needed for the curriculum (**consensus**)(1)
 - The Curriculum Stocktake process has to address the complexity of practice and the translation of the curriculum into practice (2)
 - Research is needed (3)
 - Consultation should be used that is intensive and as effective as that used by QDG for the NCEA (7)
 - Appreciation that the process is not commencing with discussion papers (1).
 - Seeking formal, theoretical and discussion papers (4)
 - Seeking a formal paper on the issue of overcrowdedness (1)
 - The profession is seeking a spin-off for their workload issues (1)
 - Early childhood input needed and more direct links to Ngā Kohanga Reo (2)
 - The Ministry of Education should consider who might be involved in the Māori medium Curriculum Stocktake (1)