

Key Competencies

The New Zealand Curriculum/Marautanga Project

An Invitation ... Explore the ideas – tell us what you think.

March 2005

Beginning in 2000, the Ministry of Education conducted a major stocktake of the New Zealand Curriculum. This task was completed in 2002, and the final report was released in April 2003.

Since then, the Ministry has worked with students, teachers, principals, advisers and academics to revise the curriculum in line with the recommendations of this report.

A core proposal, backed by other research, is that five **key competencies** should replace the current lists of essential skills and attitudes.



“Key competencies provide a focus for what is considered important by society. They underpin what we do in school.”

Louise Green,
Principal, Stanley Avenue School, Hamilton

The Curriculum/Marautanga Stocktake

The Curriculum/Marautanga Stocktake followed the publication in 2000 of the final curriculum statement (the arts).

The resulting report recommended that:

- the essential learning areas should be refined and the outcomes clarified;
- the essential skills, attitudes and values should be revised and better integrated into the essential learning areas;
- there should be greater emphasis on supporting quality teaching and strengthening school ownership of curriculum.

The full report is available at: www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/csr

Why do we need something new?

International research such as the DeSeCo Report (*Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, OECD 2003) identifies key competencies that people need in order to lead full lives in well-functioning societies. Feedback from the stocktake and consultation across all interest sectors suggests that the essential skills and attitudes of the New Zealand Curriculum should be reframed along similar lines.

Key competencies are more than discrete skills and attitudes: they integrate all aspects of learning (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values); they offer an alternative way of viewing curriculum and a clearer focus for teacher practice.

The development of these competencies begins in early childhood and continues into mature adulthood. Schools and other educational institutions have a vital part to play in the process, but it can go on anywhere.

The suggested framework of key competencies promotes a life-long learning model. It is consistent with the strands of the Early Childhood Curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, and with the proposed New Zealand tertiary education framework.

What key competencies are proposed?

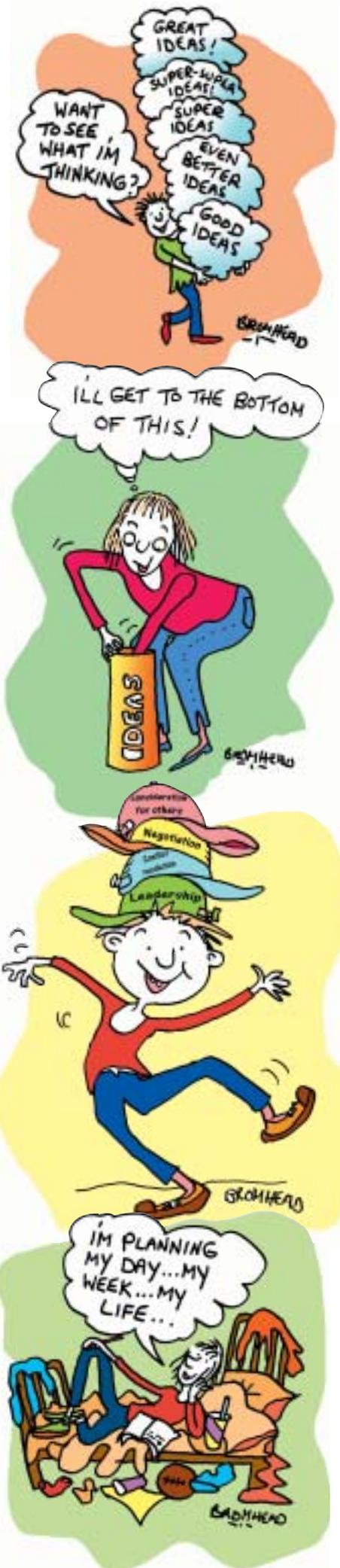
Five overarching and interconnected key competencies are proposed: thinking, making meaning, relating to others, managing self, and participating and contributing.

Thinking is about all kinds of thinking in all kinds of contexts. It includes creative, critical and logical thinking, metacognition, self-awareness, reflection and judgment.

Making meaning is about discovering meaning in ideas – whatever shape they come in. It is about interpreting cues and clues, about getting below the surface, about wanting to get to the bottom of things.

Relating to others is about the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for living, working and playing with others. It includes having the ability and inclination to take a variety of roles in group situations – for example, leadership, conflict resolution, and negotiation – and showing consideration for others.

Managing self is about making good decisions for oneself while recognising that we are part of a wider, interdependent, social context. It is about the inner independence that comes from being given manageable amounts of responsibility and choice. Managing self includes the ability to make plans, set goals and estimate time needed for activities. It is also about developing strategies to overcome hurdles and knowing when a change of course is needed.





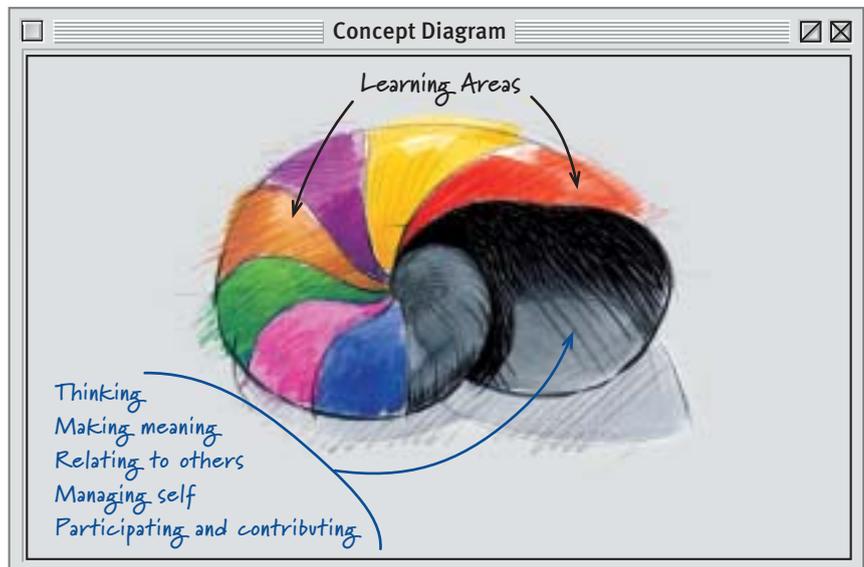
Participating and contributing involves gaining a panoramic view of what is possible. It is about seeing one's potential to be a member of multiple communities, such as family, iwi, friends, and groups of artists, problem solvers, sportspeople, or mathematicians. By participating, we gain the sense of achievement that comes from making a contribution to local and global communities.



“Our [school’s] Mission is “nurturing a quality learning whānau”. This encompasses our four values: respect, learn, grow, family; and our four keys of success: getting along, organisation, persistence, and confidence. These values and practices appear in the [proposed] key competencies.”

Heather Ballantyne,
Principal, Rhode Street School, Hamilton

Learning areas and key competencies

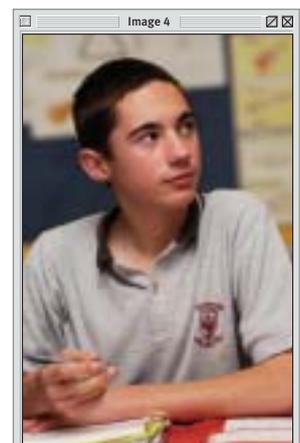


The key competencies and the eight essential learning areas interweave to build the strong pathways needed for student success in learning.

Key competencies and success

Successful school leavers can be seen as those who have a positive sense of identity, take responsibility for themselves, can interpret and critique the world around them, can participate and contribute effectively in a range of contexts, and are equipped for ongoing learning.

The proposed key competencies attempt to embrace the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that contribute to such success.



“The key competencies align with the “learner” each school should be endeavouring to produce.”

Murray McDonald,
Principal, Aberdeen School, Hamilton

How can you and your school community contribute?

“The co-construction of the curriculum [involving both Ministry and school] ... is ground-breaking in terms of process and models for us in schools a different way of doing things.”

Linda Tame,
Principal, Lincoln High School

Explore

Many individuals and school groups have already had their say on these developments; some are now exploring practical ways to incorporate key competencies into the curriculum of their schools. You may like to try this, too.

Discuss

Discuss the proposed key competencies with your board, parents' groups, teachers, students and wider school networks. You could use these questions to focus the discussion:

What do you think about the proposed key competencies and their descriptors? Should anything be added? Should anything be removed?

What opportunities do the competencies offer, and what challenges do they pose?

What are you already doing to help your students become competent in any of the proposed areas? For example, how do you:

- help your students learn to manage themselves and their learning?
- encourage them to develop a give-it-a-go attitude?
- help them learn to handle the hurdles in their learning?

Respond

Tell us what you think

Address email responses to curriculumfeedback@tki.org.nz

If it helps, use the feedback form available in the What's Happening section at www.tki.org.nz/e/community/nzcurriculum

 Send written responses FREEPOST to:

Key Competencies Response
Freepost 192041
PO Box 17727
Sumner
CHRISTCHURCH

Please note that we need to receive your ideas and comments by 20 April this year.

We will collate all feedback and publish the resulting report in the Curriculum Project kete on the TKI website.

Acknowledgments

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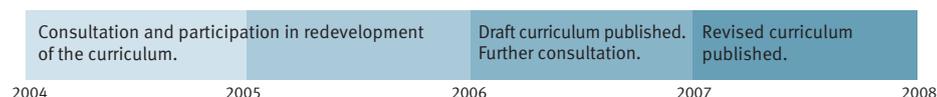
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Timeline



Want more information?

Visit TKI: www.tki.org.nz/e/community/nzcurriculum Papers relating to key competencies are in the What's Happening section.