EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

The New Zealand Curriculum Principles: Foundations for Curriculum Decision-Making

July 2012

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa

The Child – the Heart of the Matter

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We welcome your comments and suggestions on the issues raised in these reports.

Foreword

The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.

ERO's whakataukī demonstrates the importance we place on the educational achievement of our children and young people:

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter

In our daily work we have the privilege of going into early childhood services and schools, giving us a current picture of what is happening throughout the country. We collate and analyse this information so that it can be used to benefit the education sector and, therefore, the children in our education system. ERO's reports contribute sound information for work undertaken to support the Government's policies.

This is ERO's second national evaluation report looking at the extent to which the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* are evident in schools' curricula and enacted in classrooms. The curriculum principles are intended to be the basis of curriculum decision-making at schools. The findings in this report are very similar to our earlier report, published in May 2011, and show that there is considerable variability across schools in the level of evidence of the curriculum principles.

Successful delivery in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust the information in ERO's evaluations will help them in their work.

Graham Stoop
Chief Review Officer
Education Review Office

July 2012

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Overview

Schools in New Zealand were required to implement *The New Zealand Curriculum* from February 2010. During Terms 3 and 4, 2010 ERO, at the request of the Ministry of Education, evaluated the extent to which the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* were evident in schools' curricula and enacted in classrooms. The findings of this evaluation were presented in ERO's report *Directions for Learning: The New Zealand Curriculum Principles, and Teaching as Inquiry (May 2011).*

During Terms 3 and 4, 2011 ERO conducted a further investigation of a new cohort of 113 schools to determine the extent to which the curriculum principles were now evident in schools. ERO studied 200 classrooms in these schools to evaluate the enactment of the curriculum principles.

As reported in 2011, there was considerable variability in the extent to which the curriculum principles were evident in the schools reviewed. In about a third of schools, the principles were highly evident. There was some evidence of the principles in 35 percent of schools, and minimal or no evidence of the principles in 33 percent of schools.

Although the percentage of schools where the principles are highly evident is similar in both evaluations, it is disappointing that in this evaluation a greater percentage of schools displayed minimal evidence of the principles in the school curriculum and in classrooms.

The curriculum principles were more likely to be highly evident in primary schools than secondary. Secondary schools generally have greater focus on the individual learning areas of the curriculum, rather than taking the holistic approach to curriculum review and design afforded by the principles.

Schools where the principles were highly evident were more likely to have had support from external professional learning development facilitators, who helped their understanding of the principles. Only a small number of the schools where the curriculum principles were not so evident had accessed relevant external professional learning development. Consequently the curriculum principles were generally not well understood, and teachers had received limited support from leaders for incorporating them into their classroom planning. If any professional development had taken place, it was a one off occurrence.

Surprisingly, in some schools, although little work had been done to foster implementation of the principles at school wide level, they were nevertheless evident in some classrooms. This was due to individual teacher curriculum management and delivery, rather than good school wide leadership.

The relative implementation of individual principles was similar in both evaluations. The principle most evident was *high expectations*. This incorporated both learning and behavioural expectations. The next most common principles were *inclusion; learning to learn;* and *community engagement*.

The *Treaty of Waitangi, coherence, cultural diversity* and *future focus* principles, in that order, made up the remaining four principles evident in schools' curricula. This mirrors the earlier findings. It is of note that the *Treaty of Waitangi* principle has moved from being the least evident principle to having a middle ranking.

This report provides examples of good practice for the four principles that were least evident in schools and classrooms. It also suggests steps to address the least evident principles.

The curriculum principles are expected to be the foundation of curriculum decision-making at each school. When they are used well the principles put students at the centre of teaching and learning by fostering the design of a curriculum that includes, engages and challenges them. When the principles are not fully enacted, students do not have opportunities to experience a broad and deep curriculum that caters for their interests, strengths and learning needs, and promotes their independence, self responsibility and engagement. It is unlikely that learners from diverse cultures or those that need additional support will accelerate their progress in schools that are not focused on the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

NEXT STEPS

On the basis of this report ERO recommends that:

- schools review the extent to which each of the curriculum principles underpins and informs their curriculum and teaching practice towards improving both academic and social outcomes for all students
- the Ministry of Education investigates opportunities for ongoing professional development to make shifts in those schools where leaders and teachers need a greater focus on the curriculum principles *future focus, coherence* and *cultural diversity.*

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Principles in The New Zealand Curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum enables all schools to design their own learning programmes to meet the needs of their communities and students. Every school's curriculum should be a unique and responsive blueprint of what they and their community consider is important and desirable for students to learn. The vision, values, principles and key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* provide a framework for stakeholders to engage in discussion about the kind of people they want students to be, and the best means to support students to develop their potential.

The eight principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* are the foundations of curriculum review, design and practice in schools.[1] The principles apply equally to all schools and to every aspect of the curriculum. The eight principles are as follows:

High expectations: The curriculum supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their circumstances.

Treaty of Waitangi: The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo me ōna tikanga.

Cultural diversity: The curriculum reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people.

Inclusion: The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students' identities, languages, abilities and talents are recognised and affirmed, and that their learning needs are addressed.

Learning to learn: The curriculum encourages all students to reflect on their own learning processes and to learn how to learn.

Community engagement: The curriculum has meaning for students, connects with their wider lives, and engages the support of their families, whānau and communities.

Coherence: The curriculum offers all students a broad education that makes links within and across learning areas, provides for coherent transitions, and opens up pathways to future learning.

Future focus: The curriculum encourages students to look to the future by exploring such significant future-focused issues as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation.

1 Ministry of Education, (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Learning Media Limited. Wellington. (Page 9).

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This evaluation sought to answer two evaluation questions:

- To what extent are the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* evident in the interpretation and implementation of schools' curricula?
- To what extent are the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* enacted in classroom curriculum?

Judgements were made using a four point scale. Further details about the evaluation framework are provided in Appendix 1.

METHODOLOGY

In reporting the findings ERO refers to the broad categories of secondary schools and primary schools. The following school types are included in each category.

Table 1: School categories

Secondary schools	Years 7–15 Secondary schools
	Years 9–15 Secondary schools
Composite schools	Years 1–15 Composite schools
Primary schools	Years 1–8 Full primary schools
	Years 1–6 Contributing schools
	Years 7–8 Intermediate schools

Eighty-two primary schools, 26 secondary schools and 5 composite schools were selected for this evaluation from the schedule of schools due for an ERO education review during Terms 3 and 4, 2011. In total, data was gathered from 120 primary, 80 secondary and 11 composite school classrooms. In sampling, consideration was given to achieving proportional numbers across year levels and, in secondary schools, to covering a wide range of school subjects. Further information about the numbers of observations at each year level, and in each subject area (in secondary and composite schools) is provided in Appendix 2.

Note: Schools were selected on the basis of a review schedule rather than by demographic selection, so the sample does not reflect the national percentages in terms of roll number, school decile group, school size, school locality and school type.

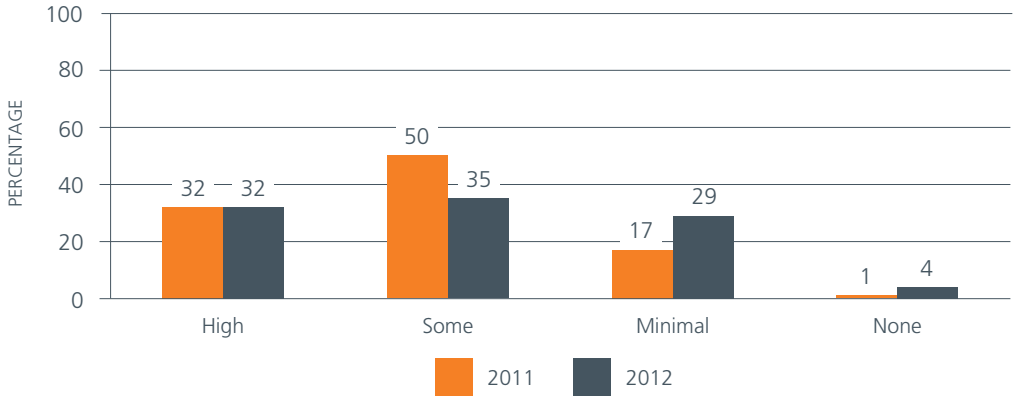
Findings

The curriculum principles are expected to be the foundation of curriculum decision-making at each school. They are intended to be used for planning, prioritising and reviewing the school's curriculum. When they are used well the principles put students at the centre of teaching and learning by fostering the design of a curriculum that engages and challenges them.

There continued to be considerable variability in the extent that the curriculum principles were evident in the schools reviewed. This evaluation shows an increase in the percentage of schools with minimal evidence of the curriculum principles, compared to ERO's previous report. Little improvement was evident since the May 2011 report despite schools having had more time to focus on implementing the principles.

As indicated in Figure 1, in about a third of schools, the curriculum principles were highly evident, which is similar to the earlier findings. There was some evidence of the principles in 35 percent of schools, a decrease from 50 percent. Similarly, there was minimal or no evidence of the principles in 33 percent of schools, compared to 18 percent previously.

Figure 1: Curriculum Principles – level of evidence in schools



The principles were more likely to be highly evident in primary schools than in secondary schools. This may reflect the greater focus on the individual learning areas in secondary schools, compared to more integration of teaching across the curriculum in primary schools.

ERO carried out further analysis of data from this and other recent ERO evaluations to suggest explanations for the overall decline in evidence of the principles. The only significant variance between the cohort evaluated in 2010 and that reviewed in 2011 was the ratio of primary to secondary schools. However, the fact that the principles were more likely to be evident in primary schools than in secondary schools means that this difference does not explain the decline.

ERO considered possible impacts from schools developing their curriculum at the same time as implementing the National Standards. When information for the report *Working with National Standards to Promote Students' Progress and Achievement* (2012) was reanalysed it was found that only a very small number of schools had identified this as a reason to delay the development of their curriculum. Schools that were working well with the National Standards were also more likely to be well advanced with their curriculum development. As schools were developing their curriculum and their understandings of the National Standards in both 2010 and 2011 the decline cannot be attributed to this factor.

ERO's increased emphasis on how well schools are focused on success for Māori and Pacific students and how they are including students with high needs may have influenced reviewers' judgements about schools' enactment of the curriculum principles. ERO expected that schools reviewed in 2011 would be further ahead in enacting the principles than those reviewed in 2010. Recent ERO findings have particularly highlighted for schools the importance of the *cultural diversity, inclusion, community engagement* and *learning to learn* principles.

The 2010 report *Promoting Success for Māori Students: Schools' Progress* indicated that not all educators have yet recognised their professional responsibility to provide a learning environment that promotes success for Māori students. The report also highlighted that in a sizeable minority of schools consultation with Māori parents and whānau was limited, and Māori parents' engagement in their children's education is not valued. Subsequently, in 2011 ERO changed its approach to focus more on success for Māori and determined that schools would not be seen as highly effective unless they could demonstrate that Māori learners are actively engaged in their learning, are progressing well and succeeding as Māori.

Information collected from schools in 2011 and reported in *Improving Education Outcomes for Pacific Learners (June 2012)*[2] also highlighted schools challenges responding to the diverse cultures in their schools. The evaluation found little evidence of primary and secondary schools responding to the diversity, identity, language and cultures of Pacific learners. Most primary and secondary schools in this evaluation had not drawn upon contexts and themes that were relevant to Pacific learners. Many schools were not successfully engaging with Pacific families in their communities as they used the same approaches to engaging with Pacific parents as they used with other parents.

ERO's report *Including Students with High Needs (2010)* found that approximately half of the schools demonstrated inclusive practice, while 30 percent had 'pockets of inclusive practice' and 20 percent had few inclusive practices. The report explained the important role of leaders in building an inclusive culture where effective systems and innovative solutions to manage the complex and unique challenges related to including students with high needs.

A recurring theme has emerged across ERO's reports on the National Standards in schools with Years 1 to 8 students. Involving students in understanding what their progress and achievement looks like in relation to the National Standards is an ongoing difficulty. For some schools, teachers have insufficient understanding of the standards to engage in meaningful conversations with students about their learning, achievement and progress. Schools need a culture where such conversations happen in constructive ways that build productive relationships between teachers and learners and their parents and whānau.

Findings from these recent ERO reports highlight that many schools are not designing a school curriculum that reflects the *cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn* and *community partnerships* principles. ERO's current findings also indicate particular concern regarding the principles of *coherence* and *future focus*. All the curriculum principles are closely interconnected and together provide a framework for a coherent curriculum. Schools that are not enacting the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* are not likely to be able to successfully accelerate the progress of priority learners such as Māori, Pacific and special needs students.

2 Education Review Office *Improving Education Outcomes for Pacific Learners (June 2012)* New Zealand Government.

HIGH VISIBILITY OF CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Where the principles were effectively integrated into a school's curriculum:

- a strong correlation with the curriculum values and Key Competencies was apparent
- very obvious links were evident between the principles and curriculum design, with very clear rationale for choices in curriculum design
- statements for each learning area described how the principles were enacted in the curriculum
- classroom planning was referenced to the principles
- teachers were supported to enact the principles through professional learning opportunities
- self review that considered the principles was ongoing.

In these schools the curriculum focused on meeting the diverse needs and interests of all learners in the school. A very broad curriculum encouraged opportunities to develop learners' abilities and talents. Effective support programmes were in place for students with learning or behavioural needs. All learners were expected to be treated with respect regardless of their level of achievement, ethnicity or gender. Diversity was encouraged and celebrated.

Integrated and authentic learning contexts were outlined in the school's curriculum that were intended to give relevance and coherence to the learning. Students were provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of their place and responsibilities as citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and as part of a world that is increasingly interconnected.

Classrooms were strong learning communities that fostered high expectations for teaching and learning. Students showed a high level of understanding of themselves as learners. They were able to talk about their learning goals and next steps. Teachers shared information with them about their progress and achievement. Students were fully engaged in their learning.

A partnership between home and school provided parents and whānau with regular feedback on student achievement and progress. They were involved in learning and support activities with their students. Parents' views were canvassed and given serious consideration in school decision-making. Students benefited from members of the local and wider community sharing their expertise.

Where the principles were highly evident, they were described in school documents, such as teaching and learning guidelines. In a few schools they were articulated in schools' charters and mission statements. In some schools self review had been used to evaluate how well the school was enacting the principles, and steps were then taken to address the identified gaps. In a small number of schools the principles were considered as part of ongoing curriculum review and there was a clear alignment between the charter, *The New Zealand Curriculum,* teaching and learning guidelines, performance appraisal and professional learning development.

Teachers in the schools where the principles were highly evident were more likely to have been supported by external professional learning development facilitators as they examined and discussed their understanding of the principles. Sometimes participation in professional learning development in curriculum areas such as Information Communication Technologies, literacy, numeracy or implementation of the National Standards had enhanced staff understanding of the principles. In other schools the development process was guided by the senior leaders.

Leaders played an important role in helping teachers to interpret and implement the curriculum principles. In schools where the curriculum principles were highly evident, leadership was particularly apparent in the following key areas:

- Organising consultation processes that included the community, teachers and students
- Accessing professional development programmes that focused on building teacher clarity about *The New Zealand Curriculum*
- Creating opportunities for teachers to review and develop the school's curriculum, including supporting teachers to build a shared understanding about the place of curriculum principles in relation to the school's vision and values, and the Key Competencies
- Ensuring that the principles were evident in curriculum guidelines and policies
- Helping teachers to understand how the principles could be included in classroom planning and programmes
- Incorporating the principles into the school's strategic and annual planning
- Drawing links for teachers between the principles and current school learning approaches or initiatives (such as Assessment for Learning[3] and Te Kotahitanga[4]).

3 Assessment for learning is a process where assessment information is used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, and by students to adjust their learning strategies.

4 Te Kotahitanga is a research and development programme that supports teachers and school leaders to improve Māori students' engagement and achievement.

The following examples illustrate how instrumental leaders were in making sure the curriculum review and development process happened effectively:

> *The principal created energy and enthusiasm for curriculum development that spread to the school leaders and the teachers and trustees. There has also been significant input into the review and development by students, parents and whānau. The principles are now reflected in the charter, and in the learning programmes and teaching practices.* (Full primary school, Years 1–8)

> *The leadership team, involving team coordinators and teachers has identified how each individual principle is reflected in the school's curriculum and also identified the principles in the teaching and learning programmes and planning. Leaders ensure that teachers are addressing all the principles and that these are thought about during curriculum reviews.* (Intermediate School, Years 7–8)

Some leaders were simultaneously building their own knowledge of the principles, through networking with other leaders and by attending seminars, curriculum development courses and leadership forums.

SCHOOLS WITH LIMITED VISIBILITY OF CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES IN THEIR CURRICULUM

Schools involvement in professional development influenced the extent to which the principles were evident across the school. In the group of schools judged to have some evidence of the principles only a small number of teachers and leaders had accessed external professional learning development to help them explore the principles. Teachers in these schools did not always demonstrate a clear understanding of the principles and there was sometimes confusion between the principles and values from *The New Zealand Curriculum*. In some cases there was an attempt to align the principles to special character values and philosophies of the school. Self review against the principles was limited. In some schools, although little work had been done on implementing the principles in policy and practice at school-wide level, they were evident in the teaching in some classrooms.

In the schools with minimal evidence of the principles, professional development, if it had taken place, was a one-off occurrence. The principles were generally not incorporated into planning at school or classroom level. Teachers received limited support from senior leaders in incorporating them into their classroom planning. If any principles were evident they were intrinsic to ongoing school practices, rather than planned. These schools required external support to develop an understanding of their significance for the school's curriculum. The principles were not considered in the school's self-review processes.

The four percent of schools where the principles were not evident had not accessed external support and most had not started to consider them. A few were at the beginning of this process.

COMPARING THE INDIVIDUAL PRINCIPLES EVIDENT IN SCHOOLS' CURRICULA

Principles evident in schools' curricula were similar in the earlier ERO report to those evident during this evaluation (see Tables 1 and 7). The principle that was the most evident in both evaluations was *high expectations*. This principle incorporated both learning and behavioural expectations, the latter being often linked to the Key Competencies. The expectation for student excellence frequently extended to achievement in sporting, cultural and leadership activities. Public celebration of success was a common factor.

The next most evident principles were: *inclusion; learning to learn;* and *community engagement*. These were also the four most evident principles in the previous evaluation, with a small variation in the order. These four principles are traditionally common elements of good pedagogical practice and have been reinforced recently in published literature. These practices are also continually reinforced by school leaders.

Future focus was the least evident, followed by *cultural diversity*, *coherence*, *Treaty of Waitangi*, *learning to learn*, *community engagement*, *inclusion* and *high expectations*. It is of note that in ERO's previous report the *Treaty of Waitangi* was identified as the principle least evident, but this now sits in the middle of the group. The significance of this is discussed in a later section, as are the implications of the limited evidence of *future focus*, *cultural diversity* and *coherence*.

Table 1: Evidence of each principle in the curricula of schools in 2012[5]

Ranking	Principles identified as ***most evident*** in the school curriculum	No. of schools
1	High expectations	91
2	Inclusion	81
3	Learning to learn	73
4	Community engagement	69
5	Treaty of Waitangi	65
6	Coherence	48
7	Cultural diversity	43
8	Future focus	40
Ranking	**Principles identified as *least evident* in the school curriculum**	**No. of schools**
1	Future focus	50
2	Cultural diversity	46
3	Coherence	39
4	Treaty of Waitangi	33
5	Learning to learn	28
6	Community engagement	24
7	Inclusion	15
8	High expectations	11
Ranking	**Principles identified as *not evident* in the school curriculum**	**No. of schools**
1	Coherence	9
2 =	Learning to learn	8
2 =	Cultural diversity	8
4 =	Treaty of Waitangi	7
4 =	Future focus	7
6	Inclusion	5
7	Community engagement	3
8	High expectations	2

5 See Appendix 3 for 2011 report rankings.

INDIVIDUAL PRINCIPLES ENACTED IN THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

ERO visited 200 classrooms in 113 schools and evaluated the enactment of the curriculum principles and the use of teaching as inquiry. Overall, the principles were less evident in the classrooms' curriculum than they were in school-wide curriculum planning. This reflects the independence that teachers often exercise in implementing their classroom curriculum.

In classrooms where the curriculum principles were highly evident, they were present in teachers' planning. What teachers were doing in their programmes for students in their class closely aligned with what the school leaders expected of teachers. Some teachers were supported by school leaders to plan units of work collaboratively that focused on incorporating the principles.

One of the visions for education outlined in *The New Zealand Curriculum* is that students develop as confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners.[6] Teachers had taken up the challenge of fostering this vision in classrooms where the principles were highly evident. They provided students with good opportunities to undertake independent learning and encouraged them to set goals and evaluate their progress against these goals.

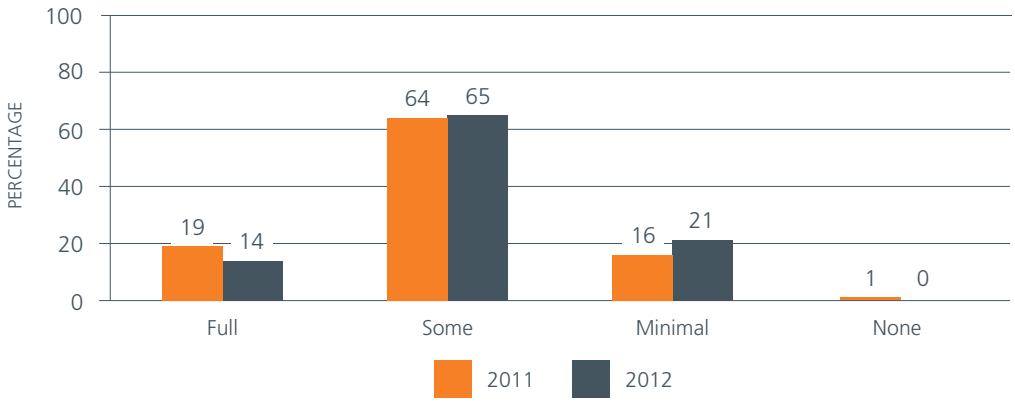
Sitting alongside these good practices were curriculum management processes that brought coherence to the curriculum and therefore had benefits for students' learning. Specifically, opportunities for students to:

- experience a curriculum and learning approaches (such as inquiry learning models) that built progressively on their understandings and skills
- make links between knowledge acquired in different learning areas of *The New Zealand Curriculum*
- learn about concepts through multiple contexts and over multiple time periods
- move smoothly between schools and classes through well-coordinated transition processes
- make choices about the curriculum, such as selecting topics that interested them.

In only 14 percent of classrooms were the curriculum principles highly evident, compared with 32 percent at school level. There was some evidence of them in a further two-thirds of classrooms. In 21 percent of classrooms the principles were not evident. These findings show a reduction in the percentage of classrooms where the principles were fully enacted and an increase in the percentage of those with minimal enactment of the principles when compared to the previous ERO report (see Figure 2).

6 *The New Zealand Curriculum,* p.8

Figure 2: Curriculum Principles – level of enactment in classrooms



No significant difference was found in the extent to which the principles were enacted in different subject or year levels in secondary schools or in different year levels in primary schools.

In a small number of schools where the principles were highly evident in documents and guidelines they were not enacted in some of their classes. No monitoring occurred to check that classroom programmes and practices reflect those outlined in the school's curriculum. This difference between school policy and practice was also found in the ERO report *Improving Education Outcomes for Pacific Learners (June 2012)*. While references to Pacific students might have appeared in the overarching statements of a school's curriculum, classroom planning and practice frequently missed opportunities to reflect the culture, knowledge and understanding of these learners.

The curriculum principles were more likely to be enacted in classrooms when they were highly visible in the school's curriculum. In a few classrooms the principles were more evident than in the school-wide curriculum. On occasions, some of the principles were evident in the teacher's practice but not documented in planning, indicating an incidental, ad hoc enactment. This was true of those principles that reflected what has been traditionally regarded as good pedagogy, such as *high expectations, learning to learn* and *inclusion*. For the principles to have the expected impact on students' learning they need to be an integral part of the process of planning classroom programmes.

The most evident principle in classrooms was *high expectations*, which was visible in more than 80 percent of classrooms. In some classrooms, students were involved in developing these expectations and were given the opportunity to set high expectations and challenge targets. Teachers in these classrooms viewed the students as capable learners and thinkers. Students were empowered to self monitor their own progress. High levels of self management and perseverance were expected, as in the following example.

> *In a combined Year 5 and 6 class different types of learning spaces were available where learners chose to work depending on what they were doing. Students came into class when they arrived at school and planned their learning day, choosing what to complete and when. Teachers were available to support, discuss and question.* (Years 1–6 Contributing School)

Learning to learn and *inclusion* were evident in the curriculum in approximately two-thirds of classrooms.

Cultural diversity, future focus and *Treaty of Waitangi* were the least well represented principles in approximately a third of classrooms. These three principles were not evident at all in about a sixth of classrooms. The significance of this is discussed in a later section.

These findings are very similar to those reported by ERO in 2011, with the exception of the *Treaty of Waitangi* which has moved from being the least evident of the principles to a middle ranking (see Tables 2 and 8).

Table 2: Evidence of each principle in the curricula of 201 classrooms in 2012[7]

Ranking	Principles identified as ***most evident*** in classroom curriculum	No. of classrooms
1	High expectations	165
2	Learning to learn	134
3	Inclusion	127
4	Coherence	93
5	Treaty of Waitangi	88
6	Community engagement	83
7	Future focus	62
8	Cultural diversity	61
Ranking	**Principles identified as *least evident* in classroom curriculum**	**No. of classrooms**
1	Cultural diversity	74
2	Future focus	70
3	Treaty of Waitangi	65
4	Community engagement	63
5	Coherence	57
6	Learning to learn	38
7	Inclusion	32
8	High expectations	18
Ranking	**Principles identified as *not evident* in classroom curriculum**	**No. of classrooms**
1	Future focus	40
2	Cultural diversity	33
3	Treaty of Waitangi	32
4	Community engagement	26
5	Coherence	19
6	Learning to learn	11
7	Inclusion	9
8	High expectations	6

7 See Appendix 3 for 2011 report rankings.

Very few classes were observed where most or all of the principles were enacted. One example of high quality enactment of the principles in the classroom is outlined below.

> *In a secondary school fabrics technology class, with a diverse range of student cultures and some older students following a mixed-materials programme, the principles were infused into teaching and learning. The teacher individualised student learning programmes. Individual student records showed all the principles were enacted over time.*
>
> *The teacher provided links with what the students were learning in other curriculum areas such as tourism and hospitality, and art. Te ao Māori was explored in the design process and learners were encouraged to experiment with colours and patterns from a range of other cultures. Enterprise Education was evident as students created a sellable garment. Links were established to global business enterprise through an investigation of what would work in a local context as opposed to a wider New Zealand and a global context.*
>
> *The teacher modelled high expectations through the use of exemplars and her expectations for learners to meet deadlines. The individualised approach encouraged students to challenge themselves and accelerate their learning. The teacher and students worked together to develop ideas and plan next learning steps that were documented in individual learner's reflection books.*
>
> *The teacher provided access to outside experts to develop the skills of the students focused on mixed materials who were constructing a pizza oven. Community surveys, as part of market research, provided links to students' lives outside of school. For some learners, links with the local marae had influenced pattern design.*
> (Secondary School, Years 7–15)

It is disappointing that the examples of high quality classroom practice outlined above were not reflected in most classrooms. Students should participate in a curriculum that is 'engaging and challenging' and 'forward-looking and inclusive'.[8] This was not always the case in the classes where there was minimal or no enactment of the principles. Teachers of these classes had a poor understanding of the importance of the principles in curriculum review and design, and limited knowledge about how to use the principles as the foundation for designing their classroom programmes.

Leaders have a role to play in ensuring that teachers consider the curriculum when making decisions about classroom planning, teaching priorities and programme review. The focus of their attention should be on supporting teachers to implement programmes that provide learners with:

- a broad and deep curriculum that caters for their interests, strengths and learning needs
- learning that fosters their independence, self responsibility and engagement.

8 *The New Zealand Curriculum,* p.9

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES IN THE LEAST ENACTED PRINCIPLES

Future focus, coherence, cultural diversity and *Treaty of Waitangi* were curriculum principles that many schools have yet to enact effectively. In many schools:

- there was a clear lack of understanding of the implications of the *future focus* principle, resulting in a very restricted interpretation of its scope
- providing students with clear, sequential learning pathways had not been given high priority, particularly in the earlier stages of curriculum revision and implementation
- while an improvement in acknowledging the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand under the Treaty of Waitangi was evident, some still had much to do in this area
- teachers provided inclusive school and classroom environments but had not taken the next step of celebrating their school's and New Zealand's growing *cultural diversity* and using these as valuable resources for 21st century teaching and learning emphases.

The following section discusses further the challenges that these curriculum principles present for many schools. It also provides examples of good practice that may assist their enactment.

Treaty of Waitangi

It is difficult to ascertain the reasons for the increased evidence of the *Treaty of Waitangi* in school and classroom curriculum. Previously there have been indications of some teacher and board resistance, including the egalitarian response of 'we treat all students the same' by teachers and school leaders. Teachers have lacked knowledge and understanding of the Treaty and its implications for classroom and school practice. Some of the improvement may be due to Ministry of Education initiatives such as Ka Hikitia[9], Te Kotahitanga[10], and He Kākano[11] but this is not possible to quantify.

In schools and classrooms where this principle was very evident there were high expectations for the achievement, attendance and behaviour of Māori students. The programme incorporated aspects of te ao Māori. Tikanga Māori was valued and promoted. There were opportunities for all students to hear and use te reo Māori. Students had opportunities to participate in kapa haka and pōwhiri.

In these schools targets were set for Māori student achievement and these were reported to the board and the Māori community. The school consulted its Māori community and called on their expertise to provide advice and guidance. Māori were well represented on the board. A strategic plan outlined a planned approach to raising the achievement of Māori learners. Trustees made available sufficient funding to provide for a Māori dimension across the school.

9 Ministry of Education (2009) *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy 2008 – 2012* is the Ministry of Education's approach to improving the performance of the education system for and with Māori.

10 Te Kotahitanga is a research and professional development programme that supports teachers to improve Māori students' learning and achievement (http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz).

11 He Kākano is professional learning programme for secondary and area school leadership teams. The programme focuses on growing culturally responsive school leadership.

A few schools, particularly secondary, had a marae and this was usually central to school values and protocols. It served as a respected bridge between the local Māori community and the school. It may have been linked to a local community marae. In other schools, staff developed a relationship with a local marae that provided students with marae experience.

A pertinent observation in one school's curriculum documentation was:

> *The Māori world is very diverse. One student's experience of Te Ao Māori is as valid as another.* (Secondary school, Years 9–13)

It cautions against a stereotyping, 'one approach fits all' attitude to Māori students.

Cultural diversity[12]

The limited evidence of this curriculum principle at both school level and in classrooms is of concern as the diversity of New Zealand society and schools grows. *Cultural diversity* has perhaps been overlooked as teachers focused on meeting bicultural, Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

There is a close link between this principle and *inclusion*. Both require teachers to value students as individuals and celebrate the diversity that they bring. Schools need to consider whether their inclusive practices encompass valuing the richness and diversity that students of different cultures bring. Many teachers appeared to lack knowledge about how to engage with culturally diverse families and use the resource these students and their families can potentially provide to enrich the learning of all students.

In the schools and classrooms where cultural diversity was acknowledged and celebrated, teachers were aware of students' different cultural identities. Their cultural contexts were incorporated into teaching and learning programmes and into the classroom environment. Teachers provided practical opportunities for all students to be proud and share their language and culture through cultural groups, special events and school festivals that celebrated cultural difference. All students experienced learning contexts from multiple cultures.

There were clear expectations in these schools' charters for celebration of diversity, stating the right of all children to feel culturally safe. Boards that had developed such charters sought representation from all the cultures of their school community and the staff were representative of many cultures.

12 See also ERO's 2012 report *Improving Education Outcomes for Pacific Learners (June 2012).*

Providing students with culturally diverse experiences appeared to be a particular challenge for schools that were more culturally homogeneous. However, one inland South Island school actively responded to this challenge. As an outcome of a 'Pacific Partners' inquiry learning topic the students of this largely homogenous school participated in many interesting activities from Pacific cultures.

Special character secondary schools often demonstrated a strong commitment to valuing and celebrating cultural diversity. Some of these schools were particularly successful at using the cultural advantage that their students and community provided. This was especially the case where schools used the opportunities gained from having international students when the school was not otherwise as culturally diverse. The merging of school values such as '*universal [brother]hood*' with this curriculum principle fostered an empathy, respect and understanding of how others view the world and what they value.

Future focus

'Future focus is about supporting learners to recognise that they have a stake in the future, and a role and responsibility as citizens to take action to help shape that future."[13]

This was the least evident of all the principles at school curriculum level in classrooms' curricula. It had not been adequately examined and discussed with teachers by school leaders and therefore most of its aspects were not understood. There continues to be some confusion amongst teachers about the relationship between *future focus* and 21st century, or e-learning, and lifelong learning.

The environmental sustainability aspect was still the best understood. This was especially evident in primary schools, through enviroschool programmes. This may also be a reflection that the curriculum value of ecological sustainability has tended to overtake the full intent of the curriculum principle of *future focus*. Many schools provided students with opportunities for leadership and encouraged behaviours which contribute to good citizenship. These opportunities were sometimes linked to aspects of sustainability through projects such as environmental cleanups or stream monitoring.

Enterprise and globalisation were the least evident aspects of the *future focus* curriculum principle. Facets of enterprise were apparent in a few primary schools that provided students with opportunities for authentic learning contexts, often through the PrEP[14] schemes. At one school every class planned a business enterprise, which they implemented. In another, students made and sold goods as part of a mini chefs'

13 *The New Zealand Curriculum Update.* Issued 14 November 2011.

14 Primary Enterprise Programme. The secondary school equivalent of this is YES, the Young Enterprise Scheme.

programme. ERO's report on enterprise education provides a detailed discussion of this aspect of *future focus*.[15] Globalisation received some limited attention as an aspect of the social sciences or as a peripheral issue as part of an inquiry learning topic.

In secondary schools sustainability was also the most visible aspect of *future focus*. Enterprise received some attention in specific curriculum areas, in particular business studies and the technologies, and through the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) programme. Similarly, globalisation was evident in curriculum areas such as the senior social sciences and economics, but was not usually a key aspect of learning across the school.

Most secondary schools provided students with the opportunity to develop their leadership potential as an aspect of citizenship. In some special character schools the notion of citizenship linked to service was highly developed and actively promoted. These schools were also more likely to link globalisation to a concept of global service.

Further professional learning opportunities are required to assist schools to fully understand the significance of this principle.

Coherence

Establishing a coherent learning programme is as much a process as a principle.

'If students' learning opportunities are integrated and cumulative, rather than fragmented and rushed, learners are more likely to be engaged and successful.' [16]

In schools where coherence was strongly evident this was the end-point of extensive curriculum development. ERO found some indication that the degree of coherence at school and classroom level develops as the revised curriculum beds in.

In secondary schools *coherence* requires a coherent careers programme that links to learning pathways, with particular attention to subject choice and allocation. A recent study[17] indicated that many students did not understand the full implications of their National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) course choices and that this was particularly an issue for Māori and Pacific students. Inappropriate subject choices in early and middle years at secondary school results in an inability for students to follow suitable pathways and take courses that prepare them to achieve their career aspirations.

This study also indicated that parents and whānau were often not fully involved in their child's choice of school subjects, either through their lack of understanding of the implications of subject choice or lack of opportunity provided by the school.

15 *Enterprise in The New Zealand Curriculum: Secondary Schools* (2011).

16 Robinson, V (2011) *Student Centred Leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey Boss.

17 Jensen, S; Madjar, I; McKinley, E (2010) *Students and NCEA course choices and allocations.* Set 2, 2010.

Consequently, they were unable to support their child to make choices that strengthened their opportunities for future training and employment and enabled them to realise their full potential.

In primary schools where *coherence* was strongly evident, students were provided with clear learning pathways and progressions that allowed for a smooth transition into and through the school, and on to intermediate or secondary school. It was reinforced by a consistency of practice across the school, including moderation of assessment practices, a common language of learning and shared planning. In classrooms, teachers ascertained students' prior learning and experience and established links to this. An effective curriculum tracking system monitored the learning of individuals and groups.

Coherence was less evident in schools' overall curricula than in individual classrooms. In many schools it manifested at classroom level, primarily by establishing cross-curricular links, often through an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. This was sometimes reinforced by using the Key Competencies to provide an integrated focus across curriculum areas.

Where students were not provided with a coherent approach they did not experience learning that built progressively on their understandings and skills, and made links between knowledge acquired in different learning areas. They were less able to move smoothly between schools and classes.

In a few secondary schools ERO observed effective practices for establishing curriculum coherence and/or ensuring students successfully negotiated their desired learning pathways. These practices included:

- individual student's learning pathways that were clearly documented and monitored by the careers department throughout the student's time at secondary school
- students being appropriately supported to meet learning goals included in their individual careers/education plans
- a dean following a year group through their time at secondary school to foster a coherent approach to knowing and meeting students' needs
- all teachers of a particular class meeting regularly to coordinate their approach for individual learners
- homeroom teachers at Years 9 and 10 providing an integrated approach to curriculum delivery
- teachers working together to plan and implement an across-the-curriculum literacy focus or cross-curricular learning units.

Having implemented *The New Zealand Curriculum*, schools should now review their curriculum structure and teaching and learning processes to ensure that students experience progressive and coherent learning pathways and best teaching practices.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

ERO's reports of 2011 and 2012 indicate similar pictures of the enactment of the curriculum principles into schools' and classrooms' curricula. It is clear that in some schools, leaders and teachers have not considered the curriculum principles to be a high priority in curriculum review and design. In many schools the initial response to curriculum review had been to develop the school's expectations for individual curriculum areas. Many of these schools were still in the early stages of developing a coherent approach to the curriculum as a whole and ensuring it reflected the curriculum principles.

Some confusion is evident around the different intent and role of the principles, values and even the key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* in improving outcomes for all students. Rather than using the principles as a starting point for curriculum design, they have often been something that has been grafted on to the curriculum retrospectively, if they have been considered at all. In secondary schools, the approach continues to be learning area specific, with many of the principles having little impact across the curriculum.

The principles most confidently enacted by teachers and schools are those that encapsulate what has been long considered as good pedagogy, such as *high expectations*, *learning to learn* and *inclusion*. They have been an existing part of schools' approach to teaching and learning rather than an outcome of curriculum review.

It is encouraging that progress is evident in recognising Treaty of Waitangi obligations. This may be an outcome of Ministry of Education professional development initiatives. There is a need for more such initiatives to develop teachers' appreciation of the significance and value of all the curriculum principles, with a particular focus on promoting cultural diversity and developing understanding of the principle of *future focus*.

Three curriculum principles, in particular, are not well enacted in many schools. The *future focus* principle is not well understood. Schools, while generally inclusive of student diversity, appear to lack the knowledge to use this as a rich teaching and learning resource and of the ways in which to value and celebrate diverse languages and cultures. Many also do not offer a cohesive approach to teaching and learning that enables students to see the links across the learning areas and provides them with clear and consistent pathways across their time at school. Many schools without a focus on the principles in their curriculum had not accessed external professional to help them understand the significance of the principles and the priorities they should consider when developing their school curriculum.

Students have the right to participate in learning programmes that put them at the centre of teaching and learning. These programmes should provide them with coherent pathways to future learning. They should expect to be supported, challenged, and treated as capable learners who are able to reflect on their own learning processes and the knowledge and experience they bring to this. Their parents and whānau should have opportunities to be active participants in their learning. Students should have the opportunity to learn through contexts that acknowledge, respect and celebrate their unique social and cultural experiences and interests. In schools that are enacting the principles it is likely that students' learning is helping prepare them for their role as citizens who will contribute to shaping the future of both Aotearoa New Zealand and an interconnected world.

Next steps

On the basis of this report ERO recommends that:

- schools review the extent to which each of the curriculum principles underpins and informs their curriculum and teaching practice towards improving both academic and social outcomes for all students
- the Ministry of Education investigates opportunities for ongoing professional development to make shifts in those schools where leaders and teachers need a greater focus on the curriculum principles *future focus*, *coherence* and *cultural diversity*.

Appendix 1: The evaluation framework

Table 3: Evaluation framework

Evaluation Focus	Level of the school	Evaluation Question	Categories used to describe practice
Curriculum principles	School	To what extent are the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* evident in the interpretation and implementation of this school's curriculum?	Highly evident Some evidence Minimal evidence Not evident
Curriculum principles	Classroom	To what extent are the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* enacted in classroom curriculum?	Fully enacted Some enactment Minimal enactment No enactment

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Sample of schools

SAMPLING RATIOS

ERO investigated curriculum principles in 113 schools (82 primary, 26 secondary and 5 composite) reviewed in Term 3, 2011.

SAMPLING DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographics relate to the sample

Table 3: Decile groups all schools

School decile group	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Low (decile 1–3)	30	26.5	32
Medium (decile 4–7)	41	36.3	39
High (decile 8–10)	42	37.2	29
Total	**113**	**100**	**100**

Table 4: School size all schools

School Roll size	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Very small	7	6.2	11
Small	18	15.9	26
Medium	54	47.8	36
Large	21	18.6	19
Very large	13	11.5	8
Total	**113**	**100**	**100**

Table 5: School locality

School Locality	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Main urban	63	55.8	53
Secondary urban	10	8.8	6
Minor urban	21	18.6	12
Rural	19	16.8	29
Total	**113**	**100**	**100**

Table 6: School type

School Type	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Full primary (Yr 1–8)	34	30.1	44
Contributing (Yr 1–6)	40	35.4	32
Intermediate (Yr 7–8)	8	7.1	5
Composite (Yr 1–10)	1	0.9	<1
Composite (Yr 1–15)	4	3.5	4
Secondary (Yr 7–15)	9	8.0	4
Secondary (Yr 9–15)	17	15.0	9
Total	**113**	**100**	**100**

The following information relates to the subject areas and classrooms visited as part of this evaluation.

Table 7: Secondary school subject areas

The Arts	7
English	17
Health and Physical Education	7
Languages	4
Mathematics and Statistics	15
Science	13
Social Sciences	8
Technology	9

Table 8: numbers of classrooms visited by year levels

Year 0–2	29
Year 1–3	2
Year 1–4	1
Year 3–4	28
Year 5–6	32
Year 7–8	28
Year 9	17
Year 10	15
Year 11	16
Year 12	16
Year 13	16
Total	**200**

Appendix 3: 2011 report evidence of principles in schools and classrooms

Table 7: 2011 report – 109 schools

Ranking	Principles identified as *most evident* in the school curriculum	No. of schools
1	High expectations	76
2	Community engagement	56
3	Inclusion	53
4	Learning to learn	50
5 =	Treaty of Waitangi	43
5 =	Coherence	43
6	Cultural diversity	37
7	Future focus	36
Ranking	**Principles identified as *least evident* in the school curriculum**	**No. of schools**
1	Treaty of Waitangi	43
2 =	Coherence	31
2 =	Cultural diversity	31
3 =	Learning to learn	29
3 =	Future focus	29
4	Inclusion	17
5	Community engagement	13
6	High expectations	11
Ranking	**Principles identified as *not evident* in the school curriculum**	**No. of schools**
1	Future focus	8
2 =	Cultural diversity	7
2 =	Treaty of Waitangi	7
3	Coherence	6
4 =	High expectations	2
4 =	Community engagement	2
5 =	Inclusion	1
5 =	Learning to learn	1

Table 8: 2011 report – 200 classrooms

Ranking	Principles identified as *most evident* in classroom curriculum	No. of classrooms
	High expectations	147
2	Inclusion	115
3	Learning to learn	107
4	Coherence	75
5	Cultural diversity	65
6 =	Community engagement	55
6 =	Future focus	55
7	Treaty of Waitangi	48
Ranking	**Principles identified as *least evident* in classroom curriculum**	**No. of classrooms**
	Treaty of Waitangi	80
2	Future focus	58
3	Community engagement	53
4	Coherence	50
5	Learning to learn	47
6	Cultural diversity	44
7	Inclusion	24
8	High expectations	21
Ranking	**Principles identified as *not evident* in classroom curriculum**	**No. of classrooms**
	Treaty of Waitangi	40
2	Future focus	33
3	Cultural diversity	30
4	Community engagement	29
5	Coherence	21
6	Inclusion	10
7	Learning to learn	7
8	High expectations	6

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4: Data analyses

Review Officers entered information into an electronic synthesis sheet for each school. Included in this sheet was qualitative information for most questions, and ratings for selected questions.[1] The ratings attributed to each question were moderated by a team of experienced evaluators to cross check that judgements had been applied in a consistent manner. Adjustments were made to the ratings attributed where necessary.

Data was analysed in a range of ways. Qualitative information was coded by themes and quantified to ascertain the magnitude of the findings. Qualitative analysis was also undertaken using NVivo.[2] For example, analysis was conducted on the practices of the schools that had high ratings for certain questions. Quantitative analysis was carried out to see if there were any significant differences in findings by demographic characteristics such as school type, decile, location, and roll size.

[1] The ratings, related to the level of evidence of the curriculum principles in the school's curriculum, were:

Highly evident, Some evidence, Minimal evidence, Not evident.

The ratings, related to the enactment of the curriculum principles in the classroom, were:

Fully enacted, Some enactment, Minimal enactment, No enactment.

[2] NVivo is software used for undertaking qualitative analysis.

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