

# The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for consultation 2006

## A submission by the Education Sub-commission of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

November 2006

### Executive summary

- The Education Sub-commission of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO has read and discussed the Draft New Zealand Curriculum (DNZC).
- Whereas the sub-commission welcomes many of the recommendations in the draft, it has identified omissions, weakness and areas for improvement, clarification and enhancement.
- Only three of the 'four pillars of learning' identified in the acclaimed Delors Report of 1996, feature in the DNZC. Learning to be, the values oriented 'pillar', makes no appearance.

### Background

UNESCO is the United Nations' specialised agency for education. Since its creation in 1945, it has worked to improve education worldwide through technical advice, standard setting, innovative projects, capacity-building and networking. The organisation's close links with education ministries and other partners in 190 countries put it in a key position to press for action.

UNESCO's mission in its Education Programme is to:

- promote education as a fundamental right
- improve the quality of education
- stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue.

The Education Sub-commission of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO works with a number of government departments and a wide range of stakeholder organisations and regional networks to develop its views and policies. Its members are: Alison Broad (chair), Don Long (deputy chair), Russell Bishop, Kelly Douglas, Norman Kingsbury, Pat Lynch, Mary-Jane Rivers, Jenny Williams, Bronwyn Yates and Margaret Austin (ex officio as chair of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO). Rob McIntosh and Lesieli Tongatio of the Ministry of Education are also members of the Sub-Commission but have not been involved in the production or endorsement of this submission.

The New Zealand Commission for UNESCO is committed to the following values:

- recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi as fundamental to all activities with a commitment to a strong multi-cultural society
- contributing to the achievement of world peace
- empowerment of people to reduce inequalities
- ethical behaviour
- promotion of cultural identity
- involvement of young people as partners and participants.

## Concerns, observations and recommendations

UNESCO's Education Sub-commission has the following concerns, observations and recommendations. They fall into four main categories:

1. The almost total absence of reference to the Treaty of Waitangi.
2. There is little recognition of, or provision for, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) being part of the fabric of the curriculum.
3. The range of identified values is limited – those that are included are timid and bland. Values are equally important as Principles, Key Competencies and Learning Areas and should have equal status.
4. The importance of New Zealand's growing multi-cultural society.

In addition to these, and more specifically:

- There should be a greater focus on reducing educational disparity to align the curriculum with the 'Education for All' philosophy.
- There is no guidance on the teaching and learning of te reo Māori.
- There should be a greater focus on the special relationship that exists between Māori and other New Zealanders
- Respect for the Asian, Pacific and migrant communities should be identified and encouraged.
- The importance of Samoan and Chinese as two of the four most widely spoken languages in New Zealand is unrecognised.
- There is very little in the Learning Areas that relates specifically to New Zealand and distinguishes the draft curriculum from other countries' curricula.
- An understanding of the world's major religions must be included in the Learning Areas.
- There should be more emphasis on 'interactive' education based on trust, care and learning relationships - the focus is still on a 'transmission' based education system, ie teaching and not learning.
- Schools must be made aware of the importance of their educational philosophy and learn to value and promote it.
- The draft lacks courage and is a reductionist view of curriculum.

## Evidence and references

### Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is barely mentioned in the DNZC. We note that the Treaty of Waitangi:

- is the founding document of New Zealand and the basis of our nationhood
- contributes to the identity and belonging of all New Zealanders
- guarantees the right for Māori to live as Māori, including the protection of taonga, reo and tikanga Māori.
- is significant to all New Zealanders, not only to Māori.

### Education for Sustainable Development

Education for sustainable development is a 'dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future.'<sup>1</sup>

In a 2005 working paper, UNESCO identified that 'ESD should not be viewed as "one more" subject to be added to an overcrowded curriculum, but as a holistic or "whole school approach" where sustainable development is seen as a context for delivering existing aims of education and not as a competing priority' and that 'School-based curriculum development and teacher education about ESD are essential'<sup>2</sup>.

Likewise, in 2004, the New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment stated that 'It is essential to ensure that education for sustainability ... has a strong presence in the primary and secondary curriculum.' and that 'The recent review of the curriculum has provided a timely opportunity to ensure that education for sustainability can be part of the formal education of every New Zealander.'<sup>3</sup>

Although the draft curriculum alludes to ESD in the Values, Key Competencies and Learning Areas, there is no specific mention of its provision and for its teaching and learning.

## Values

UNESCO has long been a strong advocate of the importance of values in education and has devoted time and effort to support values in the curriculum. Its key thinking on values was incorporated in *Learning the Treasures Within*<sup>4</sup>, often known as the Delors Report. It identified four 'pillars of learning':

1. learning to know
2. learning to do
3. learning to live together
4. learning to be

as fundamental types of learning in the reorganisation of education in the twenty-first century. Learning to know (knowledge), learning to do (skills and competencies) and learning to live together (relating to others) feature in the draft curriculum but learning to be, which is values-oriented, is almost totally overlooked.

In *Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development*<sup>5</sup> UNESCO identified eight 'core and related values anchored on human dignity':

1. health and harmony with nature
2. truth and wisdom
3. love and compassion
4. creativity and appreciation of beauty
5. peace and justice
6. sustainable human development
7. national unity and global solidarity
8. global spirituality.

These values should replace the current ones of the DNZC.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, *Education for Sustainability – from Rio to Johannesburg: Lessons Learnt from a Decade of Commitment*, 2002

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, *Working paper: Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development/UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)*

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, *Sea Change: Learning and Educational Sustainability*, January 2004

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, *Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development*, 2002

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## Recommendations

1. The new curriculum should specifically recognise the Treaty of Waitangi. The new curriculum should retain some of the principles of the existing curriculum, in particular, it should:
  - Ensure that young people understand the unique position of Māori in our society and have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of Māori language and culture.
  - Reflect the multicultural nature of our society, acknowledging the place of Pasifika and Asian communities and our relationships with the peoples of the South Pacific and Asia.
2. Review and redefine the values listed and realign them with those outlined in the Delors Report.
3. Give greater importance to the teaching and learning of ESD.
4. Adopt an 'Education for all' philosophy'.
5. Review teaching methods and practices so that learning becomes an interactive process and experience.

The adoption of these recommendations would realign the new curriculum more closely with UNESCO's values and with its view that the curriculum should:

- be inspirational and aspirational
- be focused on learning not teaching
- include redefined Values, based on work already undertaken by the Sub-commission, that have equal status with the Principles, Key Competencies and Learning Areas
- give greater prominence to the Treaty of Waitangi
- take a clear stand on the issues of educational disparity, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and multi-ethnic awareness.

**New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO**  
**Te Kōmihana Matua o Aotearoa mō UNESCO**

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

Draft Curriculum Feedback  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 1666  
Thorndon  
WELLINGTON

Wednesday, 29 November 2006

**Re: The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006**

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find attached a submission compiled by the Education Sub Commission of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

Should you wish to contact the Education Sub Commission regarding this submission, you may contact them via the New Zealand National Commission Secretariat. I maybe contacted by phone 04 473 5529, or by email, [hayden.montgomerie@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:hayden.montgomerie@minedu.govt.nz).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Ministry of Education with our feedback on this important document

Regards,



Hayden Montgomerie  
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On behalf of the Education Sub Commission  
New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

