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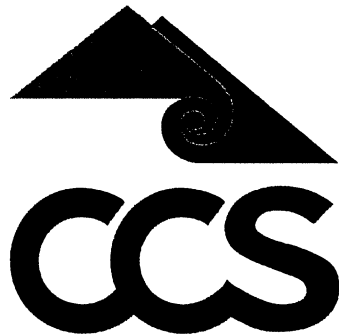
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**Submission to the
Ministry of Education**

→ Lift
5/12/06

on

**The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for
Consultation.**



30 October, 2006
Version 1.0

CCS

CCS works in partnership with disabled people, their families and whanau to ensure equality of opportunity, quality of life and an environment that enhances full community integration and participation.

CCS operates with a National Office and regional management structure, providing services nationally from 16 incorporated societies. We deliver regular services to over 6,000 people with disabilities making us one of the largest disability support service providers in New Zealand.

Our Mission

To achieve:

● 'A better future for people with disabilities'

Through supporting individuals and their families to live ordinary lives within the community, and to affect change in communities so disabled people have access to the same opportunities as other New Zealanders.

Our Vision

Disabled People are valued participants in society

Our Values

CCS will act at all times in ways that:

- Enable disabled people to make **informed choices** in their lives
- Generate increasing levels of **inclusiveness** of disabled people in our society
- Are **respectful** of each person we work with
- Allow each person the **dignity** to express themselves; to experiment, to reach, and to learn
- Celebrate **diversity and difference**

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Plain Language Summary.

1. CCS supports the Curriculum's Vision, Principles and Values. However, there needs to be fuller overt acknowledgement of what the values and principles mean for Disabled learners.
2. Acknowledgement needs to be made of New Zealand Sign Language and Te Reo Maori as other official languages of Aotearoa/New Zealand, by way of the incorporation of an 'Other Official Languages' stream to the Curriculum. This should also have provision for Braille and other alternative formats.
3. The Curriculum does not exist in isolation. All schools need to have a culture which affirms equity and diversity and which allow all students to demonstrate their capabilities.
4. Education on Impairment and Disability can occur in all sections of the Curriculum. However, the concepts have special resonance in Health and Physical Education and Social Sciences.
5. The Health and Physical Education Curriculum should affirm the experiences of Disabled students by incorporating their perspectives on access issues, well-being and diverse physical expression.
6. The Social Sciences Curriculum, in line with the New Zealand Disability Strategy, should acknowledge that Disability is a social process and therefore acknowledge the formation of Disabled people's identity in the 'Identity, Culture and Organisation' strand. Disabled students should also be encouraged to envisage positive futures for themselves in the 'Continuity and Change' strand of the Curriculum.

Introduction.

CCS welcomes the chance to submit on the draft Curriculum document. According to Statistics New Zealand figures, in 2001 “an estimated 90,000 children had disabilities.” This represents one eighth of the children in New Zealand, and by extension one eighth of those people engaging with primary and secondary education at any one point. CCS therefore believes it is important that the Curriculum, which outlines in broad terms which competences and learning students are expected to have acquired before leaving school, should incorporate the diverse experiences of Disabled students. This incorporation would also further objective 3 of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. This objective, ‘Provide the Best Education for Disabled people’ acknowledges the importance of a quality and inclusive education for Disabled people if they are to achieve their full potential. It is also important that school environments be safe and welcoming for Disabled people and their families/whanau.

The Curriculum’s Vision, Principles and Values.

CCS supports the Curriculum’s Vision, Principles and Values. It is particularly pleasing to see acknowledgement of the concepts of diversity, equity, community, and cultural heritage in the Principles and Values. The realisation of these concepts is key to Disabled learners being confident, connected and actively involved with the curriculum. However, CCS believes that there needs to be fuller overt acknowledgement of what these values and principles mean in practice for Disabled learners.

While the Curriculum includes concepts that could enhance the valued roles of Disabled learners we note the absence of any reference to the Treaty of Waitangi specifically. CCS believes this is disappointing on two counts. Firstly, as an organisation we value the unique status that Maori have as tangata whenua and the importance of the Treaty- within a historical context but also for students to learn about within a current societal framework and like other New Zealanders educate themselves to make informed decisions and contribute toward a truly multicultural future.

CCS acknowledges the principle of cultural heritage within the Curriculum and hope that having this ensures the Treaty is given the significance and contextual relevance it deserves.

Secondly, CCS notes that the Treaty and its Principles are integral to the New Zealand Disability Strategy, together with Objective 3. The values and thinking required to have Treaty based “partnerships” and participation that the Strategy refers to are relevant for the full inclusion of Disabled people. Not to make reference to New Zealand’s founding document negates some of the mana and importance given to the Strategy.

The expression of New Zealand Sign Language in the classroom is a good example of how values and principles can be made overt for Disabled learners. A classroom setting in which this can occur is allowing Deaf students to express their cultural heritage through language. CCS wishes to strongly support the Human Rights Commission's recommendation in its 'Human Rights Issues' paper, that the Curriculum should "acknowledge...New Zealand Sign Language as legitimate languages through which the NZ curriculum is delivered." The organisation acknowledges that NZ Sign is mentioned in the 'Learning Languages' section of the Curriculum, and that there is a view in the document that "all languages are to be treasured." However, we believe that there should be greater acknowledgement of both Te Reo Maori and New Zealand Sign.

We suggest that the best way for this to occur would be by the insertion of another curriculum strand 'Other Official Languages' or by an 'Official Languages' sub-strand of the English Curriculum. This would incorporate the learning areas of the 'Learning Languages' section: language, culture, and communication. This would allow in the culture section, for example, an examination of the history of deaf culture and the use of New Zealand Sign. It is also important for students who require alternative formats and students who use Braille should be able to access this as required. Teachers should also be confident and have a level of comfort in using these formats in order to obtain best outcomes from Disabled learners.

Recommendation: That acknowledgement be made of New Zealand's other official languages: Te Reo Maori and New Zealand Sign Language, by the creation of another Curriculum strand, 'Other Official Languages', incorporating the learning sub areas of language, culture and communication.

It is also important to recognise that the way in which values are expressed in a school culture can be a vital factor in the success or otherwise of a student's schooling. A good example of this is around the value and what is meant by 'equity.' Equity is defined in the values section of the draft as a belief in "fairness and social justice." Disabled children and their families can sometimes face exclusionary processes in individual schools which can be highly unfair and highly socially unjust- for example, families being informed, either covertly or overtly, that students are not welcome in a particular school setting.

This can also be seen in some schools responses to the diverse accessibility requirements of their students. The Education Review Office undertook a 'stocktake' in 2003 of how effectively the New Zealand Disability Strategy was being applied in schools. One of the key areas for examination was "responsiveness to and accountability for the needs of students with disabilities." The results from the perspective of Disabled students were disturbing. "Nearly half the schools sampled were unable to provide full access for every room and building in their school." If students are unable to access the physical space in which learning occurs, it means by extension that they are unable to access the Curriculum.

CCS wholeheartedly agrees with point 5 of the recently released IHC Code for New Zealand Schools when it states: "Schools must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Schools also need to affirm diversity and provide opportunities for all children to demonstrate their capabilities." It is therefore important that the statements made in the Curriculum concerning the Vision, Principles and Values expected to be learnt by students should be given full expression in all school cultures.

Specific Curriculum Areas and Disability Education.

CCS believes that all areas of the curriculum can be used by teachers to present positive images of Disabled people. For example, teachers should be encouraged to use positive and affirming images of Disabled people in order to develop the key competency of using language, symbols and texts in subjects such as the Visual Arts and English. However, there are two curriculum strands where Disabled people's experiences appear to have most resonance: Health and Physical Education and Social Sciences.

Social Sciences.

For CCS, Disability is clearly a social issue and process. The New Zealand Disability Strategy, agreed to by Government and Disabled people in 2001, states that "Disability is not something which individuals have. What individuals have are impairments...Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments people have...Disability relates to the interaction between the person with the impairment and the environment..." It is therefore highly appropriate that the social experience of disablement and a disabling society be incorporated in the Social Sciences curriculum.

Over the last 20 years, Disabled people in New Zealand and overseas have gained a sense of the common things which unite them, regardless of impairment. These things include a desire to be included and accepted as highly valued members of wider society, and to break down the barriers which limit participation and presence in the community. There is also a clear acknowledgement that in order for this to occur, a process of wider social change needs to happen. Disabled people have attempted to bring about this social change by joining together and claiming their own identity and culture as Disabled people, while still being proud of the multiple levels of identity which they have. This means that Disabled people, the Disability Rights Movement and Disability identity have an important contribution to make in terms of increasing students knowledge of diversity and inclusion.

In CCS view, it would be appropriate for this to be celebrated in the 'Identity, Culture and Organisation' strand of the Social Sciences curriculum. This could incorporate an examination of the formulation of Disabled people's identity in New

Zealand, the formation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy and what it means for Disabled people and their families, whanau and friends. A particular focus of this examination needs to be attitudinal change. Disabled people identified this in the consultation on the New Zealand Disability Strategy as the biggest single barrier to the development of an inclusive society. This also fits in well with the 'Continuity and Change' strand as well.

The history of Disability in New Zealand has been a process of gradual social change from exclusion and institutional living to an increasing acceptance of Disabled people's value and worth. However, this process is still continuing. One of the key parts of the 'Continuity and Change' stream is for students, by examining the past and social changes over time, to "imagine possible futures." For Disabled students, it is vital that those possible futures imagined by them and their peers be based around a 'strengths based' attitude to Disabled people and their capacity rather than the traditional 'deficit' based ways of thinking about impairment and disability. Disabled students and their families themselves are already thinking in this frame of mind. CCS believes that it is important that the curriculum reflects this and allows all students to explore positive futures for their society alongside Disabled people.

Recommendation: That the Social Sciences Curriculum acknowledge, in line with the New Zealand Disability Strategy, that Disability is a societal process and accordingly acknowledge the formation and history of Disabled people's identity in the 'Identity, Culture and Organisation' strand of the Curriculum. Additionally, that the 'imagining of possible futures' in the 'Continuity and Change' strand acknowledge the desire of Disabled students to imagine positive and strength based futures rather than deficit based ones.

Health.

The concepts which lie at the heart of the Physical Education and Health curriculum: Hauora, Attitudes and Values, Socio-ecological perspectives and Health Promotion, appear to be particularly relevant for Disabled students, their wellbeing and inclusion in the school and wider community. CCS especially welcomes the inclusion of Hauora in the Health Curriculum, with its holistic view on health and wellbeing. It is also important that any examination of 'Attitudes and Values' for example, take account of the well-being of others as well as one's self. Often, Disabled students find that because of attitudes and assumptions as to their ability to engage in the classroom, they find themselves excluded from more general classroom activities in the Health, Physical Education, and Outdoor Education fields. A good example of this is the exclusion of some Disabled students from school camps. The recently released *Te Rau Hinengaro: The New Zealand Mental Health Survey* also makes it clear that disturbances of mood and mental wellbeing are more prevalent in physical impaired people than not. A key determinant of mental wellbeing is the attitudes and values of a society and how accepting it is of diversity and diverse ways of learning.

Also key to levels of wellbeing are the relationships which students are able to create both within the classroom setting and in wider society, The 'Socio-ecological perspective' concept of the curriculum focuses on this. The formation of positive and affirming relationships are vital for Disabled students well-being and need to be incorporated into any examination of what creating positive relationships mean.

In terms of knowledge and understanding about physical movement and motor skills, there needs to be an acknowledgement in the curriculum that students have diverse levels of physical movement, sensory perception, thought process and creative expression due to impairment and diverse physical development. CCS believes that it is important that this diversity be incorporated into understandings of what it means to be 'healthy.'

The issues around physical access to learning environments mentioned earlier in this submission are extremely relevant to the concept of 'Healthy Communities and Environments.' A 'healthy community and environment' for Disabled students is one where students feel happy, accepted and included. It is also one which they can fully physically access. CCS believes that a key "responsible and critical action" which could make up part of this learning strand would be for all students to examine their particular school in terms of accessibility and perhaps 'grade' their school as to standards of access. This would give students some insight into the need for fully accessible communities and would raise awareness as to access issues in wider society. There would also be the additional benefit of increasing teacher's knowledge about wider access issues.

Recommendation: That the Health and Physical Education Curriculum incorporate the perspectives of Disabled students by specifically addressing their well-being, access issues, and diverse expressions of movement, thought, sensory perception and creative expression.



30 November, 2006.

To Whom It May Concern,
Draft Curriculum Feedback,
Ministry of Education,
P.O Box 1666,
Thorndon,
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Dear Sir/Madam

The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006

Please find enclosed CCS submission on the Curriculum. Please acknowledge receipt to the e-mail address below.

Yours faithfully

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