

# Teachers and Curriculum



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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KAIAKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

VOLUME 9 2006



# TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM

## KAIAKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

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VOLUME 9 2006

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# FRAMING A SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION 2006

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## Abstract

*The New Zealand Curriculum Stocktake, undertaken between 2000 and 2003, signalled a more coherent and fluid approach to curriculum processes, and support for school-based decision-making around curriculum design and implementation.*

*The subsequent Curriculum Marautanga Project (Ministry of Education, 2004) promised a "reframing, refocus and revitalisation" that seemed positive for the social sciences learning area of the curriculum.*

*I looked forward to a strengthening of the social sciences, a reduction and clarification of achievement objectives, and support for exciting opportunities opened up by the Years 1-13 Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1997a) for Years 11-13 social sciences options.*

*This article argues that The New Zealand Curriculum Draft (Ministry of Education, 2006) frames a politically adjudicated and limiting conception of a social sciences learning area. It is my view that this framing rejects the dynamic and interrelated nature of social sciences, invalidates social studies, and suggests an unquestioning positioning of teachers and learners.*

## INTRODUCTION

In this article I respond to and critique the framing of the social sciences learning area in the *New Zealand Curriculum Draft* for consultation (Ministry of Education, 2006). This is informed by a critical conception of the political shaping of curriculum that reveals socially constructed values and beliefs and power relationships. I develop the context of the *Draft's* framing of the learning area in relation to the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework's* postmodern orientation of a learning area (1993, p.14) and its subsequent articulation in the *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1997a). Ideas about the constructed nature of social sciences, the reshaping of knowledge, and current concerns and preferences are discussed to link the school curriculum learning area within the wider field of social sciences in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The *Curriculum Marautanga Project's* "reframing, refocus and revitalisation" presented opportunities for social sciences constituencies to ask the key questions of: What is the nature of social sciences in the school curriculum in 2006? What should social sciences in the school curriculum aim to achieve in 2006 and beyond? I consider the consultation around the revision and co-construction of the learning area, and briefly highlight the concerns and preferences of differing constituencies involved in the curriculum revision process. An analysis of the *Draft's* social sciences learning area takes into account the orientation of the current *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (SSNZC)* that is, in my view, analogous to developing a social sciences curriculum, and considers the *Draft's* positioning in relation to key features of what constitutes social sciences in the school curriculum. I employ ideas of "framing" to argue that the development and construction of the *Draft* social sciences learning area has framed a one-dimensional curriculum. I draw on critical and postmodern curriculum perspectives of Doll (1993), Hinchey, (2004), and Kincheloe, (2005a, 2005b) to develop the notion of a monological framing of a worldview about what constitutes a social sciences learning area in the New Zealand curriculum. The *Draft's* privileging of uncritiqued and positivistic conceptions of Years 11-13 social sciences subject specialisms, rejects the multi-dimensional opportunities offered by the *SSNZC* across Years 1-13 of learning. This contrasts with the researched findings of the social studies *A Position Paper* (Barr et al, 1997) and, in my view, sits uncomfortably within the wider context of tertiary and academic social sciences. Differing social sciences teaching constituencies need to make sense of and pose questions about the aims and elements of the *Draft's* social sciences learning area in relation to today's learners, new teachers, and pedagogies.

The Curriculum Marautanga Project (2003-2006) has framed communication about the social sciences curriculum development through the use of carefully crafted and upbeat "curriculum speak". In a recent radio New Zealand interview (October 29, 2006), Howard Fancy, the Secretary for Education, discussed the revision of the New Zealand curriculum and reiterated the policy driven "curriculum speak" of the *Draft* being 'simpler, elegant, and more visionary'. This masks significant and uncritical changes to the social sciences learning area and may by design or by default limit teacher discourse about the extent of curriculum reorientation.

## CURRICULUM AS POLITICAL ACTIVITY, CONTEST AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS

A national curriculum as educational policy reveals social, economic, and political influences of the times (Edmondson, 2004, p. 14). The publication of the *New Zealand Curriculum Draft* (MoE, 2006) posits national directions for education. A Vision (p.8), articulates hopes and ideals of citizenship participation, economic growth, sustained national development, and transformation to a knowledge-based society. Howard Fancy, Secretary for Education, comments in the *Draft's* Foreword, that the process of curriculum revision takes account of economic, technological, global, influences and changes in New Zealand society since the implementation of the existing *New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Te Anga Marautanga o*

Aotearoa (MoE, 1993). In introducing the *Draft*, the Hon. Steve Maharey, Minister of Education, in his letter accompanying the draft, presents the government's position on the place of the curriculum in fostering traits of national identity in children thus ensuring a 'vibrant future for this country':

This government wants to ensure that all New Zealanders can take pride in who we are, through our culture, film, music, sports, literature, our appreciation of our natural environment, our understanding of our history and our stance on international issues .

The political values and ideas expressed by Fancy and Maharey and emphasised in the *Draft's* vision illustrate Codd's assertion (2005) that policies of education mediate power. Codd cites Bowles and Gintis's "robust notion" of policy as power:

... policy is not simply about the manner in which power adjudicates competing claims for resources. It is also a contest over who we are to become, a contest in which identity, interests, and solidarity are as much the outcome as the starting point of political activity (1986, p.8, cited in Codd, 2005, p.28).

Curriculum as policy reflects contested political activity. Curriculum is also constructed and shaped by social, political and cultural processes "embracing values, assumptions, fundamental beliefs about the world, basic knowledge and visions of utopias which may or may not be overt" (O'Neill, Clark & Openshaw, 2004, p. 26).

Curriculum change is culturally and politically mediated and is situated within an historical context. A decade ago (1994-1997), the social sciences learning area of the New Zealand curriculum was a site of political activity through contested developments of a Years 1-13 social studies curriculum (Openshaw, 2000; Hunter & Keown, 2001). The curriculum construction of the *Draft's* social sciences learning area also frames overt and covert beliefs about the nature of New Zealand society and what constitutes knowledge in the social sciences. Any vision of an Aotearoa New Zealand society reflects competing interests and raises issues of power. In linking ideas about power to the *Draft's* conception of social sciences, we need to understand the forces that shape curriculum constructions and the interrelationships directly related to power such as: curriculum policy making and stakeholder co-construction; differing beliefs of social sciences curricula constituencies and the hegemony of perceptions of elite, "academic" subject status, and the controls around what belief systems and ideas of citizenship count. The construction of a social sciences learning area reflects the Ministry of Education's campaign to win hearts and minds, but important questions need to be asked in this *Draft* consultation phase of what policy was determined for the social sciences learning area? By whom? For whom?

social studies syllabus (DoE, 1961) was updated in a series of documents called *Faces*. Alongside curriculum reviews of the 1980s, the history, geography, and economics syllabi were updated (MoE, 1989-1990). The 1977 *Social Studies Syllabus Guidelines Forms 1-4* (Department of Education, 1977) were revised for secondary social studies programming with the publication of a Handbook (MoE, 1991). These primary and secondary curricula embed a curriculum tradition of integrating elements of knowledge and understandings, skills processes, values and attitudes, participation / decision-making. The 1980s -1990s reviews and successive developments of social sciences curricula reflected attempts to align with prevailing academic theoretical perspectives in the social sciences and humanities. Postcolonial, feminist and postmodern perspectives and discourses influenced in part the revisions and developments of history, geography (Hunter & Farthing, 2004; Chalmers, Keown & Kent, 2002; Hunter & Keown, 2001), and economics syllabi in the late 1980s.

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework's (NZCF) social sciences learning area statement (1993, p.14), reflects this response to social change. Changes over this period have been referred to as a domestic process of decolonisation – a "coming out" of new influences and new migrations (Belich, 2001). Maori educational initiatives such as Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa challenged a beleaguered status quo (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). The establishment of the Treaty of Waitangi Act (1975) and its amendment (1985), the commemoration of the Treaty of Waitangi sesquicentennial (1990) and the centennial of women's suffrage (1990) contributed to the Ministry of Education's commitment to gender inclusive and bicultural policies (Hunter & Keown, 2001).

Whilst the NZCF's social sciences learning area emphasises diversity of experience and multiple perspectives, it contains conflicting political ideals and values within its strong citizenship tenor, a response to a changing economy, Treaty of Waitangi understandings, cultural critique and understandings, Maori perspectives and New Zealand histories. The learning area reflects sociocultural underpinnings, an emphasis on conceptual understandings guiding pedagogies and outcomes, the socially constructed nature of knowledge in the social sciences, and the holistic yet complex interrelationships of knowledges, skills processes, values and attitudes, and social decision-making.

The existing NZCF's social sciences learning area has social studies as its core curriculum through Years 1-10, and a range of subject studies, including

#### THE EXISTING SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA IN NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORKS

The NZCF (MoE, 1993) established the social sciences Tikanga-a-iwi learning area. In development, this drew from existing syllabi and national course statements for primary and secondary curricula aligned to the broad field of the social sciences. The social sciences learning area as an organising frame of reference attempted to align social sciences syllabi and guidelines developed before 1993. In the 1980s, the primary



social studies, aligned to disciplines and interdisciplinary studies drawn from the humanities and social sciences. These are implemented across Years 9-13 dependent on school-based programming decisions (Hunter, 2005). The learning area encompasses a range of studies including history, geography, economics, sociology, environmental education, tourism, New Zealand studies, and cultural studies.

The National Qualifications Framework overlaps with the Curriculum Framework for the three senior years of schooling. The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) has a social sciences domain within which achievement standards have been written and registered. Achievement Standards for Levels 1, 2, 3, and Scholarship assessment in the social sciences learning area were formulated from syllabi and related prescriptive statements within the context of the social sciences learning area. The NCEA qualification in the social sciences presents rigid standards-based assessment outcomes, but supports a flexibility of social sciences subject constructions and options in the senior school. Interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary social sciences programmes are developing, based on school-based preferences and staffing issues (Hunter, 2001; Hunter & Farthing, 2004).

Three significant curriculum tensions are revealed in the design and framework of the existing social sciences learning area:

- i. Compartmentalisation of a learning area within the New Zealand curriculum;
- ii. Establishing the nature and constructs of knowledge, concepts, and contexts to be understood and applied through skills processes, values and dispositions;
- iii. Compartmentalisation of knowledge into strands or subjects in an interrelated social sciences frame of reference.

These issues remain problematic for today's curriculum renewal because of the learning area's subjects, cultures and pedagogies, and outcomes-based frame of reference.

### **SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE WIDER FIELD**

Challenges presented for the renewal of the social sciences learning area are concerned with: What and whose knowledge practices and methods count? and How should current revision align with new ways of thinking and reshaped conceptions of knowledge and societal concerns of academic social sciences offerings? Social sciences beyond the school curriculum are collective constructions of interconnected and related human centered and

socially informed research interests, ways of knowing, academic inquiry, ways of maximizing academic interests and expertises, and loose organisational frameworks. In shifting university landscapes in New Zealand, social sciences are often placed within humanities disciplines because of the rich opportunities offered for study, research and collaboration.

These complementary arrangements widen knowledge frontiers and break down knowledge boundaries. As an example, they may draw on the socially constructed disciplines and studies of anthropology, Asian studies, cultural geography, demography, environmental studies, gendered studies, history, Maori studies, Pacific studies, political studies and international relations, media studies, psychology, religious studies and sociology.

The unique nature of Aotearoa New Zealand society and its relationships and interconnectedness to global society presents new social dynamics, issues and concerns that inform contemporary social sciences research emphases. The report *Coming of Age: Social Science Research and the Contribution to Wealth and Well-being in New Zealand, 2006-2016* (MoRST, 2005), provides an insight into the ways New Zealand universities and academics construct meaning about many views and expectations of social sciences. The report describes the frontiers of knowledge as becoming more inter-, multi-, and cross-disciplinary (p.9) and how social sciences lead and participate in these worlds. Social sciences research concerns and directions are articulated as follows:

- Social issues and concerns, and their influence on environment and culture;
- How people capitalise on diversity in society;
- Provision of an independent critical commentary;
- Informing a more civilised, globally aware and tolerant nation;
- Communicate and foster constructive debate about values;
- Understand the unique social dynamics of New Zealand society to help us to maximize our potential across diverse and interlinked social dimensions, our people's, cultures, values, connections, and social structures;
- Understand the increasing importance of indigenous knowledge and Mātauranga Māori.

These social sciences directions cannot be detached from historical contexts and they represent the dynamic, fluid, and changing nature of Aotearoa New Zealand society. Kincheloe (2001) and Luke (2006) offer similar views about the reshaping shifts in knowledges and the diversity of knowledges. Kincheloe offers a useful comment about the shifts away from disciplinary demarcations. "What we refer to as the traditional disciplines in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are anything but fixed, uniform, and monolithic structures" (p.683). In contrast, the *Draft's* social sciences learning area of the New Zealand curriculum in 2006 appears to have retreated to a static reframing of traditional conceptions of knowledge boundaries. There appears to be little resonance with current directions in the wider field.

### **"REFRAMING, REFOCUSING AND REVITALISING" A SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA**

The Ministry of Education's Curriculum Stocktake 2000-2003 was a major review of the New Zealand curriculum. A large-scale research project gathered information about teachers' perceptions of their implementation experiences and their views of the national curriculum documents. The Ministry of Education's Curriculum Stocktake Report (September 2002) included evidence about social studies achievement from the National Education Monitoring Project (Flockton & Crooks, 1998, 2002) and national sampling surveys. International critiques of the New Zealand curriculum (Ferguson, 2002; Le Metais, 2002) included commentaries and critiques of the SSNZC and social studies implementation Years 1-10. An unfavourable Educational Review Office report (2001), focusing on the primary years of social studies in the second year of full SSNZC implementation, proved influential in driving Ministry of Education changes to the social sciences learning area.

Subsequent to the *Stocktake's* findings, the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Mātauranga Project offered teachers the opportunity to be involved in the curriculum redevelopment process. The curriculum project aimed to reframe, refocus, and revitalise the current curriculum (MoE, 2004a). The Ministry of Education facilitated a process of curriculum consultation and co-construction that began with bringing groups of teachers and stakeholders from various social sciences subject communities together to be informed of the project's purpose,

future focus themes and the research supporting the development of new values and key competencies elements across the national curriculum. Ministry of Education discourse suggests that participation of subject communities within curriculum social sciences fosters an inclusive process of consultation.

By working through the development as a community, there should be professional growth that ensures the social sciences are moving towards shared understandings about social studies / social science learning area (Cubitt, 2005, p. 15).

I had anticipated that the social sciences consultation and revision process would be iterative, building on the previous SSNZC developments, and the researched rationale of the social studies *Position Paper* (Barr et al., 1997). It appears that these were rejected in framing the social sciences learning area. The co-construction of the learning area focused mainly on the development of an "Essence" statement and Achievement Objectives and does not appear, to date, to have involved new and deep research, a literature review or questioning about what a social sciences learning area aims to achieve in 2006 and beyond. Questions about epistemology and knowledge production do not appear to have been given weight in the revision process.

It is my view that the Ministry of Education's attempts to bring together social sciences subject communities across Years 1-13 was ambitious, given the differing qualifications, experiences and curriculum needs of the teaching constituencies engaged in social sciences curriculum and pedagogy. Through the consultation process it became apparent that many teachers were unfamiliar with the purpose and positioning of a social studies learning area in the national curriculum. The 1993 NZCF's framing of a social sciences learning area seems to have been bypassed. This bypass is a significant national curriculum issue and calls into question teacher education, professional development, resourcing strategies, and initiatives around curriculum development in the 1990s (Hunter & Farthing, 2004).

The Social Sciences Reference Group assumed a leading role in the framing and writing of the social sciences learning area. This large group of social sciences stakeholders changed in composition over 2004-2006, and included stakeholder representation such as the Electoral Commission, social studies exemplars developers, Years 11-13 subject specialists, primary teachers, teacher educators and teacher professional groups\*. The Reference Group's discourses reflected curriculum conceptions supporting ideas of citizenship transmission, emphasis on democratic processes and national identity. It is my view that the curriculum project's future focus themes of social cohesion, citizenship, and enterprise and innovation were given far more attention in shaping the social sciences learning area than focus themes of cultural literacy, bicultural and multicultural awareness, and education for a sustainable future. Throughout the consultation process to date the Reference Group has appeared unresponsive to expansive ideas around the concept of culture, new literacies, ideas around multi-layered life worlds, new citizenship, cultural pluralism, and new constructions of community and ethnicities. This countered the interrelated nature of ideas and multiple perspectives of the existing SSNZC, and invalidated its positioning as the core social sciences curriculum, privileging instead narrow unquestioned conceptions of subject specialisms, particularly history and economics.

The framing of the social sciences learning area has largely been shaped by the subject specialisms of the senior school. The *Draft's* statements about coherent pathways of learning (p.32) seeks to align learning in the early years to Year 10 with specialised learning in Levels 6 and above attached to recognised qualifications (p.31). The framed nature of subject specialisms determined by curriculum consultation and co-construction in the social sciences learning area is contradictory to the *Draft's* statement about flexible school-based design.

The Qualifications Framework has opened up new possibilities to schools. The modular nature of the assessment process supports flexible, school-based curriculum design and allows for integration of the key competencies... (p. 31).

I question the influence of the Levels 6-8 subject specialisms in framing the social sciences learning area's ideas and outcomes when the National Administrative Guidelines state that it is the Years 1-10 outcomes that will be mandated. The Ministry of Education may view this framing as a form of curriculum critique and review by default at Levels 6-8: Years 11-13. However, subject specialisms including history, geography, economics, urgently require new curriculum guidelines that are informed and supported by recent theoretical and researched understandings of the nature of the disciplines and the reshaping of knowledges. New guidelines

are needed to pull together curriculum and assessment information; ideas about pedagogy and the place of assessment in pedagogy; NCEA qualifications information; curriculum resource information; new themes and contexts for study; and information about ICT and E-learning.

The Ministry of Education's endeavours to bring diverse groups of social sciences teachers and stakeholders together for curriculum renewal has proved problematic in terms of primary and secondary teachers understandings of outcomes-based curriculum. Consultation around the developing *Draft* indicates secondary teachers immersed in the NCEA Achievement Standards, validated or invalidated by their subjects' results, find it difficult to consider the conceptual nature of social sciences sets of outcomes. Likewise, primary teachers burdened with a myriad of Achievement Objectives across the curriculum want to focus on familiar outcomes that support their current social studies pedagogy. Consultation has revealed tensions around subject conceptions and capture, and the curriculum revision appears to have become more of a professional development exercise than a coherent curriculum critique and refinement. It is my view that the curriculum project's best intentions to bring disparate social sciences subject communities together to co-construct a learning area as curriculum has overshadowed the complexity of curriculum processes where contested issues of the last decade do not appear to have been revisited or problematised.

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE DRAFT SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA**

This partial analysis the *Draft's* social sciences learning area is informed by my identification of key features and processes of social sciences.

- Social sciences attempt to make sense of society and human social issues.
- Social sciences are conceptually based and deal with ideas and representations, interrelationships and making connections in meaning.
- Social sciences deal with values, worldviews and perspectives.
- Social sciences deal with multiple ways of thinking about and investigating social practices and issues.
- Social sciences deal with ways people perceive, interpret, and record experiences.
- Social sciences deal with critique, confronting assumptions and views, and reflexivity.

The analysis also contrasts the *Draft's*

"modernist" and one-dimensional worldview of social sciences in its linear framing of limitations, with the SSNZC's more postmodern orientation and spatial matrices of opportunities. The analysis focuses on the *Draft's* page 22 - Social Sciences and the Levels 1-8 Achievement Objectives located at the end of the document. I acknowledge that this partial analysis of the social sciences learning area does not consider the relationship with other learning areas in the curriculum, alignment with the *Draft's* principles, and links to key competencies, values, pedagogies and assessment.

Both the NZCF's social sciences – tikanga-a-iwi (1993, p.14), and the *Draft's* (2006, p. 22) social sciences learning area statements are frames of reference that embed sets of values and ideas about society that will be transmitted and perpetuated through interpretations of Achievement Objectives and pedagogies. The Ministry of Education's *Setting the Direction for Learning: The New Zealand Curriculum Marautanga Project* (October, 2005), informed principals and teachers about the New Zealand Curriculum Project. It describes changes to the social sciences learning area as follows:

Little has changed – we've just rearranged the curriculum so that it will be much easier for teachers to use. We have incorporated economics, geography and history alongside social studies at levels 6-8. (p. 6).

This is patently at odds with the significant changes across Years 1-13 of the *Draft* social sciences learning area signalled in the social sciences statement (p. 22) and embedded in the structural framing and intent of achievement objectives.

### SOCIAL SCIENCES STATEMENT

It appears that "easier to use" equates with a static and simplistic articulation of a learning area. The prosaic language of the statement is disappointing in the light of the dynamic nature of learning about human social behaviour in multi-layered life worlds in the past, present and possible futures. The statement is a culmination of a series of developing "Essence" statements over 2004-2006 that reflected strong participatory and citizenship transmission discourse. The explanation of what social sciences are about is limited to unsupported ideas of how society operates and social participation.

The heading "Why study the social sciences" is an example of how a standardised approach to the *Draft's* formatting can confuse meaning - we do not study social sciences, rather - we learn in the social sciences. The wording in this

part of the statement signals the omissions and contradictions of the learning area. "The unique nature of New Zealand society and its bicultural heritage" is expressed, but the omissions of Maori as Tangata Whenua, the Treaty of Waitangi and colonising processes contradict the inclusion of "histories". The inclusion of "bicultural heritage" and omission of Maori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand perpetuates a dominant cultural worldview. Cultural and gendered roles, perspectives and experiences are not included in the statement's wording and intent. The idea of an "economic world" is introduced, but in this world, ideas of access to resources, people's work, cultural practices and gendered activities are also scarce. Mention of a critical approach and focus on social issues, cultures and histories is nominal and not developed or supported by the Achievement Objectives.

The statement explains the structural elements of the learning area. This represents a significant framing of an unproblematised conception of social sciences. Four conceptual strands are structured to frame the learning area around four subject specialisms in the senior school: "Identity Culture, and Organisation" (social studies), "Place and Environment" (geography), "Continuity and Change" (history), and "Economic World" (economics). The narrow conception of social studies at Levels 6-8 represents a significant structural flaw in the framing of the learning area. This may look tidy in a diagram of the learning area, but has no relation to the holistic and interrelated nature of year 11-13 social studies. The new strand "Identity, Culture and Organisation" is not social studies as we know it currently. The rejection of the SSNZC's "Culture and Heritage" strand indicates a lack of understanding of the expansive concept of *culture* in making meaning in social sciences pedagogies. Likewise, the absence of key concepts of *time* and *heritage* in the *Draft's* structure limits ways of thinking. At Levels 6-8 of the social sciences, the geography Achievement Objectives are open-ended but sit uncomfortably with the mainly New Zealand settings of history and economics. This suggests that discrete subject communities defended territories rather than seeking inter- and trans-disciplinary social sciences opportunities.

### THE STATEMENT'S SOCIAL INQUIRY PROCESS

The social inquiry process developed for the Levels 1-5 social studies exemplars (MoE, 2005) has informed the *Draft's* framing of a learning area. This approach has a strong democratic and participatory citizenship orientation. It is my view that the dominant positioning of social inquiry across the learning area loses rich opportunities for critical pedagogies opened up by the SSNZC processes of "Inquiry, Values Exploration and Social Decision-making". Issues, perspectives, time and place settings are collapsed within this mega-process of social inquiry in contrast with the SSNZCs design where all Achievement Objectives are open to perspectives, time and place setting, and learning about Aotearoa New Zealand society. Social inquiry lacks a critical orientation because of its "one size fits all" assumptions. This undermines the scope for learner engagement with multiple methods (e.g. historical, historiographical, geographical, indigenous, cross cultural), particularly in the Levels 5-8 (Years 9-13) of the learning area.

### ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The *Draft's* description of structure reflects Ministry of Education discourse about achievement levels and "learning progression" in the statement:

The achievement objectives at levels 1-5 integrate the four strands to show interconnections and provide learning progression from the simple to the more complex concepts (p. 22).

This is revealing, and may account for the set of Achievement Objectives devised to be measures of learning outcomes. Learning contexts, settings, perspectives, and pedagogies create either simplicity or complexity in conceptual understandings. Arguably, concepts can be understood at any level if the context has meaning for learners, and pedagogy draws on learners' experiences and ways of knowing. Another contrary aspect of the statement is the final paragraph that states that whilst Achievement Objectives are provided for social studies, history, geography and economics, "the range of possible social sciences disciplines in schools is much broader, including for example, classical studies, sociology, psychology, and legal studies" (ref). This is a curious contradiction in the light of the rigidly framed and non-integrative subject boundaries structured through Levels 6-8.

The *Draft's* social sciences Achievement Objectives are not placed together from Levels 1-8 in the document. They are placed in levels sets of Achievement Objectives across all learning areas. This may be helpful for ease of programme development but disguises the rejection of two thirds of the existing Years 1-13



**FIG.1**

*Achievement Objectives: From the SSNZC to the Reframed NZC Draft*

Curriculum Levels	SSNZC Number of AOs	SSNZC AOs Remaining in NZC Draft Soc. Sci. (Includes change of Level)	SSNZC AOs Reworded /changed intent in NZC Draft Soc. Sci.	SSNZC AOs Rejected in NZC Draft Soc. Sci. framing	NZC Draft Number of Soc. Sci. AOs	NZC Draft Number of NEW Soc. Sci. AOs
Level 1	10	1	4	6	5	0
Level 2	10	1	2	4	7	4
Level 3	10	2	2	6	7	3
Level 4	10	1	2	8	7	4
Level 5	10	2	2	4	8	4
Level 6	10	1	1	9	8	6
Level 7	10	0	1	9	8	7
Level 8	10	0	2	8	8	6
	80 AOs	8 AOs	16 AOs	54 AOs	58 AOs	34 AOs

SSNZC's Achievement Objectives and the reorientation of an almost entirely new set of learning outcomes.

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of changes to the social sciences learning area's Achievement Objectives across Years 1-13 through Levels 1-8. A reduction from the SSNZC's 80 Achievement Objectives to the *Draft's* 58 seems at a superficial glance reasonable. However, the rewording in intent of sixteen SSNZC objectives and insertion of thirty-four completely new objectives represents a rejection of 54 of the SSNZC's Achievement Objectives. Examples of concepts and ideas rejected include:

- Level 1: Cultures and heritages, time and change, and important life events;
- Level 2: People's interactions, descriptions of places, impacts of past events, work and resources;
- Level 3: Leadership of groups, rules and laws, ideas and actions that changed people's lives, differing systems of economic exchange;
- Level 4: People's responses to challenges, differing experiences of events, differing views of resources and their use;
- Level 5: Cultural and national identity, human rights, seeking social justice, changing nature of work;
- Level 6: Reviewing systems and institutions, changing rights, roles and responsibilities, cultural critique;
- Level 7: Cultural values, critical affiliation, regulation of place and environment, conflicts over resources;
- Level 8: Challenges to identity (communities / nations), cultural diversity, contrasting economic systems and resource allocation, policies, change and social consequences, interpretation / revision of historical record.

SSNZC Achievement Objectives that related to ways people view, record, interpret revise events and / or places and environments have largely disappeared. We need to ask the question of why these ideas have been discarded in the *Draft's* framing along with the SSNZC Indicators (The detailed unpacking of conceptual elements and ideas for selecting contexts and settings)?

The *Draft's* "Economic World" strand replaces the SSNZC's "Resources and Economic Activities" strand. It presents a dominant capitalist free market approach in an entirely new set of Achievement Objectives shaped by the Year 11-13 economics curriculum. For social studies and social sciences this reflects an uncritical acceptance of any means to advance the ends of greater wealth. Hinchey (2004) has referred to this thinking as "casting citizenship as consumerism" (p. 116). For example, at Level 5 a new *Draft* Achievement Objective states: "People in New Zealand seek and have sought economic growth through business, enterprise

and innovation" (p.x). The "economic world" as conceived in the *Draft* is exclusive and monological and does not invite critical thinking around issues, values, perspectives and gendered experiences in a range of settings.

A major shift in the nature of Achievement Objectives through Levels 1-8 is the way some achievement objectives are exclusively situated within New Zealand contexts and settings. This is a departure from the SSNZC array of achievement objectives that were open to New Zealand or other contexts and settings. The SSNZC's expectations of "Essential Learning about New Zealand" that were open to all levels of learning have disappeared in favour of predictable and traditional emphases of New Zealand-focused studies. Curious decisions abound. As an example, a specific focus on Tangata Whenua is built into an achievement objective at Level 2 (communities) and Level 3 (migration), but there is no mention of Tangata Whenua at any other level. The Treaty of Waitangi is mentioned in only one objective at Level 5: "The Treaty of Waitangi is responded to differently by people in different times and places" (p.x). Such a sanitised token stance is difficult to comprehend and it highlights a lack of coherence between the learning area's statement's rhetoric and the limited intent of the learning outcomes.

Hunter and Farthing (2005) queried the rationale behind the ideological shift in policy that plays down the Treaty of Waitangi in the developing draft curriculum. They commented on the loss of significant ground made in the development of SSNZC in relation to situating historical perspectives in

integrated or discrete social, cultural, geographic and economic contexts and settings. Opportunities provided in the SSNZC to engage learners with New Zealand histories and Treaty of Waitangi contexts, issues, and perspectives have been favourably commented on by Consedine and Consedine (2001) and Brooking (2001). The *Draft's* social sciences framing limits understandings about processes of colonisation and decolonisation, and the dynamic nature of the Treaty of Waitangi in shaping cultural relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is an underlying set of assumptions through the *Draft's* Achievement Objectives that everyone in society has choices, that everyone can participate as a citizen in the same way, that communities and nations meet their responsibilities, that reform is good, the idea that social justice is possible, and that cultures are seen as "different" in relation to the dominant culture. In thinking about the *Draft's* social sciences framing and the potential shaping of culturally appropriate pedagogies (Luke, 2006), ways of knowing and making meaning, we need to question the challenges presented by the learning area: Diversity or monological? Critical reflexive learners or unquestioning learners unable to confront assumptions? Teachers as interpreters of others ideas and values or teachers as enforcers?

### COMMUNICATION FRAMING OF A DRAFT CURRICULUM AND SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA

Communication framing or "curriculum speak" of the Curriculum Marautanga project is upbeat and uses selective language to suggest support for the development. In a Ministry of Education newsletter (October, 2005) communication framing is apparent in relation to consultation within the social sciences learning area:

The participatory process has also led to the creation or growth of professional communities and the forging of new connections between groups. For example the revision of the Social Sciences curriculum brought together people from the disciplines of history, economics, geography, social studies and classics.

I question whether the social sciences development and consultative process has been genuinely responsive to all its constituencies needs to date. "Disciplinary intermediaries" who build bridges between social sciences territories (Kincheloe, 2001), appear not to have had a voice in this revision. "Curriculum speak" suggests a

consensus of opinion has been gained through contributing, participating and co-construction, but operates to mask the tensions, the issues, the contests, capture and political adjudication around the social sciences learning area's revision.

### FINAL COMMENT

As a teacher educator of social studies and history I feel alienated by the *Draft's* framing of the social sciences learning area, and find its fundamentalist response (Luke, 2004), to secure "safe" and neutral outcomes of learning disturbing, particularly in the light of graduate pre-service teachers' knowledges, research interests and decisions to become teachers of social sciences. I query whether consultation will be transparent, and offer a catalyst for open and critical dialogue. "Curriculum speak" of "revitalisation" feels like an empty promise. I do not feel revitalised by the social sciences revision and I ponder the energy it will take to mediate the contradictions embedded in the learning area in my pedagogy. I ponder how the existing SSNZC and all the supporting research literature and resources for pedagogy can be used alongside this framing. I query how teachers in the social sciences field perceive the changes and will be supported with professional development opportunities and resourcing to make sense of a learning area. The impacts on teachers and learners have significant implications for learners' understandings of human social behaviour, and their informed participation in a complex and increasingly diverse Aotearoa New Zealand society.

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### NOTE

\*The writer was a member of the Social Sciences Reference Group over late 2004 -April 2005. She chose to withdraw her participation from the group in order to critique the developing statement in her role as a social studies and history teacher educator, and as a member of social sciences professional associations.

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