

How New Zealand Motivates a National Identity Through The New Curriculum

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ニュージーランドが取り組む新カリキュラムによる
ナショナル・アイデンティティ醸成

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Abstract

The New Zealand Curriculum (the NZC) provides eight principles in which all schools are given unprecedented freedom and responsibility. They are expected to design the NZC principles and to visualize the curriculum in their classes.

The Treaty of Waitangi principle indicates New Zealand's "unique identity" with its bicultural history in the NZC.

Keywords: Identity, Curriculum, Maori, culture, official language

Introduction

Benedict Anderson defines a "nation" as "an imagined political community in an anthropological spirit¹⁾." People who inhabit a nation generally have a sense of belonging to it. The people of New Zealand used to have a sense of belonging to the United Kingdom. However, New Zealand gradually developed their own identity as Kiwis and a new sense of belonging after gaining their independence. So the sense of belonging to a nation is not permanent. Rosalind Edwards states that fathers seek to give their children a sense of belonging in a "Kiwi" identity²⁾. In addition, Philippa Hunter describes the importance of

identity in his paper through the New Zealand Curriculum³⁾. Therefore, one of the best ways that a nation can provide a sense of belonging is through education.

In this paper, how New Zealand cultivates their identity through education, especially in the New Curriculum, will be discussed.

1. History of Education and Education Reform in New Zealand

New Zealand has three official languages are English, Te Reo Maori, and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). Te Reo Maori in New Zealand is one of the indigenous languages officially recognized in the world. Even though the formal European-style schooling was introduced in 1815, the Maori had already started their own schools to teach the children of their tribe. The elder Maori taught mainly traditional knowledge including songs, chants, tribal history, spiritual understanding, and knowledge of medicinal plants. Soon after London missionaries arrived and began using the Bible as their main teaching resource, the English literacy rate of both children and adults quickly improved leading to their integration in a new society⁴⁾.

After the U.K. joined the European Union in 1973, New Zealand was forced to seek economic independence from UK. The New Zealand

government had to carry out financial reform in 1984 to erase its deficit. This administrative reform led to an education reform which presented The New Zealand Curriculum Framework in 1993. This education reform was based on the policy document called “Tomorrow’s School” in the 1980s⁵⁾.

Kojima explains in her paper that the first New Zealand curriculum in 1993 was greatly affected by the administrative reform in the following ways⁶⁾.

The curriculum was focused mainly on the policy of free market and efficiency. However, the education forum as a pressure group insisted that the draft of the curriculum should put more focus on Maori culture and less on other western cultures. After all, the concept of the first curriculum was compromised between in economic liberalism, biculturalism, gender equality, and anti-nuclear movement.

PISA⁷⁾ conducted research in 2003 to find out New Zealand’s rapid decline in academic ability which used to be in the top three in the world. This result in education brought about The New Curriculum in 2007.

2. The New Curriculum in 2007

The previous curriculum of New Zealand which started in 1993 was greatly affected by political intentions. Because Education Reform

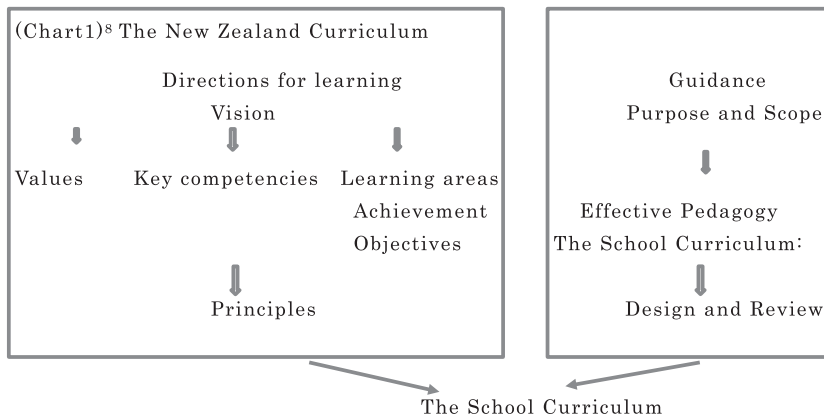
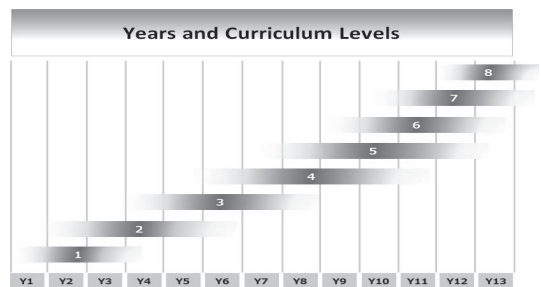
was included within administrative reform in 1989, the previous curriculum had to aim for quick academic achievements and school budget cuts.

The New Curriculum in 2007 appends “Vision’ to Directions for Learning.”

Vision shows what students in New Zealand have to learn before they finish their compulsory school years. “Vision contains four directions which help students become socially talented: being confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners.

“Directions for Learning” prioritizes Vision and is connected to three main streams: Values, Key Competencies, and Learning Areas. Directions for Learning leads to each goal with Principles. Remarkable Principles are High expectations, the Treaty of Waitangi, Cultural diversity, Inclusion, Learning to learn, Community engagement, Coherence, and Future focus. All schools have to arrange individual adequate school curriculums according to Years

(Chart 2)⁹⁾



and Curriculum Levels.

3. Biculturalism and Multiculturalism in New Zealand

Even before the International Year for the World's Indigenous People was established by United Nations in 1993, New Zealand had declared the Maori language as an official language of New Zealand. The existence of the Treaty of Waitangi and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 helped New Zealand government lead to the Maori language become an official language in 1987¹⁰. By this time, New Zealand had already began to accept two cultures, British and Maori. This led to school teachers believing that they are only teaching in bicultural circumstances, even though New Zealand is considered a multicultural country. Even though students are learning mainly in English at schools, most of the elementary and intermediate schools in New Zealand provide Maori language classes once a week.

3.1 The New Zealand Curriculum: Purpose and Scope



This is the front page of the New Zealand Curriculum¹⁰ which was issued by the Ministry of Education in 2007. There is an introduction in the beginning of The New Zealand Curriculum and it is a metaphor for growth. Physician, writer, and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94) saw the spiral shell of the nautilus as a symbol of intellectual and spiritual growth. He suggested that people outgrew their protective shells and

discarded them as they became no longer necessary; "One's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regain its original dimensions."¹¹

In the statement of official policy, prior to the Overview of The New Curriculum, there is an introduction to the main purposes of curriculum. The first policy is that schools in New Zealand should provide lessons in English as well as in Maori language.¹² The second policy is that two independent curriculums are expected to lead students toward a bicultural background in New Zealand. All documents related to The New Curriculum are provided in both English and Maori. The Maori documents are original and not just translated from the English documents.¹³ The third policy is that they decided to use the word "students" not "children" in any inclusive sense.

As mentioned in the second chapter¹⁴, the New Zealand Curriculum consists of two main parts which lead to the School Curriculum: Directions for Learning and Guidance. Directions for Learning consist of five factors which are Vision, Values, Key Competencies, Learning Areas with Achievement, Objectives, and Principles. Guidance consists of three factors which are Purpose and Scope, Effective Pedagogy, The school Curriculum: Design and Review¹⁵. Here, we will examine how these five factors of the New Zealand Curriculum can be clear and effective.

Vision means what we want for our young people who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori and Pakeha recognize each other as full Treaty partners¹⁶.

This Vision paired with the concept of the Treaty of Waitangi holds four concrete visions which are Confident, Connected, Actively Involved, and Lifelong Learners. One of the descriptions of Confident expressed as positive in their own identity. Principles focuses on how foundations of curriculum decision making should be consistent with eight statements; High Expectations, Treaty of Waitangi, Cultural Diversity, Inclusion, Learning to Learn, Community Engagement, Coherence,

and Future Focus. These principles enable students to construct New Zealand's unique identity. According to the explanation of each factor in the New Zealand Curriculum, it is overviewed how they manage to cultivate student identities. Values encourage students with the following expressions, "Diversity, as found in our different cultures, languages, and heritages." Key Competencies consists of six key capabilities, "Thinking, Using Language, Symbols, and Texts, Managing Self, Relating to Others, and Participating and Contributing" Participating and Contributing refers to student attribution where students participate and can contribute in communities and have a sense of belonging and build the confidence to participate within new contexts.

3.2 Official Languages in Learning Areas of The New Curriculum

Even though New Zealand has three official languages, English is generally recognized as the most common language medium at schools. Learning Te Reo Maori, however, helps all students to appreciate diversity which is a key to unity. The Curriculum refers to Te Reo Maori in the following way:

By understanding and using Te Reo Maori, New Zealanders become more aware of the role played by the indigenous language and culture in defining and as-serting their point of difference in the wider world¹⁸⁾.

This shows how learning Te Reo Maori helps not only Maori students strengthen their identities but also non-Maori students recognize a primary source of their nation's self-knowledge and identity.

Besides, if students wish to learn New Zealand Sign Language, they have to learn it as a second language in addition to English.

Conclusion

The New Zealand Curriculum asks the question several times "Why Study English" throughout the curriculum. English is one of

three official languages of New Zealand, and students are expected to learn it as an effective tool for enhancing their social skills in New Zealand and also around the world.

Students are also given a chance to learn Maori in addition to English¹⁹⁾. The curriculum also refers to how success in English is fundamental to succeed across the curriculum. Therefore, the English language is considered both as a heritage language and as an additional language. In other words, learning English is not necessarily considered inevitable for students but their appropriate choice. There is a description for the purpose of learning English on the page 18 of The New Zealand Curriculum:

Students appreciate and enjoy texts in all their forms. The study of New Zealand and world literature contributes to the students' developing sense of identity, their awareness of New Zealand's bicultural heritage, and their understanding of the world.

This is a clear example of why it is important for students to learn what are the official languages of a nation and how those official languages can help the people of a nation build a stable identity and a definite sense of belonging.

Even though there is no specified description of the official languages in the New Curriculum (2007), every school's curriculum has to consider its guideline according to every school's circumstance. Therefore, further research is needed in the area of individual school curricula.

notes

1. Benedict Anderson., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, Revised Edition, 1991)., Translated by T. Shiraishi, S. Shiraishi., *Souzou no Kyoudoutai.*, Shosekikoubouhayama., 2015., p.24
2. Rosalind Edwards., *12 It's a Bicultural Nation. But the Journey Towards True Biculturalism, It's Not There Yet.*, Edited by Kirsten McGavin and Farida Fozdar., *Mixed Race Identities in Australia, New Zealand and the Pasific Islands.*, Routledge.,

- 2017., p.197.
3. Phillipa Hunters., *History in the New Zealand Curriculum; Discourse Shaping and Key Competencies Possibilities.* Teachers and curriculum, Volume 12 2011., Faculty of Education., The University of Waikato.
 4. *The New Zealand Curriculum.*, the Ministry of Education., 2007., p.14
 5. M.Aoki, H.Sato., ed., *Education in Australia and New Zealand 3rd edition.*, Toshindo., 2020 pp.106-108
 6. F. KOJIMA, *A Study on the Sociological Background of the Establishment of Social Studies: From the Case of New Zealand.*, 2008., Educational Studies 51 International Christian University pp8-90
 7. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/22.02.2021>
PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment. PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. Read more about PISA in our latest brochure.
 8. *The New Zealand Curriculum.*, the Ministry of Education., 2007., p.7
 9. *Ibid.*, p.45

Chart 1 is arranged by the author according to the New Zealand Curriculum.
The New Zealand Curriculum

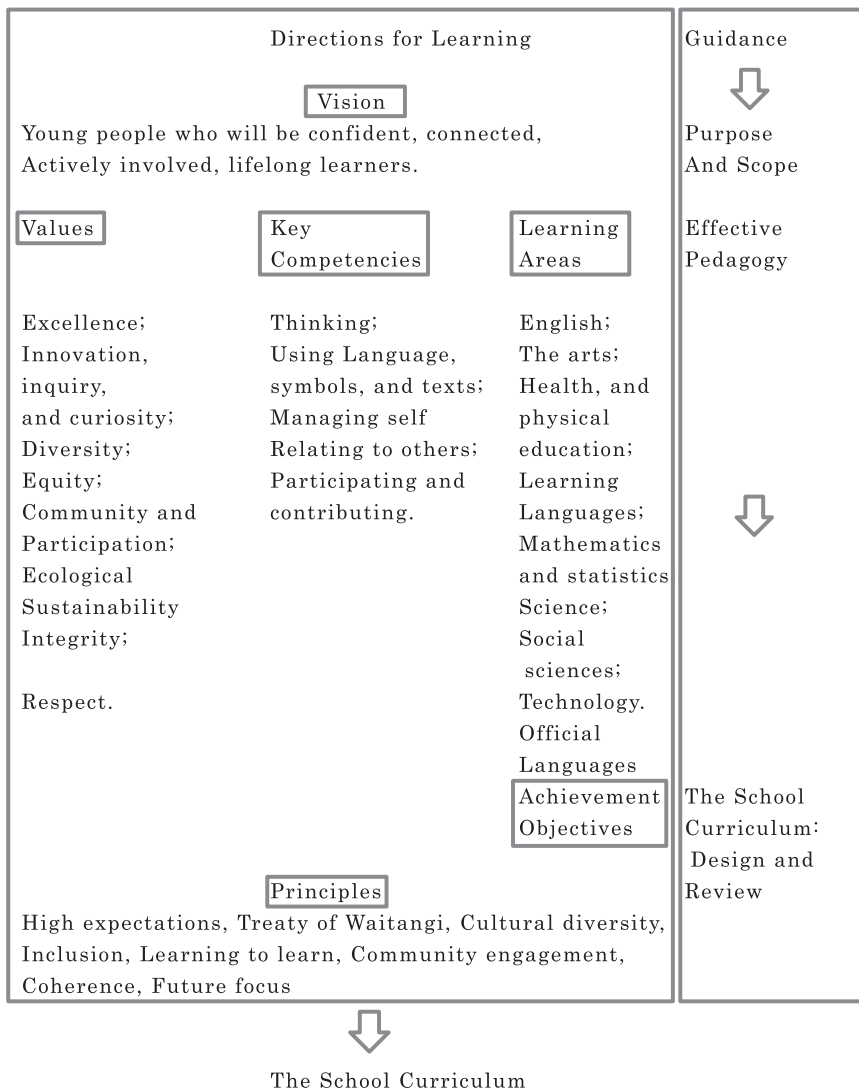


Chart 2 is arranged by the author according to the New Zealand Curriculum

10. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/waitangi-tribunal-and-maori-claim-their-cultural-and> 2021.05.02
The Waitangi Tribunal takes its name from the Treaty of Waitangi, the "founding document" in New Zealand's unwritten constitution, which was signed in 1840 by Her Majesty Queen Victoria and the chiefs and tribes of Aotearoa.
11. the Ministry of Education., *op.cit.* back of the front page.
12. During the Maori language revival, Maori started their own pre-school institutions in 1982 called "Kohanga Reo (language nest)" where children would only learn in the Maori language. In 1985, they also started Maori schools for after pre-school institutes called "Kura Kaupapa Maori," which are primary schools operating under Maori custom and using the Maori language as the medium of instruction.
13. The first unified education curriculum in the Maori language was edited in 2008. The unified education curriculum with no translation from English to Maori.
14. *The New Zealand Curriculum.*, the Ministry of Education., 2007., p.4
15. *Ibid.*, p.37
16. *Ibid.*, p.8
17. Chart 3 is the simplified version created by the author of chart 1.
18. the Ministry of Education., *op.cit.*, p.14
19. Most of primary and intermediate schools are requested to prepare optional classes for the Maori language.

Teachers and curriculum, Volume 12 2011., Faculty of Education., The University of Wai-kato.

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