

COPY

Department of Policy, Cultural & Social
Studies in Education
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Telephone 64-7-838-4500
Facsimile 64-7-838 4555
<http://www.soe.waikato.ac.nz>

92



The
University
of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga
o Waikato

Attn. Maryanne Mills
Manager of the Draft Curriculum Consultation
The Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 1666
Wellington

November 29 2006

Hunter Submission: Draft Curriculum's Social Sciences Learning Area

Dear Maryanne

Please find attached my submission in relation to the *Draft Curriculum's* social sciences learning area. I have written this in my capacity as a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences Education at the School of Education University of Waikato, and as the Editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Social Studies*. I appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the consultation process.

PA.H
Tours sincerely,
Philippa Hunter

Hunter Submission re. the *Draft Curriculum's* Social Sciences Learning Area

Analysis of the draft social sciences learning area

This partial analysis the *Draft's* social sciences learning area is informed by my identification of key features and processes of social sciences such as:

- Social sciences attempt to make sense of society and human social issues
- Social sciences are conceptually based and deal with ideas and representations, interrelationships and making connections in meaning
- Social sciences deal with values, worldviews and perspectives
- Social sciences deal with multiple ways of thinking about and investigating social practices and issues
- Social sciences deal with ways people perceive, interpret, and record experiences
- Social sciences deal with critique, confronting assumptions and views, and reflexivity

The analysis also contrasts the *Draft's* “modernist” and one-dimensional worldview of social sciences in its linear framing of limitations, with the *SSNZC's* more postmodern orientation and spatial matrices of opportunities. The analysis focuses on the *Draft's* page 22 - Social Sciences and the Levels 1-8 Achievement Objectives located at the end of the document. I acknowledge that this partial analysis of the social sciences learning area does not consider the relationship with other learning areas in the curriculum, alignment with the *Draft's* principles, and links to key competencies, values, pedagogies and assessment.

Both the *NZCF's* social sciences – tikanga-a-iwi (1993, p.14), and the *Draft's* (2006, p. 22) social sciences learning area statements are frames of reference that embed sets of values and ideas about society that will be transmitted and perpetuated through interpretations of Achievement Objectives and pedagogies. The Ministry of Education's *Setting the Direction for Learning: The New Zealand Curriculum Marautanga Project* (October, 2005), informed principals and teachers about the New Zealand Curriculum Project. It describes changes to the social sciences learning area as follows:

Little has changed – we've just rearranged the curriculum so that it will be much easier for teachers to use. We have incorporated economics, geography and history alongside social studies at levels 6-8. (p. 6).

This is patently at odds with the significant changes across Years 1-13 of the *Draft* social sciences learning area signalled in the social sciences statement (p. 22) and embedded in the structural framing and intent of achievement objectives.

Social sciences statement

It appears that “easier to use” equates with a static and simplistic articulation of a learning area. The prosaic language of the statement is disappointing in the light of the dynamic nature of learning about human social behaviour in multi-layered life worlds in the past, present and possible futures. The statement is a culmination of a series of developing “Essence” statements over 2004-2006 that reflected strong participatory and citizenship transmission discourse. The explanation of what social sciences are about is limited to unsupported ideas of how society operates and social participation.

The heading “why study the social sciences” is an example of how a standardised approach to the *Draft's* formatting can confuse meaning - we don't study social sciences, rather we learn in the social sciences. The wording in this part of the statement signals the omissions and contradictions of the learning area. ‘The unique nature of New Zealand society and its bicultural heritage’ is expressed, but the omissions of: Maori as Tangata Whenua; the Treaty of Waitangi and colonising processes contradict the inclusion of “histories”. The inclusion of “bicultural heritage” and omission of Maori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand perpetuates a dominant cultural worldview. Cultural and gendered roles, perspectives and experiences are not included in the statement's wording and intent. The idea of an “economic world” is introduced, but in this world, ideas of access to resources, people's work, cultural practices and gendered activities are also scarce. Mention of a critical approach and focus on social issues, cultures and histories is nominal and not developed or supported by the Achievement Objectives.

The statement explains the structural elements of the learning area. This represents a significant framing of an unproblematised conception of social sciences. Four conceptual strands are structured to frame the learning area around four subject specialisms in the senior school: *Identity Culture, and Organisation* (social studies), *Place and Environment* (geography), *Continuity and Change* (history), *Economic World* (economics). The narrow conception of social studies at Levels 6-8 represents a significant structural flaw in the framing of the learning area. This may look tidy in a diagram of the learning area, but has no relation to the holistic and interrelated nature of year 11-13 social studies. The new strand *Identity, Culture and Organisation* is not social studies as we know it currently. The rejection of the *SSNZC's* Culture and Heritage strand indicates a lack of understanding of the expansive concept of *culture* in making meaning in social sciences pedagogies. Likewise the absence of key concepts of *time* and *heritage* in the *Draft's* structure limits ways of thinking. At Levels 6-8 of the social sciences, the geography Achievement Objectives are open-ended but sit uncomfortably with the mainly New Zealand settings of history and economics. This suggests that discrete subject communities defended territories rather than seeking inter and trans disciplinary social sciences opportunities.

The statement's social inquiry process

The social inquiry process developed for the Levels 1-5 social studies exemplars (MoE, 2005) has informed the *Draft's* framing of a learning area. This approach has a strong democratic and participatory citizenship orientation. It is my view that the dominant positioning of social inquiry across the learning area loses rich opportunities for critical pedagogies opened up by the SSNZC processes of Inquiry, Values Exploration and Social Decision-making. Issues, perspectives, time and place settings are collapsed within this mega-process of social inquiry in contrast with the SSNZCs design where all Achievement Objectives are open to perspectives, time and place setting, and learning about Aotearoa New Zealand society. Social inquiry lacks a critical orientation because of its "one size fits all" assumptions. This undermines the scope for learner engagement with multiple methods E.g. (historical, historiographical, geographical, indigenous, cross cultural), particularly in the Levels 5-8 (Years 9-13) area of the learning area.

Achievement objectives

The *Draft's* description of structure reflects Ministry of Education discourse about achievement levels and "learning progression" in the statement:

The achievement objectives at levels 1-5 integrate the four strands to show interconnections and provide learning progression from the simple to the more complex concepts. (p. 22).

This is revealing and may account for the set of Achievement Objectives devised to be measures of learning outcomes. Learning contexts, settings, perspectives, and pedagogies create either simplicity or complexity in conceptual understandings. Arguably concepts can be understood at any level if the context has meaning for learners, and pedagogy draws on learners' experiences and ways of knowing. Another contrary aspect of the statement is the final paragraph that states that whilst Achievement Objectives are provided for social studies, history, geography and economics, 'the range of possible social sciences disciplines in schools is much broader, including for example, classical studies, sociology, psychology, and legal studies'. This is a curious contradiction in the light of the rigidly framed and non-integrative subject boundaries structured through Levels 6-8.

The *Draft's* social sciences Achievement Objectives are not placed together from Levels 1-8 in the document. They are placed in levels sets of Achievement Objectives across all learning areas. This may be helpful for ease of programme development but disguises the rejection of two thirds of the existing Years 1-13 SSNZC's Achievement Objectives and the reorientation of an almost entirely new set of learning outcomes.

Fig.1 Achievement Objectives: From the SSNZC to the Reframed NZC Draft

Curriculum Levels	SSNZC Number of AOs	SSNZC AOs Remaining in NZC Draft Soc. Sci. (Includes change of Level)	SSNZC AOs Reworded / changed intent in NZC Draft Soc. Sci.	SSNZC AOs Rejected in NZC Draft Soc. Sci. framing	NZC Draft Number of Soc. Sci. AOs	NZC Draft Number of NEW Soc. Sci. AOs
Level 1	10	1	4	6	5	0
Level 2	10	1	2	4	7	4
Level 3	10	2	2	6	7	3
Level 4	10	1	2	8	7	4
Level 5	10	2	2	4	8	4
Level 6	10	1	1	9	8	6
Level 7	10	0	1	9	8	7
Level 8	10	0	2	8	8	6
	80 AOs	8 AOs	16 AOs	54 AOs	58 AOs	34 AOs

The Fig. 1 table illustrates the extent of changes to the social sciences learning area's Achievement Objectives across Years 1-13 through Levels 1-8. A reduction from the SSNZC's 80 Achievement Objectives to the Draft's 58 seems at a superficial glance reasonable, however, the rewording in intent of sixteen SSNZC objectives and insertion of thirty-four completely new objectives represents a rejection of 54 of the SSNZC's Achievement Objectives. Examples of concepts and ideas rejected include:

- Level 1: Cultures and heritages, time and change, and important life events
- Level 2: People's interactions, descriptions of places, impacts of past events, work and resources
- Level 3: Leadership of groups, rules and laws, ideas and actions that changed people's live, differing systems of economic exchange
- Level 4: People's responses to challenges, differing experiences of events, differing views of resources and their use
- Level 5: Cultural and national identity, human rights, seeking social justice, changing nature of work
- Level 6: Reviewing systems and institutions, changing rights, roles and responsibilities, cultural critique
- Level 7: Cultural values, critical affiliation, regulation of place and environment, conflicts over resources
- Level 8: Challenges to identity (communities / nations), cultural diversity, contrasting economic systems and resource allocation, policies, change and social consequences, interpretation / revision of historical record

SSNZC Achievement Objectives that related to ways people view, record, interpret revise events and / or places and environments have largely disappeared. We need to ask the question of why these ideas have been discarded in the *Draft's* framing along with the SSNZC Indicators (The detailed unpacking of conceptual elements and ideas for selecting contexts and settings)?

The *Draft's Economic World* strand replaces the SSNZCs *Resources and Economic Activities* strand. It presents a dominant capitalist free-market approach in an entirely new set of Achievement Objectives shaped by the Years 11-13 economics curriculum. For social studies and social sciences this reflects an uncritical acceptance of any means to advance the ends of greater wealth. Hinchey (2004) has referred to this thinking as 'casting citizenship as consumerism' (p. 116). For example, at Level 5 a new *Draft* Achievement Objective states: *People in New Zealand seek and have sought economic growth through business, enterprise and innovation*. The "economic world" as conceived in the *Draft* is exclusive and monological and does not invite critical thinking around issues, values, perspectives and gendered experiences in a range of settings.

A major shift in the nature of Achievement Objectives through Levels 1-8 is the way some achievement objectives are exclusively situated within New Zealand contexts and settings. This is a departure from the SSNZC array of achievement objectives that were open to New Zealand or other contexts and settings. The SSNZC's expectations of *Essential Learning about New Zealand* that were open to all levels of learning have disappeared in favour of predictable and traditional emphases of New Zealand focused studies. Curious decisions abound. As an example, a specific focus on Tangata Whenua is built into an achievement objective at Level 2 (communities) and Level 3 (migration), but there is no mention of Tangata Whenua at any other level. The Treaty of Waitangi is mentioned in only one objective at Level 5: *The Treaty of Waitangi is responded to differently by people in different times and places*. Such a sanitised token stance is difficult to comprehend and it highlights a lack of coherence between the learning area's statement's rhetoric and the limited intent of the learning outcomes.

Hunter and Farthing (2005) queried the rationale behind the ideological shift in policy that plays down the Treaty of Waitangi in the developing draft curriculum. They commented on the loss of significant ground made in the development of SSNZC in relation to situating historical perspectives in integrated or discrete social, cultural, geographic and economic contexts and settings. Opportunities provided in the SSNZC to engage learners with New Zealand histories and Treaty of Waitangi contexts, issues, and perspectives have been favourably commented on by Consedine & Consedine (2001) and Brooking (2001). The *Draft's* social sciences framing limits understandings about processes of colonisation and decolonisation, and the dynamic nature of the Treaty of Waitangi in shaping cultural relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is an underlying set of assumptions through the *Draft's* Achievement Objectives that everyone in society has choices, that everyone can participate as a citizen in the same way, that communities and nations meet their responsibilities, that reform is good, the idea that social justice is possible, that cultures are seen as “different” in relation to the dominant culture. In thinking about the *Draft's* social sciences framing and the potential shaping of culturally appropriate pedagogies (Luke, 2006), ways of knowing and making meaning, we need to question the challenges presented by the learning area: Diversity or monological?; Critical reflexive learners or unquestioning learners unable to confront assumptions?; Teachers as interpreters of others ideas and values or teachers as enforcers?

Final comment

As a teacher educator of social studies and history I feel alienated by the *Draft's* framing of the social sciences learning area, and find its fundamentalist response (Luke, 2004), to secure “safe” and neutral outcomes of learning disturbing, particularly in the light of graduate pre-service teachers’ knowledges, research interests and decisions to become teachers of social sciences. I query whether consultation will be transparent, and offer a catalyst for open and critical dialogue. I urge the Ministry of Education to consider carefully researched developments that inform current social sciences in the curriculum such as:

- The 1997 Social Studies Position Paper (Barr et al)
- The 2006 Social Sciences Position Paper (Ministry of Education: Mutch, Openshaw, Hunter, Milligan, Siteine: Unpublished at this stage)
- The BES social sciences

“Curriculum speak” of “revitalisation” feels like an empty promise. I don’t feel revitalised by the social sciences revision and I ponder the energy it will take to mediate the contradictions embedded in the learning area in my pedagogy. I ponder how the existing *SSNZC* and all the supporting research literature and resources for pedagogy can be used alongside this framing. I query how teachers in the social sciences field perceive the changes and will be supported with professional development opportunities and resourcing to make sense of a learning area. The impacts on teachers and learners have significant implications for learners’ understandings of human social behaviour, and their informed participation in a complex and increasingly diverse Aotearoa New Zealand society.

Philippa Hunter



**Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences Education
Editor of the New Zealand Journal of Social Studies**

Note

¹ The writer was a member of the Social Sciences Reference Group over late 2004 -April 2005. She chose to withdraw her participation from the group in order to critique the developing statement in her role as a social studies and history teacher educator, and as a member of social sciences professional associations.

References

- Barr, H., Graham, J., Hunter, P., Keown, P., & McGee, J. (1997). *A position paper: social studies in the New Zealand school curriculum*. Prepared for the Ministry of Education, School of Education, The University of Waikato.
- Brooking, T. (2001). State propaganda or balanced professional histories? The Historical Branch and the production of history. In B. Dalley & J. Phillips (Eds.), *Going public: The changing face of New Zealand history*. (pp. 187-204). Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- Consedine, R., & Consedine, J. (2001). *Healing our history: The challenge of the Treaty of Waitangi*. Auckland: Penguin.
- Hinchey, P. (2004). *Becoming a critical educator: Defining a classroom identity, designing a critical pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hunter, P., & Farthing, B. (2005). Conceptions of History and Historical Understandings in the Social Sciences Learning Area: A response to the Curriculum Marautanga Project's developments. *The New Zealand Journal of Social Studies*, 13, 15-20.
- Luke, A. (2004). *New Basics, pedagogy, futures*. Powerpoint presentation at the National Institute of Education, Singapore.
- Ministry of Education. (1993). *The New Zealand curriculum framework. Te anga matauranga o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (1997). *Social studies in the New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2004). *The curriculum marautanga project: Issue 1*. Wellington, Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2004). *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars Social Studies*. Wellington: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (October 2005). *Setting the Direction for Learning: The New Zealand Curriculum Marautanga Project*. Wellington: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *The New Zealand curriculum draft for consultation 2006*. Wellington: Learning Media.