

SUBMISSION ON THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DRAFT CURRICULUM, 0-10 YEARS

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The Draft Social Sciences Draft Curriculum, 0-10 is knowledge-rich because it has the features of a knowledge-rich curriculum. They are:

- (1) Disciplinary-derived and accountable knowledge.
- (2) Subject-defined concepts and content.
- (3) Epistemological coherence.
- (4) Logical progression.
- (5) Appropriate balance of explicit teacher instruction and related student activities.
- (6) Curriculum content connected to students' understanding informed by cognitive science principles and appropriate teaching methods.
- (7) A Purpose Statement justifying these features as the means for individual achievement and society's benefit.

1. **Subject-based Curriculum Design:** The division into History, Civics and Society, Geography, and Economic Activity has two important strengths: first, it provides subject integrity by categorising knowledge into areas which are based in distinct disciplines to which the subjects are accountable. It is particularly important that History is differentiated from Sociology and Political Science – this helps History to resist the pull of ideology which has weakened Sociology in the post-modern decades. Second, the disciplines establish the concepts required to create epistemological coherence. (Knowledge-rich features 1 and 2.)
2. **Curriculum-Pedagogy Design:** The Social Sciences Curriculum is structured into 'Knowledge' and 'Practices'. This separation of subject knowledge from teaching methods recognises the differences between the 'what' (knowledge) and the 'how' (teaching) before connecting the two. The explicit separation, then connection, enables the knowledge to be designed and taught from the least to the most abstract. This connects the level of knowledge difficulty to the pupil's appropriate cognitive level. It enables cognitive science principles to inform curriculum progression from one year to the next. (Knowledge-rich features 4, 5 and 6.)
3. **Knowledge:** The content is drawn from and accountable for its veracity to the appropriate discipline. This accountability enables ideological statements to be identified and removed.

The Draft contains very few instances of ideological examples. They are:

- a) Years 6, 9 and 10: "the constitutional significance of te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi". This is a loaded and contested statement. The Treaty is significant, but to claim constitutional significance is to impose an ideological position (i.e. treatyism) into the curriculum.
- b) The omission of the 1852 Constitution Act alongside the Treaty of Waitangi. I recommend that the 1852 Constitution Act be added in all places where the Treaty

of Waitangi is included so that both New Zealand's foundational documents are given equal weighting. The inclusion will avoid decolonising ideology. (I note that the Constitution Act is included in year 7 History.)

- c) Year 6 "Importance of shared responsibility". This should also include 'individual responsibility'. The inclusion of the word 'individual' is a counter to the ideology of Marxist Critical Theory.
- d) Year 7 "the transatlantic slave trade". It is important to situate slavery in wider world and African history otherwise it appears that only Europeans practised slavery, and only during this time. This is a feature of decolonising ideological writings. (However, I note that the British anti-slavery movement is also included.)

The History Content

a) The History syllabus (i.e. the content) has these strengths:

- Includes important global and national events, e.g. the French revolution, the industrial revolution. This locates New Zealand within the larger context of world events.
- Covers several millennia (the Ancient Greeks are included) and, for years 1-3 explicitly includes the concepts of time. This will develop young children's cognitive temporal perception.
- Contains a large amount of important material about the history of New Zealand.
- Contains facts and events, all of which can be verified. Avoids postmodern perspectivism and relativism.
- Apart from the few instances mentioned above, the Draft does not promote the ideologies of Marxist Critical Theory, treatyism, and decolonisation.

Content Recommendation

I realise that not every historical event can be included in a school curriculum. However there is a strong case for the inclusion of the inter-tribal wars of the 1790-1830 decades, including the invasion of the Chatham Islands and the consequences for Moriori. Year 7 does refer to post-Musket war instability as a factor in the Treaty of Waitangi, but the extent of the instability and population loss can only be understood when placed within four decades of continual and widespread warfare, particularly once muskets were used. In addition, the inclusion of the inter-tribal wars would balance the curriculum's focus on the later New Zealand wars.

Resources

Many resources about New Zealand history written since the 1970s are ideological, presentist and inaccurate, written to serve current political ambitions. For example, I have found 10 versions of the history of the Rangiaowhia Incident, ranging from a version in which 17

fighting men from both sides died to what should be a reliable source – a 2013 masters' thesis – stating that over a 100 "elderly, along with young mothers and their babies" died in a burning church, deliberately set on fire by government forces.

I recommend that the high quality of this curriculum be reflected in an equally high quality of resources for use by teachers. This will require resources written by reputable historians that are peer-reviewed.

Final Comment

I congratulate the writers of this draft which is indeed 'knowledge-rich'.