



The learning areas provide the 'substance' of learning.

**"... each area is part of a broad, general education and lays the foundation for later specialisation".
NZC p.16**

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**

LEARNING AREAS

The Requirement

Effectively taught programmes are provided, consistent with the learning area statements. NZC pp. 18 – 33

The learning area statements give clear direction to the scope of the school's programmes. These statements are intended to be the focal point for deciding important learning goals relevant to the needs of the students, and their entitlement to rich and balanced educational experiences. Equally, they provide a strong basis for assessment and reporting of student achievement.

When designing programmes, content and context are inseparable. The more meaningful and relevant the context is to the interests and the world of students, the more motivated they are likely to be to learn and achieve.

The New Zealand **Curriculum**



Learning Areas

The Essence Statements

The National Curriculum provides “essence statements” for each of the learning areas. These are intended to very succinctly define the distinctive nature of each area. Each statement should be capable of giving each area its own identity – and not one that could easily be transposed across to another area.

The essence statements are the starting point for all teachers in expanding their curriculum area understandings. For the past several years primary generalist teachers have tended to see each curriculum area as a list of achievement objectives. The effect has been a fragmented or disjointed view of learning areas. The revised national curriculum provides an opportunity to re-establish a more coherent understanding of what is intended. Once this is achieved, teachers are more likely to open their thinking to what constitutes rich teaching and learning opportunities.

Using the learning area essence statements for teacher professional learning

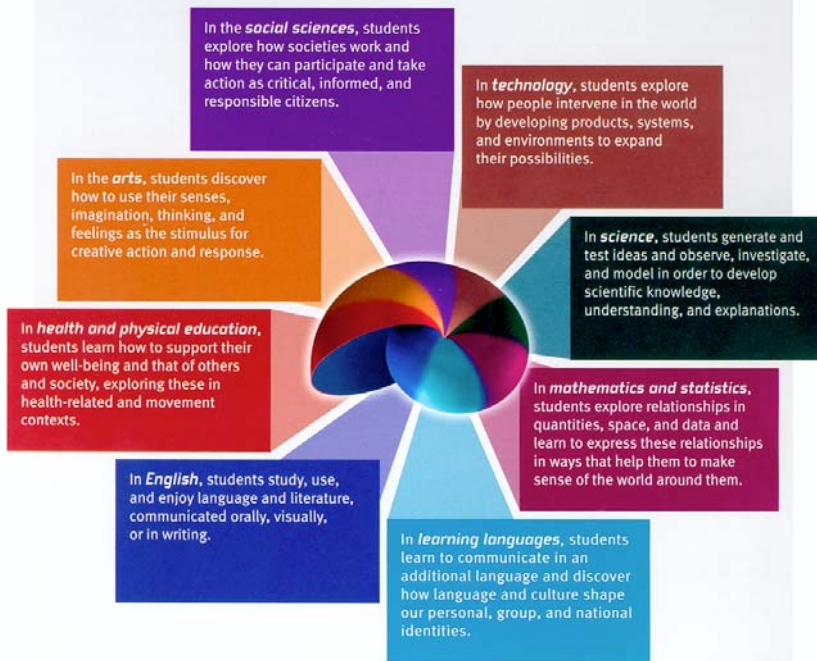
Ask teachers, in very small groups, to tell each other their understanding of the essence of a learning area. In the first instance, ask them to do this without referring to the curriculum document.

Once they have discussed and shared their ideas, have them check their understandings against what is stated in the curriculum document. This is a time to check whether understandings are well informed. Is there learning to be done so that teachers can confidently tell each other what the essence of an area is, or do they already know this stuff?

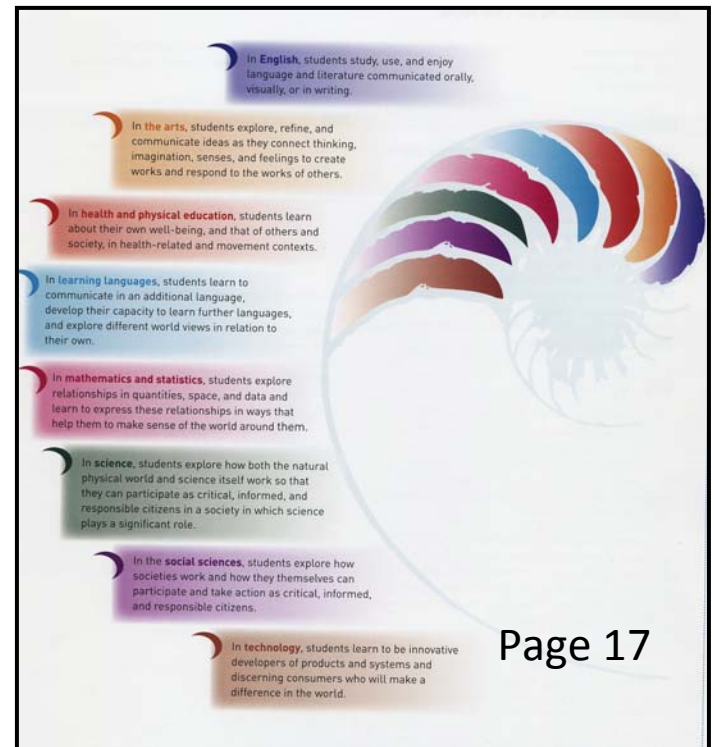
This is a first and fundamental step to developing professional knowledge of curriculum areas. We expect our medical general practitioners to be able to tell us the meaning of a condition without having to look up a book. As educational general practitioners, we should be able to tell others what the essence of a learning area is – in a way that is consistent with the NZC document – without having to look it up in a book. Developing this learning for all learning areas may take time – but it is important.

Learning Areas

Learning areas are broad groupings of knowledge. The New Zealand Curriculum specifies eight that are considered essential for a general education: arts, English, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology.



It is interesting to refer to essence statements in both the draft and final versions of the NZC. Schools may wish to examine both versions.



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The New Zealand **Curriculum**



Learning Areas *The Strands*

Each learning area is divided into strands. A next step in curriculum fluency beyond being able to state the essence of each area, is to know the names of the strands without having to always refer to the document. With a total of 27 plus strands, this is not easy! The less we can carry around in our heads, and the more we have to go to a document, the less likely we are able to see valuable curriculum connections in our day to day practice. The implications for school-level curriculum development, design and practice are significant!

8 Learning Areas: 27+ Strands

Arts (Dance, Drama, Sound Arts, Visual Arts)				
English				
Health & Physical Education				
Learning Languages				
Maths & Statistics				
Science				
Social Sciences				
Technology				

TEST:

Name the strands!

8 Learning Areas: 27 Strands +

Arts (Dance, Drama, Sound Arts, Visual Arts)	Understand Arts in context	Developing practical knowledge	Developing ideas	Communicating and interpreting
English	Listening, reading, viewing	Speaking, writing presenting		
Health & Physical Education	Personal health and physical development	Movement concepts and motor skills	Relationships with other people	Healthy communities & environments
Learning Languages	Communication	Language knowledge	Cultural knowledge	
Maths & Statistics	Number & algebra	Geometry & measurement	Statistics	
Science	Living world	Planet Earth and beyond	Physical world	Material world
Social Sciences	Identity, culture and social organisation	Place and Environment	Continuity & Change	The Economic World
Technology	Technological practice	Technological knowledge	Nature of technology	

Coverage of the Strands

None of the strands in the different learning areas is optional, but in some learning areas particular strands may be emphasised at different times or in different years. Schools should have a clear rationale for doing this, and ensure that each strand receives due emphasis over the longer term.

School Curriculum Design and Review, NZC p. 38

There is an expectation that the school will provide its students with learning experiences in all of the curriculum strands in the course of their schooling. Very careful thought needs to be given to designing the curriculum so that the learning experiences are rich and meaningful, and not merely fulfilling expectations through surface coverage. One way to do this is to develop programme approaches and contexts that integrate a number of strands. It is conceivable, for example, that a well chosen and planned science theme could provide meaningful learning across all science strands. This is entirely appropriate at the primary level of education.

The New Zealand **Curriculum**



Learning Areas

Learning Area Statements

The school is required to ***provide effectively taught programmes consistent with the learning area statements.*** The requirement allows the school to set its priority goals for each learning area. Those goals need to be stated in ways that are consistent with the ***intent*** of the statements in the New Zealand Curriculum.

While the revised national curriculum may *look* more manageable than the previous documents, it nonetheless contains quite considerable detail – and perhaps more than a school might choose to include in its own curriculum planning.

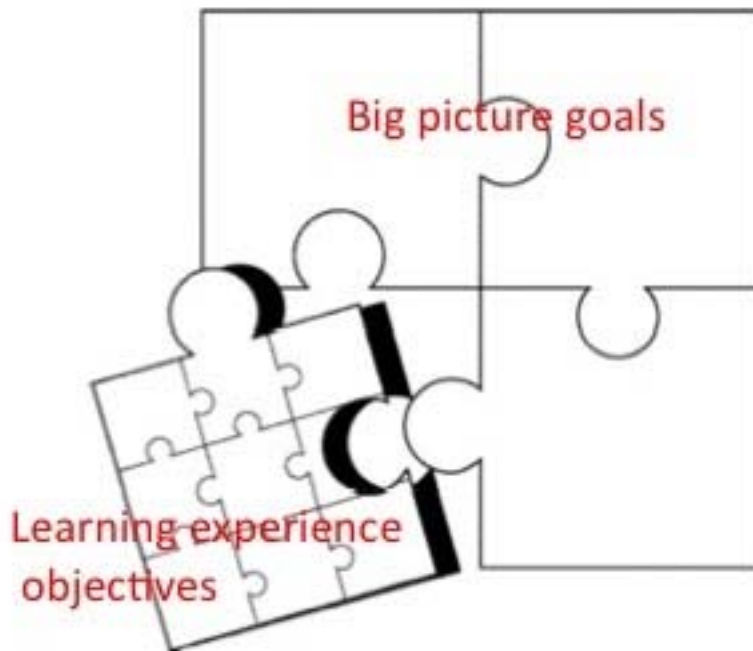
How, then, can the school bring clarity and manageability to its learning area goals?

Developing learning area priority goals: one approach

- All teachers participate in learning workshop sessions. Maximise everyone's participation by having working groups of no less than 3, and no more than 4. Have cross school representation in each group. Small schools may only have one group! Every group works on the same learning area (we want everyone to engage in the learning for every learning area).
- Select the learning area for consideration (e.g. science).
- Have everyone study the learning area statement, and work towards developing three or four priority *whole school* learning goals that capture the intent of the learning area.
- The goals need to be quite specific to the learning area (e.g. science), consistent with the essence statement, and not a set of generic, cross-curricular skills (e.g. problem solving, investigating).
- Following individual group work, have all groups collaborate to decide on the major goals that should be priorities for student learning across all levels of the school.

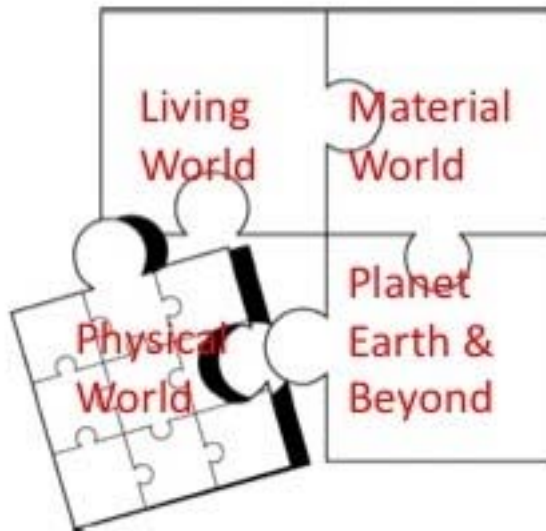
Developing learning area priority goals: one approach (continued)

The whole school priority goals should represent a balanced view of the learning area. These are “big picture” or “big focus” goals. They allow individual teachers or planning teams to choose contexts for learning that are directed towards those goals. They also provide the focal points for deciding learning objectives that are directed towards the goals.



The jigsaw is a metaphor for curriculum design. When all of the “big” pieces *fit* together, they represent a full and balanced view of the learning area. In turn, a range of planned, year appropriate, classroom learning experiences with associated objectives *fit* with big picture, goal directed learning.

The NZC learning area statements provide valuable and direct references for deciding the school's big picture goals. But the school needs to work at decisions on what it will draw out as its major goals for each learning area, keeping in mind that cross-curricular goals (those that apply across all learning areas) will be identified as a separate set of big picture goals (e.g. from the Key Competencies).



Newtime School decided to base its science whole school, big picture learning goals on the strand statements. The goals emphasise science **knowledge** and curriculum **content**. The school will not necessarily follow strand statements for all learning areas.

Living World: students recognise that all groups of living things have life processes, common and unique requirements, and adapt to and interact with their environment in particular ways.

Material World: students describe and group materials based on properties and recognise permanent and temporary changes in materials in everyday situations

Physical World: students have explanations for a variety of physical phenomena such as light, sound, heat, magnetism, motion, energy.

Planet Earth & Beyond: students have understandings about the natural processes on Earth (erosion, weather systems) and the solar system (day and night), and the interdependence of land, air, water, and life.

The New Zealand **Curriculum**



Learning Areas Achievement Objectives

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The Requirement

Select achievement objectives relevant to students' interests and learning needs.

NZC p. 44

The achievement objectives provide useful guides to aspects of learning that can contribute towards major learning intentions or goals. They are not a starting point, and they are not a sufficient basis for programme development or assessment of student learning.

The idea of achievement objectives and levels has been carried forward from the previous national curriculum. As the following slide shows, there is little difference in the *number* of objectives between the old and the revised documents.

Number of Achievement Objectives Levels 1 - 4

	Previous NZC AOs and Achievement Aims	Revised NZC AOs and Achievement Aims	NZC Strands
English	44 (+18 processes)	40	2
Learning Languages	0	28	3
Social Sciences	40 (+10 AAs)	26	5
Science	29 (+17 AAs)	63	5
Technology	52	32	3
Maths & Statistics	118	63	3
Arts	48	77	4
Health & PE	69	54	4
TOTALS	400 (+45 AAs & processes)	390	28

The original intention of achievement objectives was to provide descriptors of what students should be able to do in order to progress to the next higher curriculum level. They were intended as a tool for teachers' judgment making (assessment). To be useful and credible for such purposes, it is necessary that objectives give clear definition to what is required for progression from one level to the next. That clarity assumes that a certain objectivity can be applied, and a consistency of interpretation from school to school, teacher to teacher. The achievement objectives have been shown to fall short on these critical requirements.

Defining curriculum progressions, particularly for more complex learning content, has proven elusive in all systems that attempt this. The device of "semantic incrementalism" (systematically adding more verbs and adjectives to objectives to denote progression) has not given the distinctive clarity that allows teachers to confidently and dependably make distinctions between achievement at one level and another. This is the case with the revised curriculum achievement objectives, as with the previous national curriculum. The following slides illustrate examples of this concern.



Analysing the Achievement Objectives

NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM **English**

Speaking, Writing, Presenting Strand

Five Skills

- Processes and strategies
- Purposes and audiences
- Ideas
- **Language features** (example for analysis)
- Structure



THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

English

Speaking, Writing, Presenting Strand

Language Features Objectives

L1: Uses language features, showing some recognition of their effects.

L2: Uses language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

L3: Uses language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

L4: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

L5: Select and use a range of language features appropriately, showing an understanding of their effects.

L6: Select and use a range of language features appropriately, for a variety of effects.



THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

English

Speaking, Writing, Presenting Strand

Language Features 1st Indicator

- L1: Uses some oral, written, and visual language features to create meaning and effect.
- L2: Uses oral, written, and visual language features to create meaning and effect.
- L3: Uses oral, written, and visual language features to create meaning and effect and engage interest.
- L4: Uses a range of oral, written, and visual to create meaning and effect and to sustain interest.
- L5: Uses a wide range of oral, written, and visual language features to create meaning and effect and to sustain interest.
- L6: Uses a wide range of oral, written, and visual language features with control to create meaning and effect and to sustain interest.



THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

English

Speaking, Writing, Presenting Strand

Language Features 2nd Indicator

- L1: Uses a range of high-frequency, topic specific, and personal-content words to create meaning.
- L2: Uses a large and increasing bank of high-frequency, topic specific, and personal-content words to create meaning.
- L3: Uses an increasing vocabulary to communicate meaning.
- L4: Uses a range of vocabulary to communicate precise meaning.
- L5: Uses an increasing range of vocabulary to communicate precise meaning.
- L6: Uses an increasing range of vocabulary to communicate precise meaning.

Strand 1: Personal Health & Physical Development

Objective 2: Regular physical activity

- L1: Participate in **creative and regular physical activities** and identify **enjoyable** experiences.
- L2: Experience **creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities** and describe the benefits to well-being.
- L3: Maintain regular participation in **enjoyable physical activities** in a range of environments and describe how these assist in the promotion of well-being.
- L4: Demonstrate an increasing sense of responsibility for incorporating **regular and enjoyable physical activity** into their personal lifestyle to enhance well-being.
- L5: Experience a range of personally enjoyable physical activities and describe how varying levels of involvement affect well-being and life-style balance.
- L6: Choose and maintain ongoing involvement in appropriate physical activities and examine factors influencing their participation.

NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM HEALTH

Strand 1: Personal Health & Physical Development

Objective 2: Regular physical activity

- L1:** Participate in **creative and regular physical activities** and identify **enjoyable** experiences.
- L2:** Experience **creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities** and describe the benefits to well-being.
- L3:** Maintain regular participation in **enjoyable physical activities** in a range of environments and describe how these assist in the promotion of well-being.
- L4:** Demonstrate an increasing sense of responsibility for incorporating **regular and enjoyable physical activity** into their personal lifestyle to enhance well-being.

Newtime School has drawn the common meaning from each level objective to make a single objective that reflects the overall intent of the AOs. At Newtime School, its learning objective applies to all levels of learning. The school expects developmentally appropriate and stimulating learning experiences for *all* students relative to this objective.

Newtime School Objective

HEALTH

Students regularly participate in highly active and enjoyable physical activities and know the benefits for personal well being.

THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

VISUAL ARTS

Strand 2: Developing Practical Knowledge

- L1: Explore a variety of materials and tools and discover elements and selected principles.
- L2: Explore a variety of materials and tools and discover elements and selected principles.
- L3: Explore *some* art-making conventions, applying knowledge of elements and selected principles through the use of materials and processes.
- L4: Explore *and use* art-making conventions, applying knowledge of elements and selected principles through the use of materials and processes.
- L5: Apply knowledge of selected conventions from established practice, using appropriate processes and procedures.
- L6: Apply knowledge of a range of conventions from established practice, using appropriate processes and procedures.



NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

VISUAL ARTS

Strand 2: Developing Practical Knowledge

- L1 Explore a variety of materials and tools and discover elements and selected principles.
- L2 Explore a variety of materials and tools and discover elements and selected principles.
- L3 Explore *some* art-making conventions, applying knowledge of elements and selected principles through the use of materials and processes.
- L4 Explore *and use* art-making conventions, applying knowledge of elements and selected principles through the use of materials and processes.

Newtime School has drawn the common meaning from each level objective to make a single objective that reflects the overall intent of the AOs. At Newtime School, its learning objective applies to all levels of learning. The school expects developmentally appropriate and stimulating learning experiences for *all* students relative to this objective.

Newtime School Curriculum Plan

VISUAL ARTS

Students show that they know the use and effects of a variety of materials, tools and processes for expressing ideas visually.

Drawing

Painting

Print making

Construction

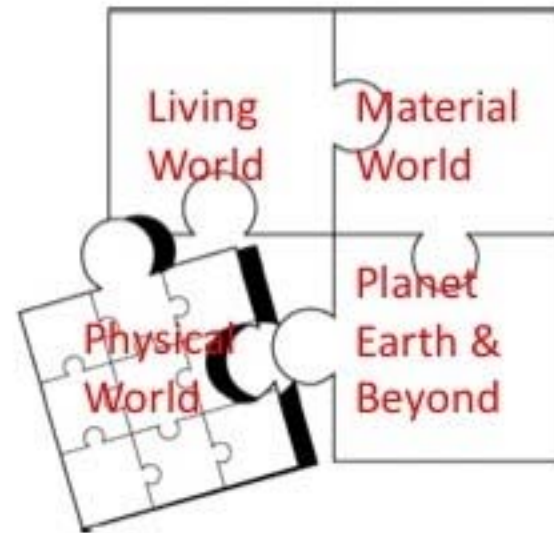
A notice in the Education Gazette, 4 February, 2008, p.23 says that schools should “draw on the achievement objectives ... to ensure that the progress and achievement of student learning throughout schooling is enabled”.

We need to apply professional “critical literacy” to this statement. Is it well advised? **DO** or **CAN** the achievement objectives “ensure” that student progress and achievement is “enabled”.

The New Zealand Curriculum advises that the school’s curriculum is likely to be well designed when the long view is taken: “each **student’s ultimate learning success is more important than the covering of particular achievement objectives**”.

NZC p.39

Deciding how to use the achievement objectives in the school's curriculum planning is illustrated by referring to the earlier example in this section. The school identifies its school-wide "big picture" goals. When teachers are developing learning experiences directed towards helping students reach those goals, they may "select achievement objectives relevant to students' interests and learning needs",⁽¹⁾ that also *fit* with the school's big picture goals. By keeping the focus on the school's big picture goals, the progress and achievement of student learning throughout schooling is enabled⁽²⁾.



"Little" picture objectives that together help represent the "big picture" goal.

(1) New Zealand Curriculum requirement (see p.44)

(2) Education Gazette 04.02.08

LEARNING AREAS

Review Questions

- Is the meaning and intent of our curriculum area statements aligned with the intent of The New Zealand Curriculum learning area statements.
- Does our curriculum explain how programmes are designed to meet the needs and interests of students?
- Has consideration been given to making and planning for connections across learning areas, values and key competencies?
- Does our curriculum have a rationale and structure for covering learning area strands and “selecting” achievement objectives?
- Does our curriculum explain how students’ learning and progress are monitored and recorded in relation to “big picture” learning goals?