

The New Zealand Curriculum A Response to the Draft for Consultation

Page 8 – A Vision

A bold statement. Will it just be that? Will there be a change in attitudes to see and ensure it empowers all our young people and not keep in place the present class system?

I can not help reading this and asking:

- Are these the same statements regurgitated from time immemorial?
- If they are, then why is there so much violence emanating from our M_ori and Pacific Island communities?
- Why the frenetic need of today's young people to drink themselves senseless?
- Why aren't all of them 'confident', 'connected', 'lifelong learners', 'actively involved' as stated on this page?
- Is this education framework still perpetuating and exacerbating the situation?
- Was it ever considered that those who blame the mainstream education system for this state of affairs could be right?

Page 9 – Principles

Excellence

Explain to me how this will take place for a child brought up in low socio-economic circumstances.

Where in this framework is the principle of indigeneity as identified by Dr Mason Durie in his opening address at the first Hui Taumata on Education in Taupo? What about the other principles he stated?

Learning to Learn

If that is so tell me why our prisons are filled mainly by M_ori. Is this telling me that they will experience a curriculum that encourages them to become active learners of crime?

Cultural Heritage

I hate this term 'bicultural heritage' being used in these documents. While there are many cultures and while there were formerly only two cultures in Aotearoa, those of the dominant white culture have made little or no attempt to become bicultural or multicultural. You instead chose to force M_ori to become bicultural with your education system, at the expense of their own culture and

to their detriment so do not tell me you have a bicultural heritage. Your heritage is mono-cultural. M_ori are bicultural. This education framework is not going to change that situation is it? Relegating the learning of the M_ori language to being simply a language that can be learnt by choice is the blatant manifestation of this lack of change.

Stating that 'students who identify as M_ori have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao M_ori' further reinforces that. It should be all students but not all will, will they?

But what is this saying?

- The writers of this document know what the world of the M_ori is?
- They have lived in it?
- They experienced it through the mainstream curriculum that has been in existence for more than 150 years?
- They have felt the oppression of M_ori that is ever present?

Equity

There has never been equity in the education system (decile ranked schools is an example) so explain what and how this will be different.

Connections

There has never ever been support from a majority of families and communities of schools especially M_ori. How will this be different? What is going to be put in place to make it different?

Page 10 – **Values**

I agree with the values of

- excellence
- innovation, enquiry and curiosity
- diversity
- respect
- equity
- community and participation
- care for the environment
- integrity

But where is:

- manaakitanga - caring for, catering to, showing hospitality?
- aroha – love, caring, empathy?

I have a concern for children entering mainstream schools with very few values and considering the violence so prevalent in our society at present;

- What in this education framework will improve matters?

- What happens if they come from homes where equity, community and participation and integrity are totally unknown to them, where every day they wake up to the reality that everywhere they look there is no equity in our society?
- What about the influence of the political arena which displays little or no integrity and which models dishonesty, deceit, duplicity and even evil as being acceptable?
- What about the insidious role the many American and Australian and some of our own television programmes have on undermining values?

The document states that students **‘will learn about their own values and those of others’**.

- Already in this document discrimination is perpetuated by the inclusion of **‘others’** – as if “others” values are not accepted and not important and while we can infer that it is reciprocal the thought behind writing this is blatantly that of the dominant culture – others’ values mean nothing.
- How will P_keha children learn about the values of the M_ori if the M_ori language is not made compulsory for them?
- How will they learn about the values of the M_ori if they spend and have spent all of their lives living in a world outside of that of the M_ori despite the proximity of both cultures and allowed to do so by the mainstream education system and their dominant culture?.

It also states:

‘..... students will learn about the values on which New Zealand’s cultural and institutional traditions are based’.

- Whose values and whose cultural and institutional traditions? Obvious?

Page 11 – **Key Competencies**

I have no difficulty with these overall.

Managing Self

Because I think again of the increasing violence in our society I wonder about the statement

‘It is about students knowing who they are, where they come from, and where they fit in’.

- What if they do not like where they come from?
- Are there going to be avenues for them to find a better place?
- Or will they be forced to carry their unwelcome ‘baggage’ for the rest of their lives?

Using language, symbols and texts.

‘The English language is the medium for most learning the importance of literacy in English cannot be overstated’. Here we go again that single-minded dominant culture thinking.

- The problem is that English is the medium for most learning.
- The importance of literacy in any language, not just English cannot be overstated.
- There is still the underlying policy of assimilation isn’t there; that progress can only be made through English?
- Is that why the Japanese led the world in technology for many years – because they were literate in English?

Page 13 – **Learning Areas**

Health and Physical Education

Meanwhile our TV channels are filled with programmes that undermine all these teachings and instil insidious values in the young and vulnerable population -underage sex, drugs, lack of respect for their own bodies, binge drinking, disrespect for parents

Learning languages

The relegating of the M_ori language as an ‘**additional language**’ of choice again epitomises the lack of value the dominant culture places on that language.

Page 15 – **English**

‘Success in English in order to participate fully in the social, cultural, political and economic life of New Zealand and the wider world’.

Again that paradigm that only English does that. Again the presumptuousness of the mono-lingual English race. Success in any language will give students access to all these as stated!

All the statements in this section would be true of any language – try substituting the word ‘English’ with the word for any language e.g. Spanish.

It could be said rather facetiously that it is interesting to see the increase in the numbers of children of the dominant culture who are not meeting success through their studies in English. It supports the argument that it depends on the teaching and acquisition of a language whether or not success will be attained. So what is it saying about the teaching of English in mainstream schools?

Page 18 – **Learning Languages**

What is learning languages about?

So the M_ori language is being recognised as being unique to New Zealand. No cognisance that it is the same language as that of the islands of Hawai'i, Tahiti, Rarotonga etc ... but which has changed slightly over the centuries from island to island, so, it is not unique to New Zealand. If it was, as stated, then why has it not been given greater importance in this revised education framework?

That underpins the non-changing attitude toward M_ori and their education.

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