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# HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION

## ENGLISH IN NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION

## 1847-2025

## AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY

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**SECTIONS**



### 1. KNOWLEDGE-RICH ENGLISH CURRICULUM

**Introduction**

This historical inquiry provides an overview of English as a curriculum subject in ordinary[1] schools and in the Native Village and Māori boarding schools. It is accompanied by a videoed lecture series which features other school subjects. The evidence shows that the quality and type of school English contributed to New Zealand's first-class education system and to building a liberal-democratic nation.

I have written this essay for two reasons. The first is to describe the features of a knowledge-rich curriculum, to explain why these features lead to pupils' achievement, and to locate them in pre-1971 English syllabuses. My second purpose is to locate the conflict between the culture-based 2023 Mātaiaho Curriculum[2] and the 2025 Knowledge-Rich Curriculum[3] in larger political and ideological conflicts. Politically, these are between liberalism and socialism. Ideologically, the conflict is between Enlightenment ideas and ideals and those of the Counter-Enlightenment. In education, the conflict is centred on knowledge. What should be taught to New Zealand children – should it be content justified by Enlightenment ideas about knowledge and the individual, or a culture-based one, justified by the Counter-Enlightenment communitarian beliefs?[4]

The historical evidence makes it clear that until the final 1963 English Syllabus, the nation could rightly claim a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum. (English was not alone as the accompanying video lecture series shows). The richness of content is evidenced in the English taught in 19th century schools (section 2), in the Native Village and Māori boarding schools (section 3), and in the ordinary schools from the 1904 Syllabuses of Instruction for Public Schools until content-free English was introduced with the New English Subject Curriculum in 1971 (section 4).

The oft-repeated Gradgrind caricature of schools is false; throughout the liberal century, roughly the 1870s to the 1970s, educational ideas were humane. The late 19th century New

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[1] Terms for public schools included 'ordinary', 'board', and 'state'. The Native Village Schools were also public schools.

[2] The full title is 'Te Mātaiaho: The Refreshed New Zealand Curriculum, Draft for Testing', March 2023. Te Poutāhū, Te Tahūhū Te Mātauranga, Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa. (Lower case: Curriculum Centre, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Government.)

[3] Te Tahūhū Te Mātauranga. (2025). The New Zealand Curriculum: English, 0-10, October. Te Tahūhū Te Mātauranga, Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa. (Curriculum Centre, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Government.)

[4] Communitarian beliefs have these main features: a) political and legal rights adhere to the group not to the individual, often with the group's rights held by the leader – e.g. communism and fascism; b) the leadership elite justifies its claims to political power (and substantial economic resources) in ideologies of 'serving the people' – justified in the case of retribalisation by claims of an unbroken link to ancestral authority, often requiring a re-write of history to fit the new story; c) the individual is dismissed as an Enlightenment fiction. Instead a person is believed to be created within the socio-cultural relations of the group – whether kin, class, or historical. Significantly this means that humans are primarily group members, producing fundamental categories of insider and outsider. It puts at risk the idea of human rights which requires the autonomous individual who holds those rights. The belief elevates culture, including language, to a primary position. The 'we have no identity other than that of our cultural group' erroneously claims a causal link between race (ancestral genetics) and 'ways of knowing and being' – a racial ideology. This ideology of culturalism (Rata, 2000, pp. 75-92) informs the 2023 Mataiaho Draft Curriculum and educational practices such as culturally responsive pedagogies. Such claims of separate ways of 'knowing and being' are not supported by cognitive science and no evidential support in educational studies, despite numerous assertions. (Rata, 2025a; Surma et al., 2025)

Education Movement with its Whole Child approach, shows similarities to today's cognitive science methods. There are specific references to the benefits of memorisation required for mind development (automatic retrieval is mentioned); of design for logical progression from year to year; of balancing instruction with motivating activities to embed deep understanding. Teachers were encouraged to treat their pupils well – 'kindness' is in the 1904 syllabus. What we call structured literacy can be seen in the early records. The Māori-English translanguaging teaching methods used in the Native Village Schools would not be out of place today.[5]

The evidence is comprehensive: legislation, official syllabuses, Annual Education Reports, personal accounts, inspectors' reports[6] all show the rich quality of school English; its language content – the linguistic features and conventions which characterise speech and writing: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etymology, spelling, and punctuation. The evidence also includes written works, both popular and literary writing, which give delight and instruction.[7]

In writing this brief history, I acknowledge the gap between policy and practice. What is intended by politicians and officials is not always what happens in the classroom. Any account of the past is necessarily limited by being just that – an account not an re-enactment. However the inspectors' reports are particularly useful in showing the links between policy and practice. They provided detailed reports, often in vivid language, about what was in the syllabuses, what they saw being taught; they examined what the children knew. There are insights into school life, even including sanitation arrangements and advice about window placement for better ventilation. The reports show that most teachers were, as today, dedicated and hard-working. We need to know as much as we can of our educational history to understand not only why the system was so successful but how it contributed to building the nation – the Gradgrind caricature distorts that task.

**A Revolutionary Change**

From the 1970s, the education system underwent a revolutionary change to its purpose and character. The liberal ethos of the previous hundred years, with roots in the Enlightenment, was replaced by a commitment from education leaders to socialism.

The Director-General of Education W. L. Renwick was clear in his opposition to the very tenets of liberalism – secularism, individualism, tolerance, and freedom:

> Liberalism's other main problem (the first was tolerance) is the idea of freedom itself.[8]

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[5] Tauwehe Tamati's study of transacquisition pedagogy in kura kaupapa Māori "justified the translanguaging instruction in place of a language separation approach" with the use of both Māori and English languages (Rata and Tamati, 2022, p. 2). Section 3 shows that the Native Village Schools employed such a translanguaging pedagogy for children up to years 3 and 4.

[6] See the Rata Lilburne Archive of New Zealand Education https://sites.google.com/view/lilburne-rata-archive-nz/home

[7] John Dryden (1668). *An Essay of Dramatick Poesy*.

[8] Renwick, W. L. (1986). *Moving Targets: Six Essays on Educational Policy*, NZCER. p. 108.

English was most affected. The subject lost its integrity as discrete bounded knowledge; its content was hollowed out; its purpose abandoned. The end point was the knowledge-free 2023 Mātaiaho Curriculum.[9] The 2025 Knowledge-Rich English Curriculum[10] which has restored content to the subject poses a very clear challenge to fifty years of socialist education. It explains why the conflict is so intense, and often so personalised; a conflict about much more than a school subject, more even then politics.

I argue that the conflict's intensity lies in the ideology driving the politics, one operating at the level of beliefs about nationhood. The two sides are: New Zealand as a liberal-democratic secular nation, with the individual as the political category; or a polity organised according to communitarian recognition of race as the political category. English is central to this conflict. It is the language of government and society, the cultural repertoire of the nation's collective representations.[11] The fifty-year diminution of its school status not only contributed to the education system's decline but has significant consequences for national cohesion.

**Liberal Equality of Opportunity**

New Zealand's education system was established in the colonial era when liberal ideas were driving democracy's expansion.[12] From the 1852 Constitution Act's propertied male franchise, to the 1867 legislation designed to increase the numbers of eligible Māori male voters (excluding "half-castes" s. 2[13]), and finally to all men and women in 1893, education was in the service of liberal-democratic citizenship. The insistence on sex equality is instructive. As early as 1882, Inspector Henry Hill was one of several noting that girls were not attending school in equal numbers to boys. Decisive action followed.

> It is evident that at least 300 girls of school age are constantly kept at home in the Hawke's Bay District who ought to be attending and receiving instruction at school. (Reports of the Inspectors [Henry Hill], AJHR, E.1B, 1882, p. 11.)

Education Minister, Charles Bowen's introduction to the 1877 Education Bill captures the liberal idea that knowledge is the source of an individual's power:

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[9] Comparing page numbers between 2023 Mātaiaho and the 2025 Curriculum reveals the absence of content in the former – 2 pages for the 'English learning area' for all thirteen years of education – 65 pages in the 2025 Knowledge Rich Curriculum for years 0-10 alone. A knowledge-rich curriculum is first and foremost a syllabus of content.

[10] It was gazetted in November 2025 for teaching to pupils in years 0-10 from 2026. The years 11-13 English curriculum is being aligned to the new qualification system so is not yet available.

[11] Rata, E. (2018) contains a discussion of Durkheim 'collective representations' (Bourdieu's 'shared reality').

[12] The radical liberalism of Sir George Grey and others ensured that these ideals permeated the newly established state institutions. "There shall be equal justice in representation and in the distribution of land and revenue to every class in New Zealand . . . equal rights to all – equal rights in education, equal rights in taxation, equal rights in representation . . . equal rights in every respect." Attributed to both Sir George Grey and Rt. Hon. John Ballance.

[13] AN ACT to provide for the better Representation of the Native Aboriginal inhabitants of the Colony of New Zealand. 2. The term "Maori" in this Act shall mean an aboriginal native inhabitant of New Zealand and shall not include half-castes.

> Ignorance is a power for evil but never for good, and we must fight against it with every available weapon. ... The State cannot impart wisdom ... but it must arm every young citizen with the knowledge that may unlock the sources of higher knowledge.

**Socialism's Challenge**

Bowen's words framed a century of the equality of opportunity approach until Director-General W. L. Renwick led the New Left's[14] revolution from liberal equality of opportunity[15] to socialist equal outcomes.

> Equality of opportunity will lead to inequality of educational results. But that premise is no longer acceptable to radical critics who now view educational needs not in terms of equality of access but equality of results. The public debate is no longer about equality of educational opportunity: it is about equity, that is to say, fair treatment or social justice.[16]

Despite being the well-educated beneficiaries of over a hundred years of liberal nation building, these radical New Marxists spurned their privileging heritage for socialism's authoritarianism. They would be its moral and intellectual vanguard. Teacher trainees were advised to reject the embarrassing history of liberal nation-building for Marxist Critical Theory –

> the critically thinking educator should start by challenging the commonsense assumption that has formed the basis of our state education system since it was established in 1877: that universal, compulsory and secular education will lead to social equality and justice for all.[17]

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[14] The New Left emerged victorious from the internecine ideological warfare of post-war Marxism. But it was a pyrrhic victory. Championing the primacy of the relations of production over the forces of production as the 'determinant in the final instance' of the economic structure destroyed the very foundation of Marxism – its materialism base. Giving primacy to sociality opened the way for cultural determinacy (i.e. culturalism), and from there to postmodern relativism. Many in the New Left were unable to explain why they tipped over so easily into the anti-materialism of postmodernism and culturalism. Even later incoherent attempts to recover Marxism with 'Cultural Marxism' could not deal with the central flaw – the replacement of the structure by the superstructure. (Rata, 2000. *A Political Economy of Neotribal Capitalism*. Rowman and Littlefield.)

[15] Prime Minister and Minster of Education, Peter Fraser's famous 1939 statement best expresses the equality of opportunity approach. Fraser's socialism was not that of the privileged New Left from the properous post-war years. A child of poverty, Fraser was a forceful advocate for knowledge as the way out of poverty. His socialism was that of Gramsci, advocating for the intellectual education of the working-class. Liberalism and socialism are both the intellectual movements of modernity with a commitment to education for all. It explains the accommodation of liberalism and socialism in establishing and building a successful education system; that is, until the New Left from the 1970s. (See footnote 7).

[16] Speech to the New Zealand Royal Society, 1977, paraphrased in W. L. Renwick (1986). *Moving targets: six essays on educational policy*. Wellington: NZCER, pp. 29-30.

[17] Coxon, E., Jenkins, K., Marshall, J., Massey, (1994). T*he Politics of Learning and Teaching in Aotearoa-New Zealand*, Dunmore Press, p. 15.

The century-old commitment to universal, compulsory and secular education was replaced by a reductionist Marxist ideology. All that happens in society, even in the classroom, is reduced to working-class exploitation by oppressive capitalists.

> In order to understand the interaction between what happens in classrooms and social class differences we need to return to Marx's ideas about the differences in consciousness between social class groups.[18]

**Cultural Ideology**

In the 1980s, the New Left, in New Zealand as elsewhere, abandoned its class analysis. By the 2000s, various versions of cultural determinism (i.e. culturalism) had emerged. Critical Race Theory, Decolonisation, and Indigenisation repackaged binary class divisions into coloniser and colonised while retaining the Marxist template of oppressor and oppressed. Historical revisionism,[19] subjective 'lived experience', even complete historical erasure meant that ideology[20] replaced objective, verifiable accounts of the past.

Ideologies are the political equivalent of authoritarian religious beliefs. Decolonisation is of this type. The New Left's version of Marx's canon installed 'Te Tiriti' as the authority for decolonisation. In 2023, the ideology was to be legally entrenched in the curriculum. Mātaiaho was "designed to foster the next generation of Te Tiriti partners by moving beyond the rhetorical notion of 'honouring' Te Tiriti to give effect to it and its principles". (p. 5).

The Mātaiaho Draft (2023) asserted that its "vision and aspirations derive from the preambles and articles of Te Tiriti"; that its "principles" are "articulated by the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal" (p. 5). This statement has huge constitutional significance – one revealed in the deceptively simple words 'derive' and 'articulated'. In deriving its meaning from the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal and not from the 1840 Treaty Articles, Te Tiriti becomes in effect *a new treaty.*

The fact that Te Tiriti is not derived from the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi is concealed by the creation of an authentic connection to the past. The Māori words 'Te Tiriti ' are used to evoke a timelessness already well developed in its sacralisation as an ahistorical spirit. But the historical fact is that Te Tiriti re-writes history. 'Principles' are not in the 1840 Treaty. They first appear in the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act. After a decade of silence, their meaning was developed by the Courts, the Waitangi Tribunal, and culturalist academics and officials following the 1985 Treaty Amendment Act.[21] The enormity of this Treaty revisionism, which

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[18] Coxon et. al, p. 127.

[19] Many acclaimed historians are now challenging the pernicious effects of this revisionism. See for example, History Reclaimed https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/why-we-are-reclaiming-history/

[20] I define ideologies as political agendas which falsify, conceal, distort, or misrepresent the creation and control of meaning. They are authoritarian because scrutiny and critism are not permitted. In contrast I define liberalism as a philosophy. 'Philosophy' refers to the creation, understanding and scrutiny of meaning. Liberalism permits the scrutiny and challenge of language. Communitarian ideologies, such as socialism (or communism), theocracy, and tribalism do not. They cannot. These ideologies require conformity to whatever group is most amenable to the current emergent elite; in contemporary New Zealand this is the neotribal elite (Rata, 2000, 2011).

[21] I explain the reasons for the re-interpretation in Rata, E. (2011) Discursive Strategies of the Maori Tribal Elite, *Critique of Anthropology*, 31(4). 359–380.

involves creating a new meaning for the Treaty and the re-writing of history was concealed by the unauthorised transfer of authority to these New Left clerics.[22]

However, a challenge is underway. Three recent events show that the very institution which had relinguished its role as the maker of the nation's constitution on behalf of the people – Parliament – is reclaiming its rightful role.

The first event was the 2023 Treaty Principles Bill. Although unsuccessful, the controversy raised public awareness about who claimed sufficient power to authorise constitutional change. The self-assertion by the Courts, the Waitangi Tribunal, judges and academics for such authority was widely exposed by the Bill. It revealed not only the constitutional issue itself, but the deeper one concerning who has authority for the constitution. In achieving that exposure, the Bill was in fact a success.

The second event was a change to the Education and Training Act Amendment Bill in relation to the nation's universities:

> Universities should not take positions on matters that do not directly concern their role or functions. [Section 281A(2)(d)]

The consequences of this institutional neutrality clause are likely to be far-reaching. It will enable a challenge to the insertion of Treaty revisionism into university policies and practices by the 2003 Maori Tertiary Framework (Tertiary Framework, 2003). Indeed it will enable universities to resist all ideologies and return to the purpose of undertaking scientific inquiry).[23]

The third event also occurred in the Education and Training Amendment Act. It was the change to section 127(2)(e). This clause had previously provided the legislative authority for the primacy of the new Treaty, 'Te Tiriti', in education; an authority used to justify Mātaiaho. The 2025 amendment moved achievement into this place. The paramount objective of school boards was now "to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement" [s.127(1)0. To seek to "achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students" [s. 127(2)(e)(i)] was a secondary objective.

What appeared to be a minor matter concerning the curriculum was in fact a much deeper struggle between the two opposing ideologies of liberalism and communitarianism – about the purpose of education and about what sort of nation New Zealand should be. The current outcome of that struggle is the 2025 Knowledge-Rich Curriculum, with a framework written by the Ministerial Advisory Group.[24] This provided the scientific and pedagogical

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[22] I discuss the sacralisation of culture, led by the new 'clerics', in the interests of retribalisation in Rata 2005 and 2011.

[23] Rata, E. (2013). Knowledge and the Politics of Culture: An example from New Zealand's Higher Education Policy and Practice. *Anthropological Theory,* 13 (4), 329-346.
Rata, E. (2005). Marching through the Institutions, The Neotribal Elite and the Treaty of Waitangi, *Sites New Series*, 1 (2) 56 – 81.

[24] I was a member of this Group, led by educational psychology expert, Dr Michael Johnston.

justification for the knowledge-rich approach as the way to achieve the new paramount objective.

**English: The Cultural Repertoire**

Unsurprisingly, English is at the heart of the ideological struggle. The language came in for early and intense attention from those whose preference for authoritarianism went hand-in-hand with their dislike of liberalism; with a special distaste for liberal's partially loyal[25] free-thinking individual. The historical fact that the land was colonised by those speaking English placed the language at the centre of decolonising politics, making it an obvious target for decolonisers' wrath. More significantly perhaps, it was clearly recognised that English was the language of liberalism.

As the means for the transmission of the nation's collective representations – how we represent ourselves to ourselves – our self-image, the English language transmitted liberal ideals of individual rights and responsibilities. It expressed the concept of the secular social contract, replacing kinship, as the new bonds for the pluralist population of a modern society. The English taught in schools was the cultural repertoire – the content of the nation's collective representations. For those opposed to liberalism – many educated since Renwick's time and in senior positions in university education faculties, schools, and the Ministry of Education – English was now very vulnerable indeed.

**Content-Rich and Content-Free**

In 1971 the child-centred New English Subject Curriculum (NESC) replaced the 1963 English Syllabus. The shift from 'syllabus' to 'curriculum' is instructive. 'Syllabus' referred to prescribed subject content. 'Curriculum' was rarely used. The abandoned 'syllabus' symbolised the abandonment of its referent – actual content.

The emptying out of content from English was within the broader stamping out of liberal influences. Progressivism, as the new education was called, required a constructivist approach from teachers. Teachers would source content from pupils' experiences and interests, and more significantly, from the child's 'culture'. Content was not the only casualty of the New English. Attention turned to the identity of 'producers of texts', their sex, race (glossed as culture, then ethnicity, then gender). What was produced, especially the literature of 'dead white men' was an embarrassment to the advocates of the new English. Even Shakespeare, the greatest of all writers and the most prolific contributor to the English language was not immune from this cultural desecration.

With content removed, the skills of reading and writing became regarded as 'English', elevated to 'literacy'. More skills were added in 1971: Writing, reading, speaking, listening, viewing, and shaping. In the new age of equivalence, anything with words was a 'text' and deemed worthy of study. Standards were rejected as liberal hierarchies – further oppressing the oppressed.

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[25] Liberal-democracy values the 'partial loyal' individual who is able to support and criticise the political order simultaneously. Authoritarian regimes require total loyalty. (Rata, 2012; 2018)

Literacy itself was downgraded to 'multiliteracies'. It now meant interpreting any sign – even words were optional. Radical academics[26] argued that "reading and writing were to be decolonised", calling for the deconstruction of "Western paradigms, including the classic constructs of literacy connected to alphabet systems". "Being literate in Māori should also include having the capacity to 'read' the geography of the land and Māori symbols such as carvings, tukutuku, kōwhaiwhai, and their context within the wharenui". Others argue that "to insist Māori children learn to read is an act of colonisation." (Derby, 2024).

English was now a set of equivalent skills for the production of texts; 'shaping' was equivalent to writing; 'viewing' to reading. Without boundaries to delineate what was in the subject, who knew where the subject began and ended? Who knew what it contained? Indeed by the early 80s, the new 'English across the curriculum' initiative threatened its very existence as a discrete subject. After all, what subject does not involve reading, writing, and interpreting. Was English really needed?

At first, some teachers retained a memory of the last English syllabus of 1963, but that memory faded. In the prescient words of novelist Sebastian Faulks[27] 'we chose to know less'. Faulks's character, Gabriel the lawyer, tells the story of what has happened to knowledge. He

> was lucky enough to be educated at a time when teachers still thought children could handle knowledge. . . . Then teachers withheld knowledge. I suppose the next lot of teachers didn't have the knowledge to withhold. Now knowledge has been abandoned as a goal. We chose to know less.

The 2007 constructivist New Zealand Curriculum cemented the changes traceable to the 1971 New English Curriculum. Teaching was replaced with learning; pupil or student with learner; teacher with facilitator; content with skills; subject content with learner identity.[28] The national curriculum was a guide only; local communities were required to develop their own content. In the 21st century, culturally responsive pedagogies[29] accelerated the shift to the knower and away from knowledge.

Content was 'saved' at senior secondary level; still taught to year 11-13 students, working backwards from the NCEA qualification system. However by 2020 the misguided idea that all content and all skills are equivalent (referred to as *rite tonu)*, with no judgement standards, had spread from English to other subjects. Even the integrity of school science came under threat.[30]

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[26] Romero-Little (2006) and the Māori Adult Literacy Working Party (2001), cited in Melissa Derby's (2024) excellent criticism of 'multiliteracies'. (2024)

[27] I first used this quotation from Sebastian Faulks novel, *A Week in Decembe*r' in my 2012 book, *The Politics of Knowledge in Education*. It remains apt.

[28] Rata, E. (2017). Knowledge and Teaching, *British Educational Research Journal.* 43(5), 1003-1017.

[29] Lynch, C. & Rata, E. (2018) Culturally responsive pedagogy: A New Zealand case study, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 27:4, 391-408.

[30] The issue of equivalence was raised in this letter: Clements, K., Cooper, G., Corbalis, M., Elliffe, D., Nola, R., Rata, E., and J. Werry, J. (2021). In Defence of Science, *New Zealand Listener*, July 31. p. 4. The

My account suggests a comprehensive destruction of the education system. This wasn't the case; some schools held on to knowledge, on to liberalism's equality of opportunity approach. Parents flocked to these schools eager for their children to be taught subject knowledge. The children most adversely affected by the equity approach were those in poorer areas where the enthusiasm for knowledge removal was accelerated by the New Left's moral imperative of social justice. In these schools culturally responsive pedagogies reinforced the abandonment of content for culturally validated experiences.

If the 2023 Mātaiaho Draft Curriculum had not been replaced by the 2025 Knowledge-Rich one, it is likely that English as a subject would have completely disappeared. The two pages for English are mainly 'Big Ideas'. Here are two.[31]

> Big Idea: The stories of Aotearoa New Zealand are unique taonga tuku iho.
> Literature and language represent knowledge and experience shared across time and place. Through the literatures of tangata whenua, tangata Tiriti, and those who have come from around Te Moana-nuia-Kiwa, we understand where we have come from, who we are, and what it means to live in the Pacific nation of Aotearoa New Zealand.
>
> Big Idea: Literature, language, and texts embody power relationships.
> Throughout history, literature, language, and texts have been used to uplift and share, and to dominate and exclude. Recognising and using the power and influence of literature, language, and texts give us tools to advocate for ourselves and others. Exploring the effects of colonisation on our languages and literatures is an important part of understanding power relations in Aotearoa New Zealand. (2023, p. 30.)

The 2025 knowledge-rich curriculum has removed much of the ideology found in Mātaiaho and has restored subject specified content (i.e. a syllabus approach). What does this mean? What is a knowledge-rich curriculum? What are its features and how are they justified pedagogically and scientifically? What is its role in creating the collective representatives of a liberal-democratic nation, specifically as the cultural repertoire found in the English syllabus?

**Features of a Knowledge Rich English Curriculum**

1. Subject Design
2. Specified Content
3. Skills connected to Content
4. Thought Products-Thinking Processes
5. Explicit Teaching of Content
6. Teacher Subject Knowledge
7. Education's Purposes

**Feature 1: Subject Design**

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subsequent outrage from many in the education sector, well beyond what was reasonable, can be explained by placing the equivalence issue in the deeper ideological conflict.

[31] The ideological confusion in apparent in this conflation of Marxist Cultural Theory "power relations", postmodernism "texts", and decolonisation.

The three main components of effective subject design are:[32]

i) Subject Boundaries: A subject is a discrete subject (not a learning area) because it has clear boundaries. That is, we know what is English and what is not – what content is integral to the subject and what is not. Subject boundaries 'hold' the content in and give it definition. Good curriculum design starts by proposing the subject's definition and those of its constituent topics. The definition for every category and topic in the subject is defined in a proposition.

Here are three proposition examples from the CDC Model study:

> *English Subject Proposition*
> School Subject English is the study of language and literature in the English language which function as instruments of thought and means of communication.
>
> *Grammar Proposition*
> Grammar is the syntactical organisation of phrases, clauses, and sentences using word types such as nouns, verbs and adjectives to create meaning and effects of tone and style.
>
> *Short Story Proposition*
> The short story is a literary genre which condenses elements of fiction such as character and setting to illuminate the human experience in a particular moment of time and place.

ii) Design for Coherence and Progression: The knowledge in the subject is designed to connect its concepts to its content. This logical connection creates coherence – to connect is to cohere. There are also hierarchical connections as concepts become more abstract and content becomes more complex – this allows for student progression.

Earlier syllabuses in all subjects were designed for logical progression and teachers were encouraged to recognise this design principle in their teaching – not always successfully as the 1949 report notes:

> [S]ome teachers have not yet an understanding of the need for *logical progression* in their work. (Education Annual Report, AJHR, 1949, p. 7.)

iii) Disciplinary Foundation: School subjects derive from disciplines. English draws on Linguistics, Literary Criticism, and History. The subject's integrity is maintained through accountability to the disciplines. But this accountability may fail – first, the erasure of the subject's content as in Mātaiaho erases the link to the founding discipline; second, postmodern relativism where all skills and 'texts' are equal, weakens the discipline to the point where it has no standards by which to judge itself, let alone its alteration as a school subject.

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[32] The following explanation of subject design is from my Curriculum Design Coherence Model (CDC Model) (Rata, 2021, 2024). The CDC Model was used in the design of the 2025 Curriculum.

From 1971, English suffered from both failures. It lost its integrity as a bounded subject when content was replaced with student interests and skills. English became an empty site ripe for ideology's intrusion. Mātaiaho demonstrates this with its replacement of English content for culturalist ideology.

**Feature 2. Specified language and literature content**

i) Specified Content: A subject's content needs clear definition. For English, the content is language and literature.

*Language Content:*
Sections 2, 3 and 4 provide evidence of detailed content from previous English syllabuses, including the English taught in the Native Village Schools. I mention above that Mātaiaho has no subject content. In contrast and in keeping with its knowledge-rich character, the 2025 English Curriculum 0-10 years has comprehensive language content in its 64 pages. For example, the Grammar, Punctuation and Vocabulary list for years 9 and 10 includes clauses, compound sentences, apostrophe, and synonyms (2025, p 57).

*Literature Content:* From 1904, the English syllabus emphasised both good literature and popular books for reading enjoyment (see section 4). English Classics were prescribed but titles were not specified until secondary school[33] (the assessment requirement drove prescribed titles in the past too). From the 19th century teachers could select quality titles, as they can in 2025.[34]

> The reading and appreciation of at least two English classics, one prose and one verse. In addition a book of selected literary extracts may be studied. Characteristics of good prose and poetry to be further studied with recitation of selected passages. General reading of good books to be encouraged. Oral reading should be expected to show a higher stage of elocutionary skill. (Education Department, 1937, p. 18)

The 2025 English Curriculum – years 9-10

> In each year, students must engage meaningfully with:
> - at least one novel
> - a selection of poetry
> - at least one film or drama text
> - at least one short story
> - at least one non-fiction text.
>
> Teachers should ensure that students experience historical and contemporary texts that are widely regarded as high quality. These must include:
> - seminal texts that have had a significant and lasting impact on how people understand key ideas from different cultures and times

[33] Few pupils went to secondary school until the 1950s. Although primary schools were for 7-13 year olds, children aged 5 - 15 attended so in effect may be seen as equivalent to today's years 0-10.

[34] The Ministry does recommend titles but these are not included in the gazetted 2025 curriculum in order to allow for flexibility and teacher choice.

 texts by a range of authors representative of New Zealand's rich bicultural (both Māori and Pākehā) and multicultural literary heritage
 texts from around the world
 texts from popular and youth cultures.

Students should also be supported to select texts for personal interest and enjoyment. (Ministry of Education, 2025, p.53.)

*iii) Title Prescription*
Is there a case for some prescribed titles in the national English curriculum? I believe so – here are my reasons:

a. Either there are standards of literary quality or there are not. Some works remain great and each generation needs to know, in Matthew Arnold's words 'the best ever thought and known'. Before postmodernism destroyed the very idea of standards, it wasn't necessary to prescribe titles. 'Everyone knew' the elements of great literature and which titles contained them. The 'penny dreadfuls' were for home not school.

b. The universal insights which transcend place and time through the beauty of language justifies a work's prescription. The writer's nationality and race become inconsequential.

c) Historical time perception. "Nothing comes from nothing" – each genre has a beginning and a development history. So time and place matters after all. This justifies the inclusion of extracts from English history suitable for students' ages – Beowulf, the Canterbury Tales, Henry V with its 'band of brothers' (Shakespeare). It justifies titles which are staging points in the development of New Zealand literature – e.g. 'Woman at the Store' (Mansfield), *Man Alone* (Mulgan), *Pounamu, Pounamu* (Ihimaera) *Rain* (Tuwhare).

Chronological awareness is an essential part of the development of students' historical time perception, a secondary cognitive ability that I discuss below. A focus on contemporary works reinforces spontaneous time perception (a primary cognitive ability).

d) National Consciousness
The English language provides the cultural repertoire for the nation's collective representations.

**Feature 3. Skills connected to Content**

Skills are the 'know-how-to' needed to express an understanding of and engagement with English. They are both mechanical and cognitive; including speech training, handwriting, reading, and writing, and taught in the engagement with content. Section four describes reading methods in the early 20th century that we today would call 'structured literacy' – that is, knowing the sound value and print sign of letters (phonetics) then moving to what the words mean.

**Feature 4. Thought Products-Thinking Processes**

Intelligence develops when 'thought products' are connected to 'thinking processes'. Memory is the most important of the latter. Cognitive science explains how student activities such as chanting, recitation, repetition, and regular practice activate the link between working

memory and long-term memory, the latter turning on genes to help grow new synapses and strengthen neuron connections. Understanding becomes automatic as in this example from mathematics –

> Our experience tends to show that unless pupils by the age of eleven acquire a quick, accurate, *automatic response* in addition and subtraction facts and in times tables, as a general rule they are past the stage when they have any interest in learning these things. (Education Department, AJHR, 1949, p. 7.)

None of the thinking processes, neither memory, classification, nor higher level ones of analysing and theorising, can occur in a vacuum. Thinking occurs when a child has something to think about – a truism forgotten during the learning approach decades. That thinking moves from random to logical (i.e. rational) when children engage with logically designed content, i.e. a knowledge-rich designed curriculum. In other words, acquiring logical thinking requires engaging with logical content.[35]

There is a second stage to understanding; content can only be known through symbols – for the subject of English these are words of increasing abstract meaning. This two stage process of 1. thinking about abstract logical content, and 2. using symbols to do the thinking is very difficult. It is the difference between primary cognition abilities – the sort of thinking used in everyday life – and secondary cognitive abilities which require the two stage process.

Such secondary cognitive abilities will only develop as children are explicitly taught the complex content which requires abstract-symbolic thinking processes.[36] Teaching methods may harness the child's natural primary thinking abilities, such as speaking and socialising, but the content which produce the secondary abilities is 'of the mind'. For example, understanding grammar, character motivation in *Hamlet,* or the pathos in Tuwhare's *The Old Place* for example, doesn't come naturally. These are necessarily difficult ideas[37] so must be taught explicitly.

The learning approach of the past 50 years ignored the contents side of the thought-thinking equation. The very means by which intelligence[38] is developed was replaced with 'learning' methods that reinforced primary cognition and blocked secondary cognition from developing. I consider this to be the foundational cause of New Zealand's 30 year achievement decline.

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[35] Rata, E. (2025). Logic in the Curriculum Design Coherence Model: How the Model creates coherence. In McPhail, G, Pountney, R, Wheelahan, L (2025). *Emerging Perspectives from Social Realism on Knowledge and Education Curricula, Pedagogy, Identity, and Equity.* Routledge. Chapter 8. (6th Cambridge Symposium)

[36] Rata, E. (2022) Language and Knowledge. In. Rata and Tamati, pp. 104-114.

[37] The New Left used sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'symbolic violence' to justify not teaching difficult abstract ideas. 'It's too hard' for children led to the rise of therapeutic education – children's feelings were given priority over effort.

[38] The word 'intelligence' lost favour from the 1970s and has not yet been restored to its place alongside achievement. The effort involved in using, and therefore developing, intelligence leads to achievement. The writers of the 1904 Education Objectives were less squeamish. They called the First Objective 'Intellectual Development'. See Feature 7.

**Feature 5. Explicit teaching**

The fifth feature of a knowledge-rich curriculum is the correct balance of explicit teacher instruction to pupil activity. The balance should capture the thought-thinking connection. The late 19th century New Education Movement's aligned explicit instruction in academic content to teaching methods; the methods were intended to motivate children's desire to understand the content. Balance is stated explicitly in 1949:

> Learning and teaching are inseparable in education. When the teacher is pre-dominant, the process is one of instruction, and when the pupil is active the process is one of learning. Both these aspects of the educational process are essential, and the skilled teacher keeps the balance.
> (Education Annual Report, AJHR, 1949, E.-2, p. 3.)

The next time this balance emerges is 75 years later in the 2025 Knowledge-Rich Curriculum.

**Feature 6. Teacher Subject Knowledge**

It is not possible to improve on this advice to teachers from the 1914 North Canterbury inspectors.

> There are one or two questions which we would like to suggest the advisability of each one putting to himself or herself from time to time: What am I reading in the great and ever increasing literature of education? What additions am I making to my library in the way of educational works? Am I keeping myself abreast of recent developments in the way of educational thought and progress? As Colonel Francis W. Parker has said, " Nothing that is good is too good for the child—no thought too deep, no toil too great." And again, "A school should be a model home, a complete community and embryonic democracy. How? you ask. Again I answer, by putting into every schoolroom an educated, cultured, trained, developed, child-loving teacher, a teacher imbued with a knowledge of the science of education, and a zealous enthusiastic applicant of its principles. . . .let us demand the artist teacher, the teacher trained and skilled in the science of education—a genuine leader of little feet."
> (Report of Inspectors of Schools, AJHR, 1914, 1. E.-2, Appendix C, p. 128.)

**Feature 7. Education's Purposes**

The knowledge-rich curriculum expresses the three interdependent purposes of education. They are: 1. the development of intelligence through the transmission of knowledge leading to achievement, 2. the socialisation of children into the partial loyalty required for New Zealand's liberal-democratic society, 3. the individual child's physical health and well-being.

The international New Education or Whole Child Movement of the late 19th century promoted schooling's purpose as intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic, civic, and physical development. It encouraged 'close to nature' teaching methods. The 1904 New Syllabuses of Instruction for Public Schools legislated the Whole Child approach in its three Objectives: Intellectual Development, Character Development, and Physical Development. 'Resilence', 'kindness to animals', and 'civics' were mentioned. The 1937 Syllabus uses slightly different

language, but the ideas are the same: education is "a means of securing for every child the fullest possible spiritual, mental, and physical development".
(Education Department, 1937.)

**The English Language and Nationhood**

Colonisation was as much a Māori endeavour as it was the nation building project of 19th century settlers, a fact vividly demonstrated in section three's history of the Native Village Schools and the Māori boarding schools. A story in the first School Journal of 1907 "The Introduction of Arbor Day, 24th day of July 1907" shows English non-fiction content contributing to the cultural repertoire of a shared future while not erasing past conflict.

> On this day you can certainly do much to make your homes or school-grounds more beautiful and attractive. There is another way in which a portion of Arbor Day may be appropriately employed, more particularly in the North Island. In many parts are the graves of the heroes – both European and Maori – who fell during the disastrous wars which rent the country and disolated many a home. To bestoe a little care on these sacred spots, to plant tress, shrubs, and flowers near and around the graves would be a fitting way of honouring the noble dead.
> (School Journal, 1907, Vol 1 No 3 Part II - For Classes V and VI, p. 53.)

## SECTION 2: EVIDENCE

## ENGLISH 1847 TO 1900

This section provides evidence of the emerging knowledge-rich features in 19th century New Zealand education.

**Education Ordinance, 1847**

The 1847 Education Ordinance is the first policy to demonstrate the system's liberal character. It has three significant details which were embedded thirty years later in the 1877 Education Act. They are:

***1. Standardisation and Accountability:*** Clause 2's inspection requirement established the method for making every school acccountable to the same national universal standards. (cl. 2)
***2. Secularism:*** Governor George Grey's liberal influence is the source of secularism in New Zealand education. Prior to 1877, most schools were either provincial or church schools, hence the inclusion of religious education in the Ordinance, but with an opting-out clause – parents could withdraw their children from "the doctrines of religion". (cl. 3)
***3. English language instruction*** (cl. 3)

**Education Act, 1877**

The 1877 Education Act set up a national system of public primary schools (the Native village schools were public), that was free, compulsory and secular. Legally, children aged 7-13 could attend the primary schools, however many began at age 5 and some stayed until they were 15. A Standard 7 class was occasionally provided for the 14 and 15 year olds. The Act sought to achieve the difficult balance in liberalism between state provision and individual freedom by including numerous exemptions. These contributed to widespread support for the legislation.

**The English Syllabus**

English grammar and composition and the skills of reading and writing were included in the 1877 Education Act, Section 84. Comprehension was added in 1885.

The 1885 Proposed Revision Of Regulations is a useful source about what was taught. The system was now eight years old. Inspectors had paid annual visits to every school in the country. This put them in a good position to evaluate what was going on in the classroom and to recommend improvements. Teachers too were involved. In 1885 a committee of teachers set up at the request of the Minister of Education suggested alterations to the English Syllabus.

Here is the revised 1885 English syllabus:

> **Standard I.**
> Read and Spell.—As at present, but spelling to be written from dictation.
> Writing.—As at present, but add transcription of capital letters from tablets or from copies written by the teacher on the black-board.
> **Standard 11.**
> Read and Spell.—As at present, but no meanings of single words should be exacted except in the case of simple finite verbs, nouns of concrete application, and commonly-used adjectives and adverbs. Spelling should be confined to the reading-book in use by the class, and should be examined in the shape of dictation.
> **Standard 111.**
> Read.—As at present.
> Spell.—As at present, but from reading-book in use by class, and chiefly in form of dictation.
> Writing. —As at present, but always in small hand.
> Grammar and Composition.—Pointing out of subject and verb (in predicate) in easy simple sentences; and the formation of similar sentences in reply to questions, or in description of some action on object. Correction (without grammatical reasons therefor) of common errors in speech. The pointing out of nouns, pronouns, and finite verbs in a lesson in reading-book, with reasons for election.
> **Standard IV.**
> Read, Spell, and Dictation.—As at present.
> Grammar and Composition.—Distinguishing of subject, predicate, object, and adjuncts
> **Standard VI**
> Subjects as at present. Instead of attaching so large an amount of importance to parsing and mere quibbling on words and terms as at present, it would be well to prescribe a moderately difficult piece of English for the study of the Sixth Standard. Some of the shortest editions of Shakespeare's plays, published by Nelson and Son,

> are very suitable. If mere word-parsing could be dropped, paraphrasing and etymology might well take its place.
> (Proposals, 1885, pp. 26-27.)

**19th Century Readers**

There were a number of readers which contained hand-writing, grammar, vocabulary, and spelling exercises along with poetry for recitation and stories – fiction and non-fiction. Although written for schools at 'Home' (i.e. Britain), they were one of many practical ways to get the system up and running in a country with very limited infrastructure and resources.

This 1885 plea from Wanganui school inspector, Mr. Veeker-Bindon, about the 'Royal' readers was answered with the Imperial Reader Southern Cross Series, published by Whitcombe and Tombs in the 1890s, and the School Journal in 1907.

> A really good set of 'Readers' is badly wanted. The 'Royal are all very well in the junior standards, but the senior books are sadly lacking in dialogue, and, while possessing a great deal of information, have very little matter calculated to encourage good reading, while they are full of pedantic 'by-words.' I have introduced Macmillan's Fifth and Sixth, but a great deal of the matter is too difficult. 'Readers' written for the 'Home' schools will always be more or less unsuited for the colonial standards, while some of the information given will necessarily be inaccurate—e.g., that with regard to finding the points of the compass from looking at the sun.
> (Proposals, AJHR, 1885, E-1, p. 15.)

Royal Readers 1878 (The Royal School Series) were two books of lessons for each year level.

> The object steadily kept in view throughout has been to make each as simple and interesting as possible-childlike without being childish. Copious lists for Spelling, and a series of Questions, are given at the end of each lesson – 'the latter chiefy for the use of those who may assist the scholar in home preparation'. 'The Natural History Lessons (are for) inculcating the duty of Kindness to Animals'.
> (Preface, Sequel to No 1, 1878.)

Poems include Poe's The Raven and the nursery rhyme 'Two Little Kittens". Stories include 'Sheep-shearing' 'Shells', and 'Lily and her Pet Lamb'. There were also writing exercises.

Chambers' Fluent Readers, Book III (1897) has coloured illustrations and includes: Poetry – 'Now We are Seven', 'The Oak Tree', and 'The African Chief'. Stories are 'Strange Meeting with a Lion', 'The Banyan Tree', 'About a Dog', The Message of the Flowers', and 'A School in Syria'. There are also lessons on world building, spelling, and transcription.

The 1893 Royal Star Reader continues the nature theme with poems and stories about spring, kittens and cows as well as 'Where Bread Comes From' and 'The Little Blacksmith'. There is a complete list of all the words in the book and copying exercises for handwriting.

The Imperial Reader Southern Cross Series, published in the 1890s by Whitcombe and Tombs was written for New Zealand and Australian schools. The fifth book in the series

contained prose and poetry with illustrations, language exercises, skeletons for composition exercises, prefixes, affixes, roots, and spelling lists.

The book opens with a three part account of Captain Cook's voyages and includes his reasons for introducing pigs, sheep, goats, fowls, potatoes and other vegetables to New Zealand. The associated pronunciation exercises include 'Tu-pi'-a', 'tutu' and 'Nga'-pu-hi'. The Waikato War: Seige of Orakau, the Story of George Stephenson, Alluvial Godmining, The Fiords of Norway, Henry V. to his Men on the Eve of Agincourt, Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata (notation), Silas Mariner finds his Treasure, Phormium or native Flax, and The Kiwi are some of the stories and poems in the work.

Composition skeletons encourage pupils to write stories about 'Your own life', 'Essay on Ferns', 'The Picture', The Seige of Orakau'. Language exercises include English and Latin prefixes, affixes to form verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; very detailed lists of Latin and Greek roots.

**Grammar**

The writing conventions of grammar, spelling, and punctuation are essential rules to ensure that what is written can be understood by the reader. Children don't just pick-up these conventions. They must be taught. In 1899 the Chief Inspector observed that

> Children must, therefore, from the very beginning, remember and understand a long set of rules, and the best way to make them remember and understand is to make them practise.
> (Reports of Inspectors, D. Petrie, AJHR, 1899, E.-1B, p. 4.)

Four years earlier, Mr Lee, the Wellington Inspector showed a sound understanding of linguistics in his musing about the connection between grammar and composition .

It is a question as to how far it is advisable to go into the technicalities of grammar in the teaching of primary schools, where no other language than English is taught, and where the home influence is a drag upon the work. At the same time it appears reasonable to expect pupils in the highest class of our schools to explain clearly the meaning of an ordinary passage of prose or poetry, to correct bad errors in speaking, to know something of word building and derivation, to construct sentences illustrating the use of words and inflections, and to know and intelligently apply the ordinary rules of syntax.
(Reports of Inspectors, Robert Lee, ADHR, 1885, E.-1B, p. 20.)

**Writing Composition**

The depth of the inspectors' linguistic knowledge was also demonstrated in Ponsonby Peacocke's 1885 comments about composition and vocabulary. In the standard regulations, required for Standard 111, he notes

> it is truly said 'the art of composition does not come by nature.' Indeed it does not. It is a subject which requires the whole and unremitting attention of the teacher. For no other subject is it so necessary that the teacher should possess that invaluable gift—a pass-key to the mind of his pupil. Composition is a proper recognition of the applicability of certain words and phrases to the thoughts sought to be expressed. To

> secure this to his pupil it is necessary for the teacher to give him a vocabulary, to teach him to use this vocabulary in the construction of phrases, and then properly to apply these phrases to the clothing of the thoughts which he—the teacher—has succeeded in persuading him he possesses.
> (Reports of Inspectors, Ponsonby Peacocke, ADHR, 1885, E.-1B, p. 10.)

The Outline Method of composition was advised for Standard IV pupils.

> On the walls of every school-room should appear a list of forty or fifty composition subjects for the use of each of the classes in the room, and the lists should be so placed that pupils can consult them with little trouble. Besides this, the subjects of oncoming composition-lessons should always be announced a week before, that the pupils may gather a store of knowledge about the subjects set. With all subjects that are not familiar to the children, rapid, and not too narrow, oral questioning about the topics should be employed as a preparatory exercise, and now and then heads might be worked out at the blackboard as models for the pupils. This preparatory work needs to be smartly dealt with both by teachers and by pupils, and with skilful handling the latter can be got to do very much of it without material help or explanation from the teacher.
> (Reports of Inspectors, D. Petrie, AJHR, 1899, E.-1B, p. 5.)

**Vocabulary**

Vocabulary supplies the main content for writing – that vocabulary content needs to be taught. The 1885 Recommendations show the inspectors' understanding of the science of language – they knew the central role of the word in the English syllabus. The composition of stories and essays needs words. Those words need to be the right words to express the child's thoughts. Then, the rules of grammar are needed to put the expressive words into the order which best expresses their meaning.

**Speaking**

The importance of oral language noted in the inspectors' reports with frequent class discussion recommended from 1882.

> I think a kind of discussion in class might occasionally be encouraged with a view to teaching the children to speak in good sentences, and some departure made from the almost monosyllabic utterances in reply to questions often especially framed to be answered in one word.
> (Reports of Inspectors, Robert Lee, ADHR, 1882, pp. 7-8.)

However, Inspector Lee, has a terse note for teachers too.

> Word knowledge in all classes is deficient. Some teachers should be more careful in their enunciation. (p. 9)

**Teaching Methods**

The Wanganui inspectors' advice about the best method to teach grammar and writing conventions refers to two fundamental principles of learning that would be quite acceptable

today – commit to memory only what we understand, and proceed from the particular to the general.

> Too much reliance is placed upon the deductive method of teaching, rather than upon the inductive. The pupils are required to learn rules by heart, and then to apply them deductively. But, as only that which is understood should be committed to memory, and as the pupil should be led to teach himself rather than to receive anything on his teacher's authority, we should put in a plea for the following method: Let the teacher proceed from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the general, from what is familiar to what is strange, giving some knowledge of the thing itself before the rule that refers to it.
> (Reports of Inspectors, W. H. Vereker-Bindon, James Milne, AJHR, 1899, E.-1B, p. 16.)

**Structured Literacy**

From 1899, the Reports of Inspectors advise that the method we would today call structured literacy is increasingly replacing the simultaneous or alphabetical method of earlier decades. The Otago inspectors note that reading required making two connections – first connecting sound to symbol and then connecting sense with sound.

> "In reading there is less difficulty in connecting sound with symbol and sense with sound, and reading has gained in fluency and expression."
> (Reports of Inspectors, P. Goyen, W. S. Fitzgerald, C. R. Richardson, C.R Bossenoe, AJHR, 1899, E.-1B. p. 48.

There was an emphasis on the importance of children understanding what they read, with the inspectors advising methods including being aware that talking about and writing about what one was reading was a sound teaching method.

Children . . . cannot by reading increase their stock of knowledge if they do not understand what they read. Questions on the matter should therefore form part of every reading-lesson, and when the answers show that there is not a full comprehension, explanations should be given. Answers consisting of a single word should never be accepted. From the youngest child complete sentences should be required, and from older children a continuous narrative or statement, which should sometimes be in writing.
(Report of Inspectors, D. Petrie, ADHR, 1899, E.-1B.)

**Teaching Resources**

All New Zealand schools had blackboards – important for teaching the syllabus. However slates were not replaced by paper until the first decade of the 20th century. The inspectors noted how slates made it difficult for teachers to correct children's writing.

## SECTION 3: EVIDENCE

## ENGLISH IN THE NATIVE VILLAGE AND MĀORI BOARDING SCHOOLS

This section provides evidence of the purpose, type and quality of English taught to Māori children in the Native Village schools and the Māori boarding schools. The schools are described first, followed by details of English content and teaching methods.

**Education Ordinance, 1847**

Governor Grey's 1847 'Ordinance for Promoting the Education of Youth in the Colony' established industrial schools. The conditions for all those applying for public funds included “instruction in the English language shall form a necessary part of the system” (Education Act 1847, 3). This is unsurprising. English was the entry into 19th century industrial technology – metallurgy for the new era of factories, rail, road and steamships, animal husbandry for livestock farming, and soil cultivation for grain and fruit production. Older crafts included leatherwork and blacksmithing. Combined with the English language, technological knowledge added to the already established Māori involvement in national and international business and trade.

**Native Schools Act, 1858**

The 1858 Native Schools Act continued the 1847 Ordinance's requirement for English language and industrial training. "Instruction in the English language and in the ordinary subjects of primary English education, and in Industrial training" (1858, S. IX). The legislation recognised ongoing diocesan control of the established mission schools, many of which were not located in the villages. "Every School aided under this Act shall be in connection with some Religious Body" (1858, S.X).

However, in 1867 W. Rolleston, first inspector of Native Schools, recorded parents' slavery fears "most of them have been in slavery in olden times"; fears behind their desire for schools to be located in the villages. He also noted widespread dissatisfaction with the syllabus and with Māori as the language of instruction.

> There was too much of the Bible taught, and too little of other subjects. They were taught moreover in their own language, whereas what they wished to learn was English.
> (Papers Relative To Native Schools. AJHR, 1867, Session I, A-03.)

**Native Schools Act, 1867**

The 1867 Native Schools Act directly addressed these concerns. Māori Members of Parliament supported implementing the Act. Karaitiana Takamoana (Eastern Maori) noted that the missionaries had been teaching the children –

> “for many years, and the children are not educated. They have only taught them in the Maori language. The whole of the Maoris in this Island request that the Government should give instructions that the Maoris should be taught in English only”
> (Takamoana, 1871, p. 828.)

Four more petitions to Parliament followed: In 1876 from Te Hakairo and 336 others; in 1877 from Renata Renata Kawepo and 790 others; and in 1877 from Riripi Ropata and 200 others.

In a significant break with the past, requests for schools had to come from Māori men, not from religious bodies.

> Upon the memorial of any considerable number of the male adult native inhabitants of any locality or district where no native school already exists praying for the establishment of a school.
> (Native Schools Act, 1867, S. 5.)

Control of government funding and school management was transfered to village committees "at least 5 who are elected annually by parents of the children at the school" (S.5). The Act required teacher competency, English language instruction, and syllabus quality.

> The English language and the ordinary subjects of primary English education are taught by a competent teacher and that the instruction is carried on in the English language as far as practicable.
> (Native Schools Act, 1867, S. 21)

If this wasn't practicable then the "Colonial Secretary (would) contribute to the maintenance or salaries of such Native teachers as shall conduct Native Schools in remote districts when it may be found impossible to provide English teachers" (S. 21). The first Māori principal at a Native School was appointed in 1875.

**Parents' involvement**

The Annual Inspection Reports show that parents kept a watchful eye on the schools and knew what was going on. At Ruatoki (examined 10th August, 1897).

> The elder Natives take great interest in the school, and the children, one and all, work with a will. The parents attended in force to see the examination, which must have appeared to them rather mysterious and pretty dry.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 6.)

The report from Poroporo School (examined 11th August, 1897) is similar.

> There was a great hui in progress at examination time, and the elder Maoris assembled in force to see the work done. They watched the proceedings with intelligent interest.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 5.)

> Hapua School, examined 2nd March, 1897 – this, the most northerly of all our schools is a very interesting one; the attendance is large, the parents show much enthusiasm with regard to their children's education, and the children themselves are alert and intelligent in a high degree. The examination results were unusually good. (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 4.)

The Te Pupuke School report (examined 15th July, 1897) is an example of a feature noted elsewhere –

> The school tended to unite villagers around a common cause. One interesting

> feature observed was the amicable working together of two leading men, hitherto generally hostile, in order to secure a satisfactory education for the children of their people.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 4.)

**1880 Native Schools Code**

The 1880 Native Schools Code established the –

> Rules and Regulations . . . for the guidance of Native School Teachers, and of others concerned in the education of the Maori race" to implement the 1867 legislation.
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, Introduction, p. 1)

Written by James Pope, Native Schools inspector from 1880 to 1903, the Code anticipated many of the ideas, such as kindness to children, harmonious relationships with the community, and the aesthetics of the schools' buildings and grounds which informed the New Education Movement. It also allowed for the use of Māori in the junior classes and included knowledge about Maori tradition, culture and language in teacher examinations.

The Code is very detailed –

> (1.) The master will be expected to teach the native children to read and write the English language, and to speak it. He will, further, instruct them in the rudiments of arithmetic and of geography, and, generally, endeavour to give them such culture as may fit them to become good citizens. (Teachers were expected to lead by example, showing) "kindness, their diligence, and their probity"
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, p. 2.)

The curriculum, apart from teaching English as a second language, was the same as for other public schools.

> One of the stipulations made by the Education Department is that no race distinction shall be allowed to prevent the Maori children from getting educational facilities equal to those allowed to Europeans.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1887. E.-2, p. 4.)

Twelve years later, the 1898 Annual Report compared the two systems, reporting favourably on the Native Schools.

> The arithmetic of a Fourth-Standard Maori is, I believe, quite as good as that of a Fourth-Standard European; the geography and the elementary knowledge of sanitary laws are certainly not worse. Neither is the singing. The drawing is sometimes, but not always, meritorious. The needlework is nearly always good.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 13.)

**Adult Scholars**

From 1858 the Native School legislation and policy included adults as scholars at the Native Village Schools. The 1887 Native Schools Report provides insights into adult education (about 6 per cent are over 15 years.

(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1887. E.-2, p. 2.)

> Two books have been produced—one entirely, the other partly, for the use of the Maoris. The former is a reading-book, containing (1) easy reading lessons on matters of local interest, (2) adaptations of Aesop's Fables, and (3) short and interesting stories of a humorous character. It is hoped that this book will be both entertaining and useful to Maoris of all ages.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1887. E.-2, p. 10.)

The second book –

"The State: the Rudiments of New Zealand Sociology, for the Use of Beginners" was also available in the Māori language "for the use of the older Natives".

> The book is expected to serve three purposes : (1) The easier chapters (about one-third of the whole) will give Maoris acquainted with the English language elementary ideas about such matters as wealth, production, money and exchange, and law and liberty; (2) these chapters, in connection with twenty others, will serve for all beginners as an easy introduction to the social sciences; and (3) the remaining chapters may be interesting to those who have made some little progress in the study of sociology.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1887. E.-2, p. 11.)

**Bilingualism**

Bilingualism was the intended outcome of Native Village School education. In his 1898 inspector's report, James Pope notes that those with "knowledge of a second language will recognise the importance of this feature of Native-school work", of "the linguistic attainments" of those who are taught a 'foreign' language analytically rather than through the 'pick-up' method".

> The intellectual culture gained by a Maori through his having been trained to express his thoughts in a foreign language will (not) be found in a European child that knows no language but its own. He finds the 'children will pick up' English approach unsatifactory, referring not only to "'children that never, or hardly ever, heard a word of English out of school in the more remote Native schools' but also to the need for a comprehensive second language teaching approach, or the word he uses 'analytical' teaching.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 14.)

**Maori Language in the Board Primary Schools**

Boys and girls who passed Standard 5 before reaching the age of 15 in the Native Schools could receive a scholarship to attend the Board schools. Although the Māori language was not taught in the Village Schools, the 1909 Revision of the *Regulations Relating to Native Schools* (cited in Barrington and Beaglehole, 1974, p. 181) included the study of the Māori language as an optional subject in the syllabus for boys who went on to attend the Board primary schools in the final two years.

**Maori Culture In The Native Schools**

The aim of the 1926 Maori Arts and Crafts Act was to encourage "the Dissemination of Knowledge of Maori Arts and Crafts". Its influence extended to the Department of Education. A 1934 Department of Education memorandum contained the following instructions.

> Teachers, in preparing and organising the work in Native Schools for the following year, should endeavour to bring the instruction more in line with the real and practical interests and life of the Maori (and) that instruction should also preserve the best in Maori cultures, mythology, arts and crafts, and develop the special gifts and talents with which the race is so richly endowed.
> (NZ Education Department, 1934, p. 2)

The 1949 Annual Education Report noted how –

> For many years teachers in Maori schools have taken a deep interest in certain aspects of Maori culture—arts, crafts, action songs, history, mythology, &c.—but in some schools there has been, perhaps, a tendency to concentrate on the more material culture, and to neglect the less tangible but more vital spiritual values of that culture. Thus Maori carving has been taught as a craft, but more could have been done to lead pupils to a better understanding of the symbolism and significance of authentic Maori carvings.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1949. Education of Maori Children, E-3, p. 4.)

The involvement of parents along with teachers in "the discussions already held these matters were dealt with" shows that village management of the schools, required by the 1867 Act is still active, with the report proposing

> to continue the study of these aspects of our work at subsequent meetings of teachers and parents. (1949, p. 4)

Cultural activities weren't confined to the school. The Te Kao School teacher, Mr Hutchinson's diary for 1940 records the integration of the school into the wider community's social life.

> Spent afternoon at Conrads. Interesting yarn with old Joe. Showed us book of Maori mythology. (Sunday 7th July 1940). Went to Herekino. Dinner at Awanui. Scratch team against us. Singsong. Went through our Maori repertoire accompained by Niki on the guitar. Showed us use of taiaha. (Saturday 31 August 1940).
> (Hutchinson, 1940)

(Forty years later, in the early 1980s, I was shown this very mythology book by Niki Conrad.)

The 1944 Department of Education Report recommended that in as many schools as possible the study of Māori be fostered and –

> if it is taught full advantage should be given of the opportunities that here exist to reveal it as the ‘living language of a living people’ and to use it as a vehicle for the understanding of the culture that it expresses.
> (NZ Department of Education, 1944, p. 70.)

**Prizes and Scholarships**

The 1880 Code required that achievement and regular attendance were to be rewarded with prizes such as the "strongly bound Reward Book for Standard III and IV achievers" (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, p. 3). Scholarships were awarded to "the most proficient of the children to prosecute their studies after leaving the village schools" (p. 3).

In 1898

> the four boarding-schools for Maoris had at the end of the year 236 pupils, of whom 73 were Government scholars. There were 10 boys holding industrial scholarships apprenticed as follows:—3 to farmers, 3 to saddlers, 2 to carpenters, I to a blacksmith, and 1 to a printer. Scholarships for £40 a year each were enjoyed by two young men studying, one at the University College, Auckland, and the other at Canterbury College, Christchurch.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 2.)

In 1928 Māori students secured university scholarships: four scholarships to study law at Canterbury and two for medicine at Otago. (1928, AJHR, E.-3, p. 14). By 1949 eleven Maori University scholarships included:

Four medical, one veterinary science, two agricultural science, one home science, one dentistry, and two arts. One of the scholars, Miss Sturm, graduated B.A., she being the second Maori woman to obtain that degree. Another scholar, Peeti Walker, passed the examination for the B.D.S. Degree, this being, to my knowledge, the first degree in Dental Surgery as distinct from the Diploma, to be taken by a Maori.
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1949. E-3, p. 5.)

**Māori Boarding Schools**

By the end of the 19th century parents' slavery fears about children boarding away from their home village had been replaced by acceptance of the denominational Māori boarding schools. Children who had achieved at their village school received scholarships to attend the boarding schools, where they "should be educated for service among their own people" (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1882. E.-2, p. 5.)

The education provided varied according to the school. For example, in the 1890s –

> Authorities at St Stephens did not attempt to give the boys the kind of classical education provided by Te Aute. They concentrated on the ordinary state school education for the upper classes and on developing technical instruction.
> (Barrington and Beaglehole, 1974, p. 165).

By 1906, at the now six Māori boarding schools the number of Government scholarships was:

> Te Aute College, Hawke's Bay, 10; St. Stephen's, Auckland, 30; Queen Victoria School for Girls, 20; Hukarere Girls', 20; St. Joseph's Girls', 33; and Turakina Girls', 10.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1906. E.- 2, p. 14.)

A 1906 Royal Commission gives some insight into the range of views about what subjects should be taught at the boarding school.

> The Commission finally recommended that, because the Maoris owned considerable areas of agricultural and pastorial land, it was necessary for prominence to be given to manual and technical instruction in agriculture, and that if it became necessary to choose between a course including Latin, geometry and algebra in the higher forms and scientific and technical subjects, preference should be given to the latter.
> (AJHR, 1906. G-5, pp. iv-vi, cited in Barrington and Beaglehole, 1974, p. 176.)

In 1928 the Māori language was included in the Buller Scholarship prescription for attendance at Te Aute College.

> "English (including civics and New Zealand history), arithmetic, Maori, religious knowledge, and either woodwork or mathematics"
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p.7.)

From 1931, Māori was a compulsory subject in the boarding schools for Government scholars (Barrington and Beaglehole, 1974, p. 207). The secondary departments of Māori district high schools included Māori language as an examinable subject from 1934. Those who went into Public Service careers could sit Māori in the Public Service Examination from 1934 and from 1941 could take the subject for the Teachers Certificate (1941, Schedule of Subjects, Group IV). In 1949 – 117 students were taking Māori for School Certificate (88 in 1948).
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1949. Education of Maori Children, E-3.)

**Teacher Quality**

The quality of any education system depends on the quality of the teachers. The 1867 Act referred to "competent teachers". The 1880 Native Schools Code required teachers to be examined in the subjects which informed the school syllabus. Examination topics included New Zealand history and the Māori land wars; 400 marks were allocated to ensure that teachers had a good understanding of the Māori language, for example:

to know Williams's "First Lessons in Maori; "to translate a passage from the Maori Bible, and to translate into Maori sentences from "Ko te A-nui aWi".
(Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, p. 4.)

Teachers were required to have some proficiency in English, for example there were 200 marks for:

> Reading — to read a passage from an English author with proper emphasis and expression, and to give the meanings of the words and sentences therein contained; Writing, Spelling, and Composition.—To write a neat legible hand, to spell correctly from dictation, and to write a short essay on a familiar subject.
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, p. 3.)

The necessary resources were supplied and extra resources, such as articles from the New Zealand Institute, were recommended.

Staffing the native schools in remote areas was recognised from the 1867 legislation as a problem, one that was ongoing. By the end of the 1930s, teacher training was recovering from the cut-backs of the Depression and in 1940 a Māori teacher training college quota was introduced. From an intake of 4 in 1940 to 37 trainees in 1948 (1949, p. 3) the graduates went on to form the nucleus of the Māori cultural revival underway from the late 1950s. Starting their careers as teachers, some became the first generation of professors in university Māori departments departments.

**Influence of the Native Schools**

The Native and boarding schools (colleges) were influential in numerous ways. Remarks by Sir Apirana Ngata recorded in the 1928 Annual Report are illustrative of this.

> In the progress made by the Maori people the influence of the schools and of the teachers has played no unimportant part. The following interesting and pertinent remarks were made recently at the general meeting of the Waiapu Farmers' Association—a Maori concern of very considerable magnitude—by the Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata, M.P, chairman of directors: 'Lastly, the tribe (Ngati Porou) had arrived at that stage in its development where persistent patronage of the schools and colleges for a generation and a half had leavened it through and through with men and women who aimed at higher standards of living, and who were more than conscious, were confident, of their ability to translate their acquired knowledge into flourishing farms, better houses, healthier villages, and a greater share of the benefit of civilization'.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 7.)

**Discipline in the Native Village Schools**

Government advice to teachers was to avoid corporal punishment. The section 'Directions For Teachers Of Native Schools' in the 1880 Code cautions teachers against physical punishment

> You should, if possible, avoid inflicting corporal punishment. If you should ever have to resort to it, you will record the fact in your Log Book.
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, p. 7.)

The Code adds that "the discipline in a Maori School should be mild and firm" (p.7).

This advice was repeated in 1914 with the regulations clearly acknowledging the tapu nature of the head in Maori culture. Physical punishment, and once again the term 'last resort' is used, cannot be used for failure to learn or for trival matters.

> "All degrading and injurious punishments shall be avoided. In particular no teacher shall strike any child upon the head. A violation of this rule may subject the offending teacher to dismissal. The head teacher may as a last resort inflict corporal punishment only, and shall at one enter the particulars in the logbook. Corporal punishment may be inflicted for offences against morality, for gross impertinence, or for wilful and persistent disobedience. It may not be inflicted for failure or inability to learn, or for trivial breaches of school discipline.
> (Barrington, 2008, p. 118 *Regulations Relating to Native Schools*, 1914)

Ten years later, the 1924 Native Schools Annual Report referred to corporal punishment being used ‘sparingly’ (p. 6).

> In many schools corporal punishment is not resorted to at all, as the teachers exercise a strong moral influence over their pupils. There is particularly noticeable in several schools where women are in charge.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1924. E.-2, p. 6.)

While official documents are concerned with intentions, requirements and guidance, the inspectors' reports provide insights into what life was like in the schools. For example, at

> Otamauru (examined 12th August, 1897).—the rule is kindly and effective; practically there are no punishments. The children are in good heart, and their behaviour is respectful.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 6).

> At Poroti. The rule is mild and genial, and the school tone is good.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 4.)

> Ruatoki (examined 10th August, 1897.) The order seemed surprisingly good to one who had seen the children totally undisciplined a short time before. The rule is very firm, but sufficiently mild.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 6.)

> At Waikouaiti (examined 14th October, 1897.) The order and tone are particularly good.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 9).

The inspectors used the teachers' log for information about punishments. Mr Hutchinson's Te Kao diary does contain one reference to 'a hiding' but the main punishments include weeding the garden and cutting a hedge. (Hutchinson, 1940). Physical punishment was part of New Zealand life both at home and school – indeed the strap and cane was not outlawed in schools until the 1989 and physical punishment remained legal in homes until 2007. But there is no doubt that the Native School records specifically advised against its use from 1880. If teachers did use physical punishment on children speaking Māori at school they were not complying with the 1880 Code guidance, nor with the restrictions in the 1914 Regulations.

**Native Village School numbers**

The number of village schools showed steady growth from 74 schools in 1898, 108 in 1912; 119 in 1919, 134 in 1928, and 159 in 1949. (1949, p. 1). In 1945 the Native Schools were renamed Maori primary schools. In that year there were 11,000 children in Native Schools, reducing to 9,000 by 1965. In contrast, the number of Māori children in ordinary primary schools increased from 15,000 in 1945 to 46,000 in 1965. The schools were transferred to the control of regional Education Boards in 1969.

## ENGLISH CONTENT AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

The purpose of the Native village schools was to ensure that children would be bilingual: Māori at home and in the community and English acquired at school. English was a foreign language to many children so second language teaching methods and English content was used.

**Māori Language in the Native Schools**

The Māori language was spoken in the the playground. According to the 1906 Annual Report

> An important distinction exists . . . between the Maori children attending a Board school and those attending one of our own Native schools—namely, that the former speak English in the playground, while the latter speak Maori.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1906. E.- 2, p. 12)

The 1914 Annual Report noted that "many infants know not a word of English when they enter the school, and hear none it their homes." (*AJHR*, 1914, p. xix). Some of these children are very young. According to the 1887 Annual Report –

> About 3 per cent, of the whole are Maori children under 5 years old, and about 6 per cent, are over 15; 52 per cent, are between 5 and 10, and 39 per cent, between 10 and 15.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1887. E.-2, p. 2.)

**English Syllabus – Quality Rather Than Quantity**

Pope's 'quality over quantity' approach set the standard for the second language approach that teachers were required to follow. The annual inspections and Pope's thoroughness ensured that this happened.

In this section of the Code, Pope referred to quality over quantity:

> Teachers should endeavour to make the instruction as thorough as possible. Quality rather than quantity is the thing required. Especially while giving their English lessons should teachers bear this in mind. No reading lesson should be looked upon as finally disposed of until all the children thoroughly know the meaning of every sentence and word in it, and, in the case of senior classes, are able to reproduce the substance of the entire lesson. The children should be able, too, to pronounce every word accurately, and to spell it, or write it from dictation.
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, S2, [3])

**English Content**

The explicit inclusion of Māori words to Standard III – the children would be 9 years of age and older – means that the children would have spoken Māori in the classroom, not the least in order to acquire English vocabulary and to complete the required translation exercises, but because it was their dominant language.

> **Standard I.**
> Reading.—To read English sentences made up of easy words of one syllable.
> Spelling.—To spell easy words of one syllable.

Writing.—To copy on slates easy words from the black-board, to transcribe from the wall-cards, and to form figures neatly.
English.—To know the meanings of such easy English words as go, bad, run, dog, sky, father; also, to know the English names of familiar objects—such as the school furniture, parts of the body, articles of dress ; and to be able to name these when taken singly, or in twos or threes; (e.g., one eye, two eyes ; one man, two men ; one child, two children, three children.)

**Standard 11.**
Reading.—To read sentences made up of words of one syllable, and very easy words of two syllables.
Spelling —To spell the words in the reading lesson.
Writing.—To transcribe from the Primer neatly (on slates), and to write neatly in an elementary copy-book.
English. —To translate Maori words such as rere, tai, tenei, po, manu, into English, and to know the meaning of very easy English sentences, such as, "He laughs," " I see you." Also, to know the names of things represented in the wall-pictures, and of the parts of these things; (in the case of the picture of a fish, for instance, the children should know the names of the head, the tail, the fins, and the gills.)

**Standard 111.**
Reading.—To read and understand the " Second Royal Reader," and to give in English the meanings of the words and the sentences.
Spelling.—To write correctly from dictation sentences taken from the Primer.
Writing.—To write small-hand neatly in a copy-book.
English.—To be able to describe familiar objects or actions. (Eor example, the examiner holds up a little piece of pencil, and asks what it is. The pupil should be able to say—"That is a short pencil." The examiner raises his hand and asks what he has done. The pupil replies—" You raised your hand, sir.")
Also, to understand clearly the difference between such expressions as "This boy," "That boy," "These boys," "Those boys."
Composition. —To translate sentences into English from "Ko te A-nui a Wi."
Arithmetic.—Subtraction, long multiplication, short division, long division.

**Standard IV.**
Reading.—To read the "Third Royal Reader" with proper expression, and to thoroughly comprehend the meaning of what is read.
Spelling. —To write from dictation a short paragraph from the "Second Royal Reader."
Writing.—To write a good, plain round hand.
English. —To speak and to understand English fairly well, and to clearly understand the difference between such expressions as I see, I saw, I shall see, I had seen, I may see, &c.
Composition. —To reproduce the substance of a short fable or story, or to write a letter on some familiar subject.
(Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, s. IV)

**European children may be excluded**

The 1880 Code allowed parents to object to European children attending the Native Schools. This was to ensure that second language teaching techniques were used. If too many children in the class spoke English as their first language, the second language approach needed by the Māori speakers would be affected.

> Where the parents desire it, there is no objection to the children of Europeans attending a Native School. In such cases, however, the master will bear in mind that the object for which his school has been established is the instruction of Maori children. He will let nothing interfere injuriously with this his properwork.
> (Native Schools Code, 1880, H.—lf, S. xix [1]).

I have not found any official reports of European children being excluded from the Native Schools as a result of objections. European children did attend the Native Schools. The 1911 Annual Report records –

> 427 European children—232 boys and 195 girls. Under this head children who are intermediate in blood between half-caste and European are reckoned as European". (1911, pp. 6-7). (By 1949, the numbers of European children has increased significantly.) Of the 13,254 children on the rolls, 12,144 were Maoris and 1,110 were Europeans.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1949. Education of Maori Children, E-3, p. 1.)

**Second Language Teaching**

The demands of second language teaching are not confined to the syllabus.

> In acquiring a mastery of the new language the pupils are confronted with very considerable difficulties, due to the fundamental difference in grammatical and idiomatic construction between it and their mother-tongue.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 4)

These difficulties has long been recognised with extra teacher allowance for schools with large classes.

> Where the enrolment of Natives is large the difficulty of teaching to read and write good English is intensified. Native schools are allowed an addition to the staff when the average reaches twenty-one.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1914. E.-2, p. 19.)

**Conversational English**

Advice was provided about the best teaching methods, including conversation and dramatic dialogue – all of which would be considered effective teaching methods today. Conversational English would "enable pupils to express their thoughts in correct, clear, and concise language, both orally and in writing". Teachers were advised not to talk too much with recommendations –

> to rely upon the direct method of instruction" (followed by) abundant opportunities for oral expression, and must be careful not to take up too much of the time themselves. The successful teachers keep in the background and let the pupils do

> much of the talking. The oral work must include conversational English, which is necessary to give the pupils the ability to speak readily and correctly about their common everyday interests. Conversational English should include conversation about current events, and the activities of the pupils in the school and outside of it. The outside interests of the pupils should receive special attention in connection with this subject, and these should form topics of discussion. Dialogues and dramatizations may also be very profitably used.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 4.)

**Oral Preparation for Writing**

The importance of oral expression in preparation for writing is also emphasised in the reports, again excellent advice for 21st century teachers.

> Before any attempts are made in either oral or written composition, the subjects for composition, after being decided, upon, should be developed orally. One of the most difficult problems of composition is to find something worth saying, and in order to assist the pupils in forming their thoughts they should be prepared for the work by suggestions and questions. The pupils themselves may also be given opportunities to suggest methods of treatment and to question their class mates."
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 4.)

**Cultural Repertoire: Poetry and Prose**

The reference to poetry as a "cultural subject" in the 1928 Report recognises that English is not for utilitarian purposes only, but is part of the cultural repertoire.

> As the cultural subject of the school course, poetry should receive increased attention from the teachers. (Such attention requires teacher to select relevant and interesting material which engage the children to prevent) what should be a source of pleasure and enjoyment becomes an uninteresting and humdrum affair. It has been frequently impressed upon teachers that poems and prose passages providing dramatic interest, and also dialogues, will be found exceedingly useful in securing better expression, in arousing genuine interest, and in assisting the English of their pupils generally.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 4.)

The School Journals were specifically intended to provide the cultural content. From the first publication in 1907, the journals included works from the English literature canon and New Zealand writing and illustrations. (See Section 4 for examples.)

**Teaching Methods in Practice**

The 1898 Inspector's Report of Pukepoto Native School (examined 26th February, 1897) is laudatory and provides interesting detail about specific teaching methods.

> The methods in use here have a thoughtful and consequently effective character. Diaries are still kept by the senior pupils. Also, the practice of making each pupil compose and deliver an English sentence is still part of the school routine. These two devices, to say nothing of others, have done a great deal to improve the pupils' knowledge of English.

> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 4.)

However, not all schools were equal. The 1928 Annual Report refers to "a fairly large number of the schools the work is of more or less indifferent quality" with "little doubt that this condition of affairs is due to inefficient teaching". Teachers are advised "to concentrate their skill and attention upon discovering and applying the best methods and means of teaching the subject."
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1928. Education of Native Children, E.-3, p. 4.)

**Technology as a Teaching Resource**

The English literary canon was not the only resource. Teachers were encouraged to draw on the children's experience. James Pope, in his 1898 Report, also urged teachers to use the latest technology of the telegram for developing the concise writing that makes his own reports so valuable.

> The writing of telegrams would give pupils most valuable training in the art of finding out the exact purport of a group of statements, and of expressing this meaning in the briefest, clearest, and most correct way.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 13.)

**English in the Māori Boarding Schools**

The Te Aute syllabus illustrates the scope and standard of students' work. A matriculation class at Te Aute does "the same kind of work as is done at such institutions as Wellington College and Wanganui College". (1898, p. 2). It includes –

> Portions of the syllabus of Class V. for the year 1897 will partly indicate what is done in the form next below the highest. It is not necessary to give the whole of it:—
> English literature: Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" and "Macaulay's Armada" to be learnt by heart; paraphrase, analysis, and grammar; such figures of speech and constructions as the following to be known—inserted sentence, provisional subject, complex object, adverbial objective, nominative absolute, personification, metaphor, simile, alliteration. Extracts from Scott for reading only.
> Macaulay's "Hampden" eleven pages; the text to be learnt by heart only.
> English grammar: Smith's "Manual of English Grammar"; all the syntax, and (in etymology) noun, adjective, pronoun, verb (except pp. 62-72), and adverb.
> Composition: To be able to write in idiomatic English, and to map out essays in a correct manner.
> Latin: English into Latin
> About the same standard of difficulty is set up in Euclid, algebra, arithmetic, physiology, and geography.
> (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, pp. 2.)

**Teaching Methods in the Boarding Schools**

James Pope's 1898 report of teaching methods includes an account of three Te Aute teachers: Mr. T, Mr. B, and Mr W, all of whom would be welcome in the 21st century classroom.

Methods: Mr. T. endeavours to secure thoroughness at all costs. The same position is worked up to from this direction and from that, until at last it seems pretty plain to him that it has been actually reached; security with regard to this point is gained by means of adequate testing. This method has, in Mr. T.'s hands, no tendency to become tedious; every attack on the position has some new element in it, some new interest, some new incentive to attention is constantly being introduced. Thus it comes about that the pupils hardly notice that they are doing the same work over and over again and acquiring more complete mastery of it every time. I do not think that boys of fair intelligence could fail to become sound under this kind of teaching.
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 2.)

Mr. B.s work seems to amount to this: His class are set to do work that previous recent experience has shown him to be well within the boys' reach, and assistance afforded where it is needed. Soon it becomes plain to their teacher that the boys know this, and do not know that, and only partly know the other thing. That is to say that Mr. B., in the course of his supervision of the boys' work, learns where they are strong and where weak. Then the individualistic mode of treatment is dropped; the master now lectures the class, as a class, on dark and doubtful points, and gradually glides, so to say, into hints, statements of principle, &c, which are to serve as a guide to the work of the next lesson in the same subject.
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 2.)

Mr. W. was working at a disadvantage —he had charge of another teacher's class; but previous experience had shown that he has rare skill in preparing young Maoris for entering on the thorny path that may by-and-by lead them to the correct use of idiomatic English, and will give them such knowledge of other pakeha matters as will be very good indeed for them.
(Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1898, E.- 2, p. 2.)

## SECTION 4: EVIDENCE

## ENGLISH SYLLABUS 1904-1963

The English syllabuses from 1904 to 1963 contain all seven knowledge-rich features that I identify in Section One. This section provides the evidence.

### An Early 20th Century English Lesson

Mabel Bloomer's Schemes of Work for Teachers were popular. Her English lessons captured the 1904 Syllabuses of Instruction's three Whole Child objectives – Intellectual, Character, and Physical Development.

> The object of the book is to provide a scheme of work in which the method of transition from one season to another shall be like that of Nature herself – gradual and harmonious. The work for one week centres around the object, or so-called, nature lesson. The poetry, singing, play and manual work are all correlated with the object lesson. (Bloomer, 1911, pp. 4-6.)

Here is an example of a phonetics lesson for infant classes. It includes all the components of an English lesson – pronunciation, alphabet letters, poetry, stories, drama – along with the nature study of the Spring Period about how bulbs grow – each child had an onion from the school garden. The lesson included the skills of hand-writing and types of drawing. Plenty of breathing and posture exercises meet the physical development objective.

It is not possible to better Mabel Bloomer's description of the lesson –

> Phonetics. –- Teacher produces a pair of bellows. “How do the bellows take in air? We will breath through our noses too. Hands on ribs: mouths closed. Ready! In! Out! The children stand firmly on both feet, and do this exercise several times, while a boy works the bellows in front of the class. (The lesson then turns to sounding the letters ‘p’ and ‘b’). B in bulb is compared to P in pipe. Children tell how the lips work harder for b than for p. They put fingers to throat and tell that b is started there. Teacher corrects any tacking on of a vowel sound to p or b. Record of lesson – drawing of a bulb with b printed in corner. The lessons continue about numbers – counting bulbs, the story of Narcissus, the song ‘Sweetdaffydowndilly’, a game ‘The Bulb Flowers, Blackboard. Reading and drawing, paper-cutting and paper folding, clay modeling, brushwork, free-arm drawing, chalk drawing. (Bloomer, 1911, pp. 4-6.)

**Grammar in the English Syllabus**

English grammar is specifically mentioned in the 1904 Education Act (Part IV, s135) and there is very detailed grammar content in the 'Formal Language' section of each update of the English syllabus from the 1904 New Syllabuses of Instruction for Public Schools (including the Native schools) until the 1963 English syllabus.

The 1928 revised syllabus recognises the degree of difficulty aligned to pupils' ages, for example, Standard IV children are required to recognise and correct grammatical errors but not to explain the reasons for the errors – explanations are for older children.

> FORMAL LANGUAGE
> Standard IV
> Formal Language.-
> Exercises to give pupils command over good types of sentences for use in their composition, and to give them such knowledge of sentence-structure and word-function as will enable them to criticize their own or another’s composition. . . .
> (Education Department, 1928, N.-4, p.12.)

There is specific instruction in –

> 1. Correct use in sentences of the parts of the verbs *forget, shear, ring, rise, break, flow, lie, lay*.
> 2. Correction of written and spoken errors, reasons not being required.
> (Education Department, 1928, p. 12.)

**Oral English language**

Sound was recognised for its aesthetic beauty as for its utility. Children were taught to speak fluently, to moderate their sound, and to enunciate clearly. Shouting and squealing were frowned upon.

> The syllabus aims to give greater prominence than heretofore to the teaching of English in primary schools. It urges attention to the manner in which the child speaks as well as to the manner in which he writes.
> (Education Department, 1928 Syllabus, Introduction.)

Twenty years earlier, the Wellington inspectors noted the failure to obtain "purity of accent" and suggest a way to fix the problem. It involved the logical progression of speech instruction through the years –

> Failure to attain purity of accent appears to us to be due mainly to the following faults: fl.) Slovenliness of speech, as shown in usulu, yestideh, las, sup- prise, ko. Such mistakes cannot be noticeable feature in well-disciplined school. (1.) Failure to appreciate the value of the common vowel-sounds e.g., moine, lain, teown (and more recent developments), ut for it, plasuz for places. Careful phonetic drill in the lower standards is the only effective means of coping with those faults.
> (Report of Inspectors of Schools. AJHR, 1908 E.-1B, p. 16.)

The 1914 Taranaki inspectors were hesitant to be too critical of the "so-called colonial dialect" but encouraged the teaching of standard English vowel sounds.

> The teaching as a rule has been on educative and modern lines, and the defects that were noted were due more to a lack of experience and training than to a want of zeal and earnestness . . . . We have very little fault to find with the reading as far as fluency and expression are concerned, but a little more attention might be devoted to the purity of the vowel sounds. This defect is more noticeable in the ordinary speech of the pupils. While we think that the not-uncommon criticism levelled against our primary schools, that there is a tendency amongst the pupils, and even the teachers, to drift into a so-called colonial dialect, is not altogether justified, yet we feel that there are a few cases of common errors in the use of the standard English vowel sounds that call for attention . . .
> (Education: Primary Education, AJHR, 1914, 1. E.-2, Appendix C.)

The focus on speech training (oracy) is in all the English syllabuses.

> Standard IV. Speech Training. –Systematic instruction in correct speech to be continued, with attention to the correct pronunciation of Maori words and place names . . . the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words might begin here.
> (Education Department, 1928 Syllabus, p. 12.)

> Standard II. Oral Expression. –
> Practice should also be given in the oral reproduction of stories from literature or history. The asking of questions is to be encouraged. (1928, p. 10.)

The 1937 Syllabus "emphasises at every stage the importance of accurate speech, correct spelling, correct arrangement of ideas and the extension of the child's vocabulary." (p. 8). Teachers were recommended to include singing in speech training.

> Regular training in correct speech or utterance should be given in all classes, to secure, through the correct use of the vocal organs, distinct articulation, clear enunciation of consonants, and purity of vowel sound. . . .The value of the singing lesson in affording training in articulation should not be overlooked.
> (Education Department, 1937, N.4, p. 8.)

Advice to teachers about developing young children's oral language includes being sensitive to the shy child.

> Conversations upon pictures, topics familiar to the child, plants, birds, animals, insects, simple natural phenomena, and generally topics introduced through the spontaneous interests of the day, at home and at school. Stories, fairy-tales and folk-tales, nursery rhymes and simple poems to be told to the class by the teacher and retold by the children. Dramatization and reproduction in drawing and handwork. Throughout the lessons the aim should be to train the children to talk individually, and the more reticent children should receive special encouragement.
> (Education Department, 1937, N.4, p. 9.)

**Spelling**

The English syllabuses leaves no doubt about the importance of spelling. This example from the 1928 syllabus for Standard III refers to systematic instruction being required.

> Spelling. –
> Systematic instruction in the spelling of common words used by pupils in discussion, oral lessons and composition exercises. Class and individual lists of words to be kept. Dictation of easy passages.
> (Education Department, 1928, p. 12.)

**Spelling in the Inspectors' Reports**

In 1908, after finding imperfect supervison by teachers of spelling and punctuation, Marlborough Inspector D.A Strachan responded with sound professional development advice. He explained why correct spelling is needed, firstly for ear-eye collocation and secondly to express thoughts accurately.

> Spelling.—Part of the spelling is judged in connection with composition e.g., the use of there, their; were, where; as, has; to, two, too; and the use of the apostrophe noticed in several instances spelling tests in exercise-books with several unmarked errors—a serious fault which indicates imperfect supervision. By leaving the pupil's error uncorrected the mistake is harder to remedy, for in subject that depends largely on eye and ear false collocation has been set up and allowed time to establish itself.
>
> By using the word in sentence it becomes an instrument of thought, and thus both formal and material considerations receive due weight; spelling becomes correlated

> with composition; the lesson becomes an exercise in both subjects; each subject at once throws light on the other, and adds to its interest. This is great gain.
> (Education: Primary Education. AJHR, 1908 E.-1B, p. 26.)

Also in 1908, the Wellington inspectors acknowledged the role of spelling in the power of language expression. Their comment about spelling drudgery suggests that the New Education Movement's psychological learning principles were not always implemented in the classroom.

> We are unconventional enough to look forward to the time when such reasonable measure of spelling-reform shall be brought about as will not only relieve the child of much useless drudgery, but will also make spelling what it ought to be—a powerful factor in teaching language, both spoken and written. Are we not too often indifferent to the troubles of the little ones struggling with the harassing contradictions between the spoken and written forms of the same words?
> (Education: Primary Education. AJHR, 1908 E.-1B, p. 16.)

**Written Composition in the English Syllabus**

The 1928 English Syllabus contains the pedagogical balance established in 1904. The balance takes two forms. Teacher instruction in content is balanced with pupil activity in expressing the content. The balance also appears in the integration of knowledge and skills. Knowledge comes first and is the platform upon which skills are developed. Children cannot write if they have nothing to say – no content. Their limited experience of life is boosted by the subject-matter of poetry and prose, something noted in the 1928 syllabus.

> Standard IV (Today's year 6, age 10). The reproduction of subject-matter of poetry or prose; description of events, current and past . . . Imaginative stories. The writing of personal letters and correspondence with other schools, both in New Zealand and abroad. (Education Department, 1928, p. 12.)

**Hand Writing**

If writing is the art, then handwriting is the craft. Just as speaking was to be clear with well enunciated sounds, so was writing to be clear with well-formed script. The 1928 English Syllabus of Instruction for Public Schools contained detailed illustrations of letter formation and of the required seating posture and hand-arm coordination. The New Education Movement's emphasised the psychological requirement for connecting fine motor movement to mental activity.

> STANDARD II
> Writing to secure muscular control with consequent freedom of movement should be devised. Position of body, arms, fingers and book to be carefully supervised. Cursive writing with pencil and pen to be further developed.
> (Education Department, 1928, pp. 92-95.)

> Standard V
> All written work and figuring should be of a good standard of legibility, neatness, correct form, and fluency. Practice in commercial and business forms. The pupil may

> now be allowed to develop some individuality in style, but eccentricities in the holding of the pen or in shaping or sloping the letters should not be permitted.
> (Education Department, 1928, pp. 92-95.)

**Reading**

Reading is a complex intellectual (i.e. cognitive) activity. First, it is a complex skill requiring a) recognising alphabet letters and words in print, and b) recognising the correspondence of those printed squiggles to sound. Second, it is an intellectual activity requiring symbolic or abstract thinking. Children need to recognise that those print squiggles are not only the signs for letters and words but they are symbols. They stand for something – they have meaning. This shift from fairly mechanical thinking to symbolic thinking is highly abstract intellectual work.

**Structured literacy in 1904**

Structured literacy is the contemporary term used for the full complexity of combining sign decoding and symbolic comprehension. It requires knowing the sound value and print sign of letters (phonetics) then moving to what the words mean – often using the context provided by pictures, objects, and actions. It was the method introduced by the New Education Movement to replace the alphabetical method of large classes of children reading simultaneously.

> The general results in English are satisfactory. (But with) reading and recitation the main fault lies in the excessive use of simultaneous reading but the excuse is very obvious, and as long as teachers are required to push large classes of fifty, and even seventy, through the same amount of reading-matter . . . it is perhaps unreasonable to expect any great improvement on the present results.
> (Reports of Inspector of Schools. AJHR, 1904, 1.-B. p. 14.)

Given the conditions of early 20th century schools, the replacement of the alphabetical, simultaneous method with the sound-print-symbol method, i.e. today's structured literacy, was gradual.

The 1914 Annual Primary Education Report refers disparagingly to the old alphabetical method. It was still being used by some teachers despite the 1904 policy change to the sound-print-symbol method.

> Some teachers still cling to the antiquated alphabetical method of teaching reading in its initial stages, instead of requiring children to acquire a knowledge of the sound-values of letters and gradually to apply these in interpreting the symbols that stand for words. The use of objects, pictures, and actions to give reality to the word-symbols is very commonly neglected . . . .
> (Education: Primary Education. AJHR, 1914, 1. E.-2, Appendix C, clause 5.)

The crucial role of the phonics or sound-letter correspondence is referred to in the 1937 Syllabus. This reference demonstrates the psychological automaticity the children need acquire in order to advance, one recognised and promoted by the New Education Movement.

> . . . after the first school term (the pupil) is ready for the examination of sounds. The more skilful he becomes in utilizing phonics in interpreting words and sentences, the more rapidly he will become independent of the teacher's aid.
> **(**Education Department, 1937 p. 76.)

**Reading for Enjoyment**

Schools were encouraged to develop the children's reading habits with an emphasis on reading for enjoyment.

> The beneficial effects of a wider course of reading are generally recognised. . . . Additional cheap reading-books, mostly fairy-tale and story books, costing a penny or twopence each, can now be made available for supplementary reading. The comprehension of the language and of the subject-matter of the reading lessons continues to improve.
> (Reports of Inspector of Schools. AJHR, 1908, 1.-B. p. 4.)

> Reading. – Oral and silent reading of the following: - (a) The School Journal; (b) supplementary continuous reading. Increased time should now be given to silent reading; the use of library books under the teacher's direction to be encouraged and a record kept by the pupils of the books so read. The reading aloud of selected passages of poetry and prose by teacher and pupils, followed by discussion thereon, to be regularly practised. Magazines clubs and reading at home to be encouraged.
> (Education Department, Syllabus, 1928, p.10

**English Literature**

From 1904, the Syllabuses emphasised both good literature and good books for reading for enjoyment. English Classics but not specific titles are prescribed, leaving choice for teachers.

> The reading and appreciation of at least two English classics, one prose and one verse. In addition a book of selected literary extracts may be studied. Characteristics of good prose and poetry to be further studied with recitation of selected passages. General reading of good books to be encouraged. Oral reading should be expected to show a higher stage of elocutionary skill.
> (Education Department, Syllabus. 1937, p. 18.)

This extract from 1914 is important. It contains much of what we would expect to see today in an English syllabus: reading for meaning with "intelligence and feeling"; the development of literary appreciation; teachers with their own love of literature and for "literary ideals", and finally, books of quality.

> Pupils who have been properly taught and have profited by the instructions should be able, when reading aloud, to convey to a listener not merely the gist of the passage but its meaning clearly and pleasantly expressed. " Barking at print," as some one has tersely described the process, should give place to more ambitious aims, and pupils should be taught to read with intelligence and feeling. The chief object with which reading is taught is to enable children to master written or printed matter for their own information. In addition to this, however, it is most desirable that pupils should gradually come to appreciate good books and develop a taste for good literature. It is

> here that the teacher's power can be very effective and his influence and example very helpful, for it is mainly on his skilful treatment of lessons that the interest aroused will depend. A teacher without some knowledge of literature and without some appreciation of literary ideals cannot hope to inspire his pupils with a desire to learn and know something of the beauties of thought and setting with which good literature abounds, nor can he hope profitably to direct the reading of his pupils when recommending books from school or public libraries. We are glad to welcome amongst the additions to the reading-matter available for schools many of the recent publications containing carefully selected passages from standard authors, of sufficient length to enable pupils to form some conception of the author's style and of his claims to literary distinction. These should be used freely in the schools and should gradually supersede the 'miscellaneous' reader as the class reading-book.
> (Education: Primary Education. AJHR, 1914, 1. E.-2, Appendix C, p. iv.)

**Recitation**

Reciting poetry and reading prose aloud were encouraged. The practice contributed not only to speech development and children's confidence but reciting poems lodged a rich repertoire of cultural symbols in pupils' memory. It linked children to tradition and to place – both to New Zealand and, for the majority of 19th century settlers and their descendants, to Britain.

> The day of days for me in the old school was the one on which I listened to Mr Fleming read poetry to the senior pupils. I was in Standard III and should have been attending to my own work. But in my home my father often recited poems to me, and I had become familar with the words of Goldsmith. On this, to me, great day, the subject was Goldsmith and his Deserted Village and it could not but be of interest to me and hold my attention. It did more than that. It awakened in me an appreciation and a desire to know more about poetry.
> (Bannockburn School. 1910-1918. Miss Lynn.)

Poetry recitation was valued over prose for its superior benefits to speech quality.

> Standards I and II
> The reading of poetry, both as a model by the teacher and as practice by the children, will raise the quality of inflexion and emphasis much more rapidly than continual practice with prose.
> (Education Department, Syllabus. Reading. 1937, p. 77.)

**Classroom Drama**

Here the 1924 Chief Inspector of Primary Schools refers to English literature – he also mentions classroom drama and the importance of pupil enjoyment.

> English. —We are pleased to note that, owing to the increased facilities for wide reading, a general improvement has taken place in the teaching of English, and especially of English literature. Not only do the pupils read more books, but they show a keener appreciation of good literature; and we have received some really good answers to questions set to test the pupils' enjoyment as well as their appreciation of the selections read. Some teachers have been very successful in stimulating interest by having the pupils impersonate the various characters in the plays studied—a practice which we heartily commend.

(Education: Primary Education. AJHR, 1924, E.-2, Appendix C, p. iv.)

**The School Journal**

It is impossible to over-estimate the role played by the *School Journal* in New Zealand education. From 1907, the *Journal* provided comprehensive and quality resources for all subject syllabuses. It had a key place in the life of the school.

> The School Journal, whose monthly advent is so eagerly looked forward to by both pupil and teacher. Its wisely chosen selections from gems of English literature, its well-written articles on current topics, its readable accounts of modern discoveries and inventions, of interesting and important international questions, of seems of travel and adventure, and its contributions to the history and geography courses—to mention only a few of the matters treated in its pages— render it a very welcome, a very real, and a very valuable addition to the available reading-matter in our schools.
> (Annual Report for Primary Schools, AJHR, 1911, 1.E-2, Appendix C, p. iv.)

From the first publication of the *School Journal* in 1907 it is highly likely that the Journal would have been the main source of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. These examples from 1907 and 1910 show the range and type of New Zealand content.

**1907 Vol 1, No 1, Part 1 – For Classes 1 and II**

***Poetry***
The Woman in the Moon (describes Rona seizing a ngaio-tree)
Why cats wash after eating

***Story***
The Dog and the Pukeko

***Non-Fiction***
Captain Cook
The Cross in the sky – about the Southern Cross

**Vol 1, No 2, Part II Classes III and IV**

***Poetry and Song***
God Save the King; E Ihowa Tohungia te Kingi (National Anthem) (Music provided)
Abou Ben Adhem and the Angel

***Story***
Tupaea and Taieto
The Merry Family at Stewart Island
Ivanhoe
Frodi's Mill: A Norse Legend

***Non-fiction***
The Maori Canoe
The first Capital of New Zealand
The Death of Nelson

From Wanaka to Wakatipu
Pelorus Jack: includes 1904 Order In Council prohibiting taking of Risso's Dolphin in Cook Strait.

**1907 Vol 1 No 3 Part II – For Classes V and VI**

***Non-fiction***
Forests and Fertility –the evils of forest-destruction and the introduction of Arbor Day, 24th day of July 1907.

**1907 Vol 1 No 4 Part II – For Classes V and VI**

***Shakespeare***
A Good Name

***Non-fiction***
The Opening of Parliament (NZ)

**Vol 1 No 5 Part II – For Classes V and VI**
***Poem***
Cato's Soliloquy on Eternity

***Fiction***
The Witenagemot – An Anglo-Saxon describes Edward the Confessor's Council Hall to his friend, Haco from Norway (an imaginative re-telling)

***Non-fiction***
Antarctica

**1907 Vol 1 No 6 Part II – For Classes V and VI**

***Non-fiction***

Comets (cont.) with a photo of Halley's Comet photographed at the Observatory, Meeanee, Hastings. Includes first and only photo in the journal, an extract from 'Paradise Lost' and a reference to the meaning of comets for Māori.

The Proclamation of the Dominion of New Zealand.

**1910 Vol IV, Part III, 1910 For Classes V and VI**

***Non-fiction and biography***

The Chatham Islands – includes photos: Carving on a Karaka-tree and a rock carving and the story of German missionary J.G Engst on Chathams since 1843 in his own words.

New Zealand writers and illustrators were published in the School Journal, including in later years Patricia Grace, James K Baxter, Hone Tuwhare, and Rita Angus.

## Literature in the Secondary English Syllabus

The titles of works from the English canon, including Shakespeare's poems and plays were specifically referred to in the 1906 Secondary Education Annual Report. They are not the same in all schools so there is obviously some teacher choice.

> The following titles are recorded in the 1906 Annual Secondary Reports.
>
> Shakespeare – Merchant of Venice, The Tempest, King Lear, Twelfth Night, A Winter's Tale, Henry V
> Milton – Samson Agonistes, Prometheus Unbound, Paradise Regained, II Penseroso, L'Allegro
> Chaucer – The Prologue and Selections
> Carlyle – Sartor Resartus
> Charles Dickens – Christmas Stories
> Other titles – e.g. Ivanhoe
>
> Collections and Anthologies included
> Hales (Longer English Poems), Bell's English Classics for Schools and Longmans' Handbook of English Literature, the Globe Poetry Reader for Advanced Classes, Tennyson for the Young, Nelson's Supplementary Reader, Stronach's English Literature.
>
> Language Textbooks – e.g. Nesfield's Manual of English Grammar and Composition
>
> (Secondary Education, AJHR, 1906.)

**English Examinations**

These examination questions provide a good indication of what was taught in secondary English classes. My examples are of literature only. However, each examination also has language questions – vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar.

***1952 School Certificate Examination***

In this question, pupils were asked to give the title, or first line or author of 8 from the following list:

> 1. an epic . 2. a poem about hunting. 3. a poem about a journey on horseback. 4. a sonnet by Shakespeare and a sonnet by Wordsworth. 5. A song by Shakespeare and a song by Burns. 6. An ancient ballad about a drowned princess. 7. A modern ballad about the sea. 8. A poem about a nightingale. 9. A long poem in rhymed couplets. 10. A mock heroic poem about a thieving bird. 11. A long poem in Spenserian stanzas. 12. A poem about the New Zealand bush. 13. a poem about a donkey. 14. A poem about a New Zealand harbour.

Another question from the same exam requires pupils to select 8 books, all by different authors, for the school library, including a New Zealand novel and 3 novels written before 1900.

**Libraries**

School libraries were also being established to add to those in classrooms. This extract from the 1914 Annual Report refers to individual reading at home. It also shows concern for pupils new to a school.

> During the year grants were given for establishing and maintaining school and class libraries . . . and supplying schools with supplementary continuous readers in sufficient numbers (along with) the free supply of classbooks in necessitous cases or in cases where a newly entered pupil has already purchased elsewhere class-books different from those in use in the school. After provision has been made for the supply of such books, the balance of the grant, if any, is to be spent on approved books suitable for individual reading in school or at home.
> (Annual Report for Primary Schools: Class-books and School and Class Libraries. AJHR, 1914, 1. E.-2, Appendix C, p. 9.)

School libraries were often connected to the community. The 1924 Chief Inspector's Report describes libraries in all areas.

> School Libraries.—The youth of this district owe much to the wise policy of the Wellington City Council whereby literature of the best and most varied is provided in ample supply . . . The group scheme of Featherston and Wairarapa Counties and of Masterton are also under efficient management, and conferring a most valuable benefit on our youth.
> (Annual Report for Primary Schools, AJHR, 1924 E.—2. Appendix B. p. viii.)

**Teaching Resources**

The first decade of the 20th century saw the shift from slate to paper with "a fairly good unruled paper costs sixpence a head per annum".
(Reports of Inspector of Schools. (D. Petrie) AJHR, 1908, 1.-B. p.4.)

**Visual Resources**

Twenty years later, visual works were included in the English Syllabuses, from illustrations and pictures in the early years to the inclusion of moving-picture machines or film from 1924.

> An attempt has been made by private enterprise, with the approval of the Department, to introduce visual instruction into the larger schools. The scheme has not been an unqualified success so far, and it must be regarded as a temporary measure in anticipation of the time when it will be possible materially to assist the schools to install moving-pictures machines of their own.
> (Primary Education, Annual Report, AJHR, 1924, Appendix A, p. ii)

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