



**The revised New Zealand curriculum takes its direction from four major goals.**

## Introduction

### 1. Curriculum Direction

### 2. Managing Implementation

### 3. Curriculum Fluency

### 4. Dimension 1: Vision

### 5. Dimension 2: Principles

### 6. Dimension 3: Values

### 7. Dimension 4: Key Competencies

### 8. Dimension 5: Learning Areas

### 9. Teaching/Pedagogy

### 10. Assessment

### 11. Putting it all together



# Purpose and Direction

The revision of the New Zealand Curriculum was started in 2004. The last of the current national curriculum documents (1995 – 2009) was authorised in 2005. The proximity of change from one national curriculum to another is unprecedented in the history of New Zealand's curriculum.

- **What were the reasons for revising the national curriculum so soon after the present curriculum was finalised?**
- **What is the “direction” of the revised New Zealand Curriculum?**

A Ministry of Education publication explained the reasons for the change in the information shown on the next three slides.

Is this a satisfactory explanation?



## The Rationale for Change: *the Past*



*Circa 1919*



*Circa 1910*





# The Rationale for Change: *the Present*



Draft New Zealand Curriculum 2006



## The Rationale for Change: *the Future*



Draft New Zealand Curriculum 2006

A more typical reason given for having a revised curriculum is shown on the next slide.



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Pānui Pāho

**Speeches**

Whaikōrero

**Features**

Tuhinga Kaupapa

**Newsletters**

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Content by Portfolio

[View All Portfolios](#)

Home > Speeches > New Curriculum will prepare students for 21st century

Chris Carter

8 NOVEMBER 2007

## New Curriculum will prepare students for 21st century

Today we are launching a new curriculum for New Zealand schools.

*But what does this really mean? Is it inferring that the 1995 – 2009 curriculum wouldn't do this?*

When we try to contemplate what sort of place the world will be when young children reach our age, we can have confidence in knowing that some of what has been learned in times past will still be relevant in times future.

***Can you identify what learning that might be?***

Yet there will be other kinds of learning and approaches to learning that will also be necessary.

***Can you imagine what they might be?***



The screenshot shows the official website of the New Zealand Government, beehive.govt.nz. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like Home, Releases, Speeches, Features, and Newsletters. The main content area displays a news article titled "New Curriculum will prepare students for 21st century" by Chris Carter, dated 6 November 2007. The article text begins with "Today we are launching a new curriculum for New Zealand schools."



The Press, 26 Feb 2009

What an education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century actually means is open to debate. To give this as *the* rationale for revising the national curriculum fails to acknowledge the driving concerns that led to the replacement of the 1995–2009 curriculum: the “Curriculum Stocktake”.

Serious concerns with the 1995-2009 curriculum led to the Ministry of Education to conduct a “stocktake” of the curriculum. The stocktake was to establish “strategic direction for ongoing renewal”.

# Curriculum Stocktake

## POINTS OF CONSENSUS AMONG PROFESSIONALS THAT WERE RAISED DURING THE STOCKTAKE AS MAJOR CONCERNS

- The national curriculum is **overcrowded**. Depth is sacrificed for breadth.
- Overcrowding is compromising **flexibility**.
- **Unintelligibility** of curriculum documents to parents.
- Process of curriculum development **politically motivated and exclusive of teachers**.
- Artificial structuring of **achievement objectives**.
- Arbitrary nature and widespread **uncertainty about the levels**.
- Teachers are **less creative**.
- **Conflict** between national and local curricula.
- **Assessment practices** undermining learning and teaching in the national curriculum.
- Concern at **ERO** using achievement objectives as audit tools, whereas teachers perceive them as planning tools.

In 2002 the Ministry of Education reported the Curriculum Stocktake to its Minister, along with recommendations.

The Government approved four key areas to be addressed in a revised curriculum. These are expressed as “goals”.

# New Zealand Curriculum Project

(An outcome of the Curriculum Stocktake)

The goals of the curriculum project are:

1. To clarify and refine curriculum outcomes
2. To focus on quality teaching
3. To strengthen school ownership of curriculum
4. To support communication and strengthen partnerships with parents and communities.

“These goals contribute to the Ministry of Education’s overall aim of raising student achievement and reducing the disparity of outcomes of New Zealand school students and to Government goals that include improving New Zealanders’ skills, reducing inequalities in education, strengthening national identity and growing an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all. (New Zealand Government: Estimates of Appropriation, 2004-05).

**It is interesting to relate the goals for a revised national curriculum to what was concluded from a major national review of curriculum in the late 1980s.**

# EDUCATION GAZETTE



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION *Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga*

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## ► THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM OF NEW ZEALAND: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Shortly, all schools, boards of trustees and other educational agencies will receive a discussion paper on the National Curriculum of New Zealand. The paper proposes a new framework for the national curriculum. A questionnaire form will accompany the discussion paper inviting comments on the proposed framework.

Curriculum development at the national level has been a strong feature of the New Zealand education system, providing teachers with a helpful basis for designing programmes. New Zealand has long been a leader in offering national support and guidance for teachers through in-service training, resources and syllabus statements which reflect sound educational thinking about learning and teaching.

While revisions of any individual subject syllabuses have taken place to incorporate changes in educational understandings, for some years there has been a growing concern that the national curriculum has not responded rapidly enough to changes in society and the imperatives of the modern, competitive international economic environment. Recognition of the need for change led to decisions in

the early 1980's for thorough reviews of the curriculum. One of the main objectives of these reviews was to emerge from the reviews were the need to establish a more coherent and integrated learning base for the national curriculum (with their communities) to design programmes

More recent developments in New Zealand at the national level have been a strong feature of the New Zealand education system, providing teachers with a helpful basis for designing programmes. New Zealand has long been a leader in offering national support and guidance for teachers through in-service training, resources and syllabus statements which reflect sound educational thinking about learning and teaching.

The proposals for the National Curriculum of New Zealand are set out in the discussion paper. They also take into account the needs of the national curriculum. (Education Gazette.)

The proposed framework comprises these Essential Generic Skills, and Assessment. The

**The Principles** are the set of broad curriculum objectives which provide clear learning objectives for the national curriculum which incorporates essential knowledge and skills which enables progression and life-long learning; recognises the experiences and backgrounds of learners.

At the core of the proposed framework are the Essential Learning Areas. These are the areas of learning that are learned at various stages of schooling. The Essential Learning Areas are the understandings, skills and qualities stated in the objectives within subject syllabuses and described in the particular stages of learning throughout the curriculum.

Facilitate assessment and monitoring and to provide students and parents with specific information about student achievement; they can be used by teachers and schools to chart the progress of individual learners and to identify their learning strengths and weaknesses.

Seven **Essential Learning Areas** (which describe in broad terms the knowledge and understanding to which all students are entitled) are recommended by the document. The seven areas are language, mathematics, science and environment, technology, the arts, society and culture, physical and personal development.

The discussion paper also states that essential skills and qualities should be developed across the entire school curriculum and be part of every learner's experience. The seven groups of **Essential Skills** suggested are communication skills, numeracy skills, information handling skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, self management skills, social skills and work/study skills.

Among the conclusions to emerge from the reviews (of the NZ curriculum) were the need to establish a ... broader, more coherent and integrated learning base for the national common curriculum; and greater flexibility for schools (in consultation with their communities) to design programmes appropriate to the needs of their learners.

**The goals implicit in the late 1980s review were not widely realised. Why?**

**If we are committed to such goals, what can the school do to ensure that the goals of this new curriculum *are* widely realised?**

**The real difficulty in changing any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas, but in escaping from old ones.**

John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946)

Given that the revision of the national curriculum set out to meet four major goals, it is arguable that those goals should be interpreted as the “direction” for *The New Zealand Curriculum*, particularly its implementation into practice.

# NZC “Direction”

- Rationalisation of learning outcomes  
*What are the learning priorities for our students in a balanced curriculum?*
- Quality teaching (pedagogy)  
*What are the characteristics of effective teaching that we choose to uphold in our school?*
- School ownership (localisation)  
*How will we interpret the national curriculum in ways suited to our school and its students?*
- Community engagement (team up)  
*What strategies will we use to give every encouragement and opportunity to parents and whānau to engage with their children’s school learning?*

**Each of these goals gives the direction that schools should also follow in the design and implementation of their own curriculum.**

**The curriculum document has a chart (next slide) that shows “directions for *learning*”. These directions refer to major *content* areas of the curriculum, and shouldn’t be confused with the four major goals that give direction for *implementation* of the national curriculum.**

