

Individual comments for

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Overview Comment

The document is on the right lines but more work is needed before it is ready to be launched as a New Zealand school curriculum document that wins the respect and confidence of the international, national, and local educational public.

Worthy features

- Simplicity, generally easy to digest, a 1 volume document
- Reduced and easier-to-handle list of principles
- Improved values statement
- Manageable list of key competencies
- 8th learning area – 2nd language
- Useful sections for schools on designing and planning for the implementation of the curriculum.
- Simpler and more accessible and manageable charts on achievement outcomes for each of the 8 levels

COPY

More work needed

- Language at times could be tighter and more teacher-friendly
- Section and paragraph structure at times could be more coherent
- Elimination of errors
- Simplicity at times is at expense of deeper and relevant understanding
- Content should include context and statement on ages and stages of learning during the years of schooling
- Too much weight is given in the document to the key competencies and numeracy (whereas literacy is foundational to all of learning at school, it could be argued that numeracy, while clearly an important key competency, is not basic in all of learning)
- Too little weight given to the learning areas and their essentiality of each to the compulsory curriculum *
- More is needed on the crucial first and last stages of schooling: the beginning years (years 1-3) and senior secondary schooling.

Specific Comments

Title

I suggest you add the descriptor, *school*, to distinguish it from the Early Childhood Curriculum etc, viz, *The New Zealand School Curriculum*

Foreword

Para 1:

Excellence. Desirable, but possible? I would prefer *high standards* – more realistic if saying much the same thing.

To the last sentence possibly add *and students to be challenged and to enjoy their learning*.

* The learning area and the foundation blocks of learning through which the principles are to be implemented, the key competencies developed, and the values affirmed and nurtured.

Para 2

Future success. The aim of education is not simply for students to be able to succeed. It is also to prepare New Zealand children for life as adults. The rest of the paragraph acknowledges this.

Para 3.

Generally okay. But one question. The paragraph elaborates on the *state* and the *community* – why not the *family* and the *individual*?

Exciting. An emotive word. Some experiences can be exciting but not useful educationally. I would prefer *positive*.

Para 5

Sound if general. What may be helpful is reference to a section in the body of the document under the heading, *Aoteroa/New Zealand*, which provides an informed and incisive summary description of our country today - society, economy, employment characteristics, relationships in the world, contemporary needs, possible future developments etc; and the relationship of the new curriculum to these characteristics and needs (see suggestions re **contents** below).

Other aspects that might have been considered are the growing presence of Asian migrants, exodus of significant numbers of New Zealanders to Australia, declining children and youth percentage of population, the increasing percentage of elderly, impact of migrants and countries whose first language is neither English nor Maori and whose religious or belief system is not Christian or secular, numerous technological changes and influences, greater societal dysfunctionality, changing family and sexual practices, prevalence of illicit drugs, etc. Refer to page 28 of NZCF document.

Para 6.

I would prefer it said *The existing curriculum tried to address many of these issues, but those involved ...concluded that a new curriculum was needed to relate more closely to recent changes and make needed improvements.*

I presume the list is to identify improvements to, or differences from, the current curriculum. If so, then I suggest that dots 1 and 5 are neither, and that dot 4 should be changed to *are simpler and more manageable* etc

Para 7

I suggest a change in the order of sentence to achieve greater coherence; viz 1 followed by 5, 4, 2 and 3.

Contents

Add the following sub-sections under the heading, **The Context**

- New Zealand education system
- National and School Curriculums – what is a national curriculum, why the need, what are the parameters of national and school curriculums? .
- The value of each individual school student within NZ schooling (society expects schools to be the primary agency outside of the family to grow, mature and develop each child so that....)

- Aotearoa/New Zealand society and economy (and the role of the curriculum to reflect these); e.g., New Zealand's bicultural heritage and multicultural society, New Zealand's economic dependency on overseas trade (quality exports)
- The Wider World, including recent changes in status, relationships and beliefs that affect New Zealand (and the role of the curriculum to reflect these); e.g., globalization, rise of China, wars of religion, primacy of USA and Australia in New Zealand's international relations, speed of technological and other changes (need for lifelong learning)
- Designing a New Zealand School Curriculum – the New Zealand experience and relationship with early childhood curriculum, national qualifications, and tertiary education. (cf section on **planning for coherence** below)

Also add the following sub-section under the heading, **Legal Implications**.

Legal Implications of new curriculum: for country, Govt and govt agencies; boards of trustees; teachers; students, parents and communities. Include implications for state schools, integrated schools, independent schools, compulsory years of schooling, senior schooling, secular clause.

Overview

Final content will depend on rest of document.

A Vision

I am not sure if what follows is correctly a vision. From my reading it seems to be more a statement about the purpose of education and its intended outcomes. It may be important to start with a sentence or two explaining what a vision statement is and what role it has in the national curriculum.

Para 1

Education's purpose is not only to help students 'reach their potential' and develop competencies. One primary function is to grow children towards mature adulthood; i.e., prepare them for a fulfilling, stable, prosperous, and productive life beyond school.

I think it more coherent to switch the order of the last two sentences so that individual growth and health is followed by societal (country) well-being. If that is agreed then it might be helpful to add *also* as the 3rd word in the final sentence.

Potential – a problem word. If it means capability, none of us is able to reach our (full) potential. Researchers opine that we may reach no more than 10%. I think you mean *reach their highest practical level of ability*.

Competencies is okay in the light of the definition on page 11. But I would add at the start of the list of things they need, *full and wholesome enjoyment of life*.

Confident

I see little difference between *entrepreneurial* and *enterprising*. The first is more an economic term. I would prefer the latter as more user-friendly for schools. *Resilient* is not bad. I would prefer *adaptable* (for the changing economy, employment and society).

Actively involved

Today, globalization and the pervasive influence of the media mean that all of us must also be involved as contributors in the world as well as in New Zealand.

Principles

I support your desire to keep this section simpler than the NZCF. However, in doing so, you risk inaccuracy. As with vision, it may be important to spell out what you mean by principles and their role in the national curriculum; e.g., *For New Zealand education, principles are the underpinning beliefs that guide curriculum development and implementation in individual schools*. The 1st paragraph of the NZCF statement is worth re-visiting.

I support the list apart from comments below.

Excellence:

Empowered. Check with legal section. If a school through its curriculum fails to deliver this, can a parent sue the board? It might (legally) be wiser to say that *all students are to be equipped to*

Regardless of individual circumstances. Superfluous in view of *all*.

Cultural heritage.

I am not convinced that your definition is correct. Heritage implies the past. New Zealand is often described as having a bicultural heritage and a multicultural society. The former gives recognition to the birth and historical growth of the country (from the events leading to the **Treaty of Waitangi**) that involve the relationships (interaction) between the two primary cultures - Maori and Pakeha – i.e., 19th and 20th centuries. The latter affirms the changing nature of New Zealand society since the 1960s, to embrace many other ethnicities and cultures. I think the NZCF distinguishes these two elements better by making them separate principles (see page 7). The first highlights the Treaty, surely fundamental to all ethnicities and cultures within New Zealand society today, as well as affirming Maori.

Equity.

If this is changed to reflect the multicultural society of current New Zealand then some preference is needed to give guidance to schools; viz, the special place of Pacific Islands communities in New Zealand and the growing significance of New Zealand's trading relationships with Asian countries (currently 5 of our top ten trading nations, none of which has English as its 1st language).

Coherence.

Add The New Zealand School Curriculum builds on the early childhood curriculum, and prepares students for national qualifications levels 1-3 and tertiary (post-school) education.

Values

Values is the least implemented section of the current New Zealand Curriculum. For this reason, the statement in the final document needs to clarify what you understand by values and their significance and role in the context of the national curriculum. For this statement to be implemented by schools (much more effectively than the current one) it must be tight, clear, comprehensive, yet

reasonably concise. It may be worth your while to examine closely some recent books by Professor Brian Hill (West Australia). He provides useful distinctions between types of values – government, institutional, cultural, ethical etc.

Opening Para

You may need to clarify the difference between values and principles; e.g., *Values are beliefs deeply held by individuals or groups about.....*

3rd Para

I think it debatable that the entire New Zealand community would hold to all the values listed below. It would be more accurate, as stated in the NZCF, to say *those commonly held by most New Zealanders today*. (PS This document must be seen by academics etc as essentially accurate, otherwise it will lose public credibility.)

I am not convinced there is a need to emphasise *diverse* at the exclusion of commonalities. While growing diversity is an important characteristic of New Zealand society today and is rightly identified as one of the foundation values below, it needs to be balanced by the equally important notion of commonality – those things that bind us together as New Zealanders. Perhaps a better adjective is *changing*.

List of values

General comment.

A better list than in the NZCF. I agree that *responsibility* is a more comprehensive value than *reliability*, that *non sexism* and *non racism* are PC terms, and that *tolerance* is too waffly. I welcome *care for the environment*. I am not sure if *innovation* is a value per se. It seems to me to belong more to the previous section on curriculum principles. I would still welcome some Maori terms. Perhaps *community and participation for the common good* could be moved underneath or above *diversity* to achieve balance.

Respect list could include *for the rule of law* - a foundational unwritten value promoted or encouraged by school leadership.

Next para.

Good

Last listing (students will develop the ability to)

Actions based on them – *Them* is a little awkward – does it refer to values or actions?

I suggest you add to this list the top ‘attribute’ on page 20 of the NZCF; viz *recognise and respond appropriately to discriminatory practices and behaviours*.

Key Competencies

Paras 2 and 3 need re-working. I suggest you re-examine p 17 of NZCF.

Para 2

1st sentence is not true as it stands. Many competencies may develop in a private setting; e.g. piano practice. If you want this sentence to stay then you should include a limiting term, such as *frequently*. Similarly, the 2nd sentence is based on one situation. Some develop competencies to avoid the errors of those they are in

close contact with. Others have beliefs and other convictions that are sometimes contrary to those closest to them.

It could be argued that whereas *relating to others, participating and contributing*, and *language* are competencies clearly dependent on social engagement, *managing self* and *thinking* may be developed outside of social interaction.

Para 3

1st sentence tends to highlight the emphasis of the previous para. I would use helpful ideas from NZCF.

Managing Self

It is about students... I am again not sure if the sentence is a *cuius ratio* for self management. I think you mean self confidence. If so, I suggest *It involves a large measure of self assurance* – knowing one self etc.

2nd Para. Too dogmatic. The qualifier in the next competency, *are likely to be*, is more accurate. (If so used in the first sentence, the qualifier would be seen to apply to the following sentences of the para.)

Relating to others.

2nd Para.

I would reverse the order of the last sentence – *co-operate* before *compete*. Most parents see schooling more as a social (educational) activity for their children, where they can learn to mix and match with others, and less as a competitive environment.

Participating and contributing.

Para 1

2nd sentence. Add *ideology* or *belief* – vital to acknowledge in the world of the 21st century. Then add an appropriate word to the list relating to purposes – e.g. worship.

Para 2

See managing self. 2nd sentence add *beliefs*.

Thinking

The opening description is not adequate in my view. There is a recognised process of information skills – finding, analysing, interpreting, ordering, questioning, arguing, concluding, presenting, and evaluating. Much is covered by your choice of words but others may be needed.

Curiosity is just one heart. Not all inquiry arises from curiosity. The 2nd para spells out the heart. It should include making connections (establishing relationships), providing coherent argument, exercising imagination, willingness to experiment, and preparedness to test ideas and solutions, and make decisions on the basis of experience and supporting evidence.

Language

Why highlight mathematics? Are you suggesting that literacy in mathematics (numeracy) is more important than other forms of literacy? To avoid priority, it

might be useful to give an example from another learning area; e.g., the arts (music).

I suggest there is no need to include the final phrase in the final sentence – end the sentence at *Curriculum*.

Learning areas

Introduction page (13)

Again, I am not satisfied with the brevity of the introduction. It sacrifices meaning for conciseness and simplicity, denying the right of New Zealanders to explanation re some basic questions: why the selection of the eight, why the addition of a second language, are learning areas traditional subjects by another name, are they discrete or interrelated, should schools organise their curriculum around the learning areas or by some other method, are the competencies and values to be taught through the learning areas, are the areas prescribed learning for all students in New Zealand schools, or simply for the compulsory years of learning for state schools, what impact then should they have on the senior secondary school curriculum? (Some of these points may be covered later in the document)

Social Sciences

How they, *as students*, can participate ...

Health and physical education

Support their own *physical and emotional* well-being. Without a qualifier health education is reduced to a coverage of the entire curriculum.

English

Visually, *and/or* in writing

Learning languages

Communicate in *a language other than English [or Maori?]*

Structure of each of the learning areas

It would seem helpful as well as coherent for each of the learning areas (la) to be given the same heading. Such would also give weight to the notion that each la is essential and of (relatively) equal value to the curriculum; viz what is the la about; why is the la deemed essential (why study the la); how is the la structured. Every attempt should be made to confine the content for each la to a page.

Arts

On the basis of the above comment, a section on why the arts is needed.

Opening gambit; ~~Our unique~~ *the New Zealand* environment. (Avoid use of personal pronoun in a formal document)

Sound Arts – Music

By learning to make sense of sound, students can appreciate and value the structure, form, origins, relationships, and functions of various sounds. I prefer the language of the Visual Arts; e.g., *Students develop listening skills (aural literacy) and aesthetic awareness as they listen and respond to sound, sing They develop knowledge and understanding of cultural practices*

English

What is the ruling for kura kaupapa schools? Would it be advisable to have a note at the beginning that schools may choose either/both English and/or te reo Maori for students in their first three four years (Y 1-3), but that from Y4 English is the compulsory la in all schools covered by this document.

Communication strand. Include some reference to understanding and critically appraising various media, esp. TV, music, and newspapers.

Health and Physical Education

Too long.

What is about.

The claim that the subject covers all of a student's well-being is presumptuous. All of education seeks to do this. It would be less arrogant to define it with the adjectives *physical* and *emotional*. To include *social* would counter one of the primary purpose of social sciences. The limitation appears to be reinforced by the seven key areas of learning underneath. If this is accepted, then two of the strands, *relationships with other people* and *healthy communities*, may need to be re-examined.

The Maori concept is out of kilter with the rest of the document. Either include Maori terms or exclude them. I personally would support the use of Maori terms in the English document to reinforce both the nation's commitment to biculturalism under the ToFW and to strengthen use of te reo Maori among all teachers and students.

Learning Languages

The challenge of this new la is to provide New Zealand schools and society with clear guidance on what languages should be given priority on the basis of heritage, law, social reality and economic needs. In the case of the 1st Maori is foundational. For the 2nd te reo Maori and sign language are stipulated. For the 3rd, Pacific Islands and Asian languages should be prioritised, (cf penultimate para of p 10 of NZCF), and for the 4th, main trading languages of the world and the languages of New Zealand's current and projected major trading partners should be given emphasis - viz Spanish, French, German, and Chinese, and perhaps Indonesian/Korean (cf, last sentence of p 10 of NZCF).

I suggest you start the 2nd paragraph with the phrase, *In the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand te reo Maori is unique* (cf 3rd to last para on p. 10, NZCF). I believe that all students should be given the opportunity to learn te reo Maori if they and their parents so choose, as a right under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Maths and Science

No comment other than that science should be kept to one page.

Social Sciences

Generally an improved statement to that in NZCF.

But I would like to see (i) the retention of the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi; (ii) some indication of the importance of studying countries that are closest to New Zealand today and tomorrow by virtue of various relationships in the past and present; e.g., Australia, Pacific Islands, Asian countries, UK and Europe and USA; (iii) some analysis of global concerns foundational to New Zealand's well-being

today and tomorrow – United Nations, rich and poor countries of the world, justice issues, Middle East and other hot spots, religion and society (the continuing role of Christianity in West vs the challenge of rising Islam etc).

Technology

Improves with age.

Effective Pedagogy

I am not convinced that this should be part of the document. This is preaching stuff that is best left to colleges of education and perhaps ERO. I doubt if more than a few parents would be interested in these ideas.

Designing a School Curriculum

Para 1

Start with the national curriculum with a firm statement – reinforce if need be the legal responsibility of boards etc to follow the directions and guidelines enunciated in the national curriculum (and ERO's responsibility to audit school's implementation of the same).

Para 2 and rest.

Then focus on the school curriculum, referring if need be to the distinctions enunciated beforehand (between national and school curriculum).

Para 3

Avoid saying the obvious or preaching to the converted.

Para 5

I think this could be given a separate section heading – themes of the national curriculum (perhaps after essential learning areas; cf National Curriculum of England and Wales). Alternatively, it could come under a heading, *Integration*.

Sustainability – I would place environment before the others in the final phrase – it is what most people associate with the term sustainability and is less associated with the other themes (2 = social, 3 = economic etc). Re-write to conform to the pattern of the following two.

Citizenship – Don't be afraid to mention New Zealand: e.g., *well-being of societies and New Zealand*

Globalisation and cultural literacies. Re-write to conform to the pattern of the above two. I would not start with Asia. Use it as an example after cultures in the opening sentence.

Critical literacies. Make sure that some mention is made of the media affecting nearly all students today.

Planning with a Focus on Outcomes

General

This section in my view needs rewriting. It reads as a collection of assembled ideas, rather than a coherent statement. It is very important section and should be given a more considered statement.

1st Para.

Should be part of the previous section. An important statement. Needs rephrasing and perhaps some elaboration. I suggest you reorder, with each paragraph focusing on the benefit to the curriculum and school community, to teachers and educators, to students and their parents, to allocation of resources. Then, in a box, note such matters as stated in paras 3 and 4. I personally would warn against giving priority to allocation of resources over teaching and learning benefits.

Planning for the Development of the Eight learning Areas

Add this new section to achieve balance (avoid undue priority to key competencies).

Planning for the Development of Key Competencies

Again the statement lacks tight coherence. Good ideas but somewhat randomly presented. The crucial things to stress in my view are that competencies are to be:

- developed throughout all years and stages of schooling
- developed in all learning areas and not taught separately as subjects or topics
- developed repetitively (reinforced) and progressively for each child (in increasingly complex situations)
- developed most often in combination
- assessed regularly (by students and teachers).

Planning for Purposeful Assessment

The heading is a bit loaded and preachy. I suggest remove purposeful (obvious).

An ongoing process

Ist, 2nd and final sentences are too wordy.

Some characteristics of effective assessment

Good headings. Explanatory sentences are mostly clear but I suggest you rewrite each to ensure that the 1st sentence clearly elaborates on or unravels the heading. It may be helpful to confine most to one sentence.

School wide assessment

Clear, if obvious

Uses of assessment information

Should precede school wide assessment

Assessment for national qualifications

The 2nd sentence is propaganda for New Zealand Qualifications Authority.
Remove. The final sentence of para 3 is sufficient.

Planning for Coherent Pathways

This section needs considerable revision. It could be based around the three stages of learning: early childhood, schooling, and tertiary education and training.

The schooling sector should be divided into New Zealand's historically recognisable junior primary schooling (years 1-3), middle primary schooling (years 4-6), senior primary (intermediate) and junior secondary schooling (years 7-10), and senior secondary schooling (years 11-13).

Under each of the schooling sub headings, a more balanced description that gives recognition to concepts of appropriate learning (ages and stages), and all of the learning areas and the competencies, is preferable to the currently narrowly focused emphasis on literacy and numeracy. I suggest you get education experts to devise appropriate wording.

Opening Para

2nd sentence could read *Schools ...positive, (i) building on experiences from early childhood education (ii) growing and giving direction to students during their years of schooling, and (iii) helping them... pathways for post school education and training* (i.e., you reinforce the divisions that follow).

Early Childhood Education

Last phrase change *in this document* to *New Zealand School Curriculum*

The Beginning Years - Junior Primary School Learning: Years 1-3. (see above)

Re write this schooling sector. Begin with a statement that emphasises the significance of the first years of schooling. Then start with a phrase such as *Builds on the learning from* (previous stage). Then provide statement about the human and education development of the student in these years; followed by reference to all the learning areas, key competencies and special emphases (such as laying the foundations of literacy and numeracy in junior primary school).

Middle Primary School Learning: Years 4-6

Re write using the structural shape of the previous section.

Senior Primary (Intermediate) and Junior Secondary School Learning: Years 7-10

Re write using the structural shape of the previous sections.

Senior Secondary School Learning: Years 11-13.

This section needs clearer and more directions for schools; e.g., is it expected that the generic learning areas (and their achievement outcomes) are still mandatory, or (as at present) are schools free to continue providing a curriculum of discrete subjects commonly offered at tertiary education and training institutions?

Are students required to continue with a balanced broad curriculum of their former years under the compulsory curriculum (each of the learning areas etc) or can they now take narrower more specialised courses, choosing subjects from a few or some of the learning areas? Etc (cf NZCF, p 9).



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

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Dear D R Wood

Thank you for your submission on the *New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006*. Your views will be added to the feedback we are gathering to help us draft the final version of the New Zealand Curriculum document due to be released next year.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Low
New Zealand Curriculum Project Support

