

New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for consultation 2006

Feedback on Draft

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SECTION A

Question 2

I am completing this form as an individual.

I was previously a lecturer in second language learning and teaching at Victoria University, and have subsequently conducted a number of teacher professional development contracts in the area of language and the curriculum.

I work independently as an educational researcher.

My most recent major project was as part of the team developing the web-based LEAP resource (guidelines for teachers of Pasifika students in the mainstream) for the Ministry of Education.

SECTION B

Question 3

What is your response to the overall intent and direction of this document?

In general I think the document is a good one that largely reflects current research-based good practice in teaching and learning, and mostly reflects the New Zealand context well.

I have some specific amendments to suggest to the initial sections (pp.8-12), relating primarily to language and culture.

- On p. 8 the “growth of the economy” is given a primary focus which is inappropriate to the central statement of a vision for education. A phrase such as “the growth and development of New Zealand” would be more widely acceptable, and would not raise potential conflicts with other important values such as “care for the environment (the Earth and its interrelated ecosystems)” (p.10).
- On p.9 New Zealand’s bi-cultural heritage is referred to in the first and only major overview statement of the relation of Māori to New Zealand society and to the principles underlying education in the school system. A stronger statement of the position of Māori in New Zealand society is required here.
The word *heritage* implies a historical lineage rather than a present situation, and this does not reflect the fact that the Treaty of Waitangi and current legislation give Māori a special position in New Zealand. Māori were the first people to establish human society in this country and name its places and features. Te reo Māori is an official language for parliament, courts and education – a status which is shared only by English. It seems odd or disingenuous not to refer to the status

of Māori in New Zealand more directly in the context of principles to guide schools in curriculum design and implementation.

- Previously any student, whether Maori or otherwise, could have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Māori. Is this no longer available, or considered appropriate, to students who are not Māori?
- On p.9 under the heading *Equity*, it is not only the learning **needs** of all students that should be identified and addressed, but also their learning **aspirations**.

Question 6

Do you believe that schools will face challenges as they design and implement a curriculum in line with the direction set out in this document?

- The statements about *Effective Pedagogy* on pp.24/5 are clear, concise and reflect current understandings. However, under the heading *Enhancing the relevance of new learning* there should be a mention of the need for students to know not only **what** and **why** they are learning, but also **when** they have learned it, and **how they are progressing** to understood and agreed goals. (These ideas are included on p.30.)
- Many teachers will find it particularly challenging to design language curriculums. Language teachers often work part-time or without the support of a number of other colleagues teaching the same language/s. They are often not well integrated into the professional life of the school. Many of them have little training, and few resources or support in the areas listed below. This is likely to make it very difficult for them to design and implement language curriculums on the basis of this document, or even on the basis of the current curriculum statements for various languages.

Areas where support is lacking:

- Resources for language curriculum planning
- Qualifications and professional development in language pedagogy
- Assessment tools
- Classroom resources
- Physical resources in schools – space, equipment, etc.

SECTION C

Question 9

How accurately do the descriptions of the learning areas capture the essence of the areas and describe how they are structured?

In general, I think the descriptions of the *Learning Languages* area need a bit of fine tuning.

The descriptions apply better to learning foreign languages such as French, German, or Japanese, than to languages in wider use in New Zealand – such as te reo Māori taken as a subject, Pasifika languages, and Chinese languages. It is these languages in use in New Zealand in which students are more likely to achieve and maintain long-term bilingualism and biliteracy with English.

- On p.13, the description is that students “learn to communicate in an additional language”. This does not apply well to the student who comes, for example, from a bilingual Samoan family and studies Samoan and Māori (or Tongan) at school. A more appropriate statement for this situation might be that “students develop and extend their use and knowledge of a particular language, and its culture”.
- In addition, bilingual students are likely to have considerable personal understanding of how language and culture shape identities. They may need to explore and develop this understanding, but they may not need to *discover* it.
- In comparison with the statement for English which envisages that students will **enjoy** language and literature, no such expectation is suggested for other languages. This seems an unfortunate comparison, and indeed most students of languages do enjoy the language itself and the written and spoken texts they encounter in it. This should be reflected in the description given of this learning area.
- On p.18, paragraph 2, the status of te reo Māori as an official language should be mentioned. It is a language which can be used in parliament and the courts, and in official documents. There is a system of education from early childhood through tertiary study using Māori as the medium of instruction. There is a television channel, radio stations, newspapers, and so on, all in Māori. It seems quite misleading to list it as if it were little different from NZSL and Pasifika languages.
- Paragraph 3, p.18 – the same comments apply to this statement as are made in the first and second bullet point above in relation to p.13. Students may develop a language further, and further challenge and develop their understandings of identity.
- The fourth paragraph needs to be rewritten, or supplemented with an additional paragraph which relates more appropriately to students who study the language/s of their families.
- The section on p.18 *How is the learning area structured* provides a view of languages which is somewhat impoverished in comparison with descriptions of English and other learning areas where notions such as *enjoyment*, *sophistication*,

critical thinking and *intellectual challenge* feature. All of these apply well to language learning and should be included to give a richer picture of what this area should offer students.

Question 10

Do the achievement objectives state student outcomes in a way that teachers and students are likely to find useful?

No, the achievement objectives, as set out on the last page of the Draft, are not structured in a helpful or easily comprehensible way.

The division into language, culture and communication strands is accurate and easy for teachers to work with. On p.18, the expectations for each strand are well described. However, in the table on the last page, each strand is subdivided into *Productive and receptive skills*, *Self and others*, and *Interaction*.

This is a suitable subdivision for the Communication strand because it reflects what people do in the processes of communication. However it does not work for the Language and Culture strands which are about developing knowledge and skills in language and culture.

Instead these two strands should have outcomes reflecting the descriptions on p.18. I set out below appropriate statements of outcomes for the Language and Culture strands based on what is currently present on p.18.

The outcomes given for English are able to incorporate critical thinking and increasing sophistication of thought and language use. These same features would appropriately be introduced into the Learning Languages description and outcomes. I note that although enjoyment of language features in the description for English, enjoyment is not included in the outcomes. Enjoyment does, however, feature in the outcomes given for Physical Education.

An outcome at Levels 1-2 encompassing enjoyment could be: Communication: Productive and receptive skills: Receive and produce spoken or written texts which provide enjoyment and pleasure in language and language use.

Possible structure of outcomes for Language and Culture strands

Language

In the language strand students learn about features, systems, patterns and conventions of a language, and its texts (such as daily interactions, rituals, news media, oratory and literature).

Students will

- notice, recognize and identify these features, systems, patterns and conventions
- use them to understand and communicate meaning
- analyse and explain them
- reflect on, compare and evaluate them
- manipulate them and adapt them creatively for particular purposes.

Culture

In the culture strand students learn about features, systems, patterns and conventions of a culture, and its cultural expressions and institutions (such as its values, family life, government, economy, music and dance).

Students will

- notice, recognize and identify these features, systems, patterns and conventions
- use them to understand and communicate meaning
- analyse and explain them
- reflect on, compare and evaluate them
- manipulate them and adapt them creatively for particular purposes.

These outcomes can apply across all levels but would be expressed differently to show the increasing complexity of text, and task demands, and the nature of the support provided at different levels.

Even at the earliest levels of the curriculum students should reflect, compare, evaluate, manipulate and adapt creatively within the limits of their knowledge about the language and culture and their ability to communicate.

Hilary Low

From: Christina Ward [christinaward@xtra.co.nz]
Sent: Monday, 4 December 2006 10:25 a.m.
To: Hilary Low
Subject: FW: NZ curriculum draft feedback

----- Forwarded Message

From: "Elizabeth Craker" <elizabeth.craker@cwa.co.nz>
Organization: CWA New Media
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2006 09:20:56 +1300
To: "Christina Ward" <christinaward@xtra.co.nz>
Subject: FW: NZ curriculum draft feedback

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From: Johanne McComish [<mailto:mccomish@paradise.net.nz>]
Sent: Thursday, 30 November 2006 11:44 p.m.
To: projectfeedback@tki.org.nz
Subject: NZ curriculum draft feedback

Attached is a document giving my feedback on the draft in relation to the Learning languages area.

Johanne McComish

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