



Some thoughts on the way ahead with the New Curriculum

Schools will need to engage in a curriculum development process

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Thought #1

The new learning area statements provide a general overview of what each of the Learning Areas is about, why they are studied, and how the learning area is structured. The new achievement objectives are broad statements of learning outcomes.

Thought #2

The learning area statements are the starting point for development of programmes of learning that are suited to students' needs and interests.

Thought #3

Teachers will need to ensure they have knowledge of the learning area including what is mandatory.

Thought #4

In the case of the Health and Physical Education, "the seven areas of learning, are to be included in teaching and learning programmes at both primary and secondary levels."

Thought #5

Outdoor Education is one of the seven areas of learning

Thought #6

All decisions regarding which Teaching and Learning programmes will be offered to students will need to be subjected to a filtering process which considers the vision, principles, values and key competencies.

Thought #7

Schools will need to engage in a curriculum development process

The New Zealand Curriculum document states "The New Zealand Curriculum sets the direction for teaching and learning...but it is a framework rather than a detailed plan. This means that while every school curriculum must be clearly aligned with the intent of this document, schools have considerable flexibility when determining the detail. In doing this, they can draw on a wide

range of ideas, resources, and models." (Ministry of Education, 2007).

This suggests that the centralized curriculum has gone and that there will be collaborative decision-making by groups of staff members where decision will be made about programmes of learning that meet student needs. Above all it suggests that school leaders will have to put processes in place that facilitate healthy informed debate and the subsequent decision making.

Bolstad (2004, p. 24) talks about a variety of ways open to school based curriculum developers. These include the number of persons involved (from individual teachers to whole staff and school communities); the type of activity (from investigation of an area to creation of new material); and the time commitment (from a one-off activity to a long term plan).



Bolstad and others suggest the general stages for school based curriculum planning are:

1. Developing a general understanding of curriculum planning
2. Building knowledge of the new curriculum
3. Gathering information to inform decisions
4. Making decisions about approaches and programmes
5. Implementing changes
6. Monitoring and evaluating.

Thought #8

There will be advantages for schools

While undoubtedly there are a number of challenges that will arise in the school based curriculum development process, there are many advantages of developing a curriculum at the school level. These include:

- Teacher involvement in the process contributes to a sense of ownership and acts as a stimulus for effective implementation
- Students can help to shape their own learning
- Links with community groups may be strengthened, and these groups may be able to contribute to learning opportunities
- Programmes are likely to identify and be responsive to students' learning needs and interests

- There are opportunities to contextualize learning locally
- There are opportunities to include current trends and research ideas into curriculum areas.

Many of these advantages particularly apply to the Health and Physical Education learning area. For example, strengthening community links and contextualizing learning locally. The learning area statement refers to "as students develop resilience and a sense of personal and social responsibility, they..... contribute to the well-being of those around them, of their communities, of their environments (including natural environments), and of their wider society."

Thought #9 Current resource material is available. For example, The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars Social Studies (2004), illustrate the important concepts from the current achievement objectives and how these may be unpacked (as Key Aspects of Learning).

Thought #10 Many people will need to be consulted. The author's recent experience with Hornby High School and their STAR programme and a number of schools associated with the Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL) programme, suggests the following groups will have valuable views:

- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- Other community groups, including iwi/hapū
- Principals and other school leaders
- Advisers/mentors.

Consultation with the groups listed above may present a challenge, and may not always result in clear guidance for curriculum design. Nevertheless, through carefully planning specific strategies to maximise the engagement of each group, and through providing a framework for discussion, useful information can be gathered.

A range of strategies could be used to gather information from various groups, including surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and conversations as opportunities arise.

Thought #11

Teachers interesting in professional reading on the subject of curriculum development could hardly go past the following:

Baldwin, R (2007). A Way Forward with the New Social Sciences Curriculum: Approaches to planning programmes for schools
 Accessed from: <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/socialscience/resources.shtml>