

# HISTORY IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM: DISCOURSE SHAPING AND KEY COMPETENCIES POSSIBILITIES

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper focuses on history in the New Zealand curriculum in light of its seemingly confused curriculum identity despite revision processes of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007). Some thinking about curriculum as a socially constructed political process that teachers can actively engage with sets the scene for unpacking ways the NZC policy conceptualises history. The notion of discourse is introduced, and competing discourses in the national curriculum are identified in relation to ways they play out in history pedagogy. The NZC key competencies are reflected as a policy space for rethinking history's curriculum purpose and pedagogy.*

## INTRODUCTION

Despite two decades of New Zealand curriculum policy and assessment reforms, history in the New Zealand curriculum clings to custom and practice contexts, knowledge claims, and approaches to teaching and learning. In my history and social studies work with post-graduate pre-service teachers, it is disturbing that history's curriculum legacy is supported in 2011 by the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment>), and New Zealand Curriculum (NZC; NZ Ministry of Education, 2007) alignment of history curriculum objectives and achievement standards. The history curriculum seems disconnected from recent historical thinking in the academy, popular history, and contemporary history education trends. In my view, history's bounded territory in the social sciences learning area is a curriculum problem. Consequently, I am interested in identifying curriculum ideologies and discourses history teachers connect with through their professional socialisation (Eisner, 2008), because these shape pedagogy and their students' historical thinking. The paper seeks a way forward for thinking about the nature of history and reshaping history's curriculum identity through the NZC. Therefore, key competencies are reflected as a policy space of possibility for switched on history pedagogy in twenty-first century classrooms.

The paper is organised in four parts. Firstly, thinking about the notion of curriculum as socially constructed and political processes is developed to support teacher critique of policy conceptions of history curriculum. Secondly, NZC policy is unpacked in light of its support of students' historical thinking, historical emphases, and conceptions of history across the curriculum. This identification is designed to draw attention to the policy-shaping of an idiosyncratic history curriculum. Thirdly, the focus turns to the notions of discourse and pedagogy. Loose groupings of curriculum discourses are introduced as scholar traditional, learner centred/ experiential, social constructivist, and social efficiency and applied to history teachers' discourse practices that play out in pedagogies. These conflicting discourses in the national curriculum make it difficult for any teacher repositioning of stance or approach to history. The paper's last section turns to key competencies as a space of possibility within the NZC policy for repositioning teachers' history discourses in practice for historical thinking.

## CURRICULUM AS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

Before establishing ways history is conceptualised in the NZC and interpreted by teachers in school, classroom, and teacher education curriculum contexts, the nature and purpose of curriculum deserves consideration. The New Zealand researcher Anne-Marie O'Neill (2005) suggests that curriculum is an "elusive" field (p. 113). For O'Neill, curriculum involves myriad purposes and dimensions in education including government policy, accountability, theories of knowledge, teachers' work, pedagogy, popular culture and contextual factors shaping students' lives and learning. Curriculum, then, is more than just a framework, guideline, or resource for teachers. In this paper, curriculum is conceived as socially constructed—a dynamic socio-cultural and interconnected process where beliefs and interactions constantly construct one another (Kincheloe, 2005). The American theorist Decker F. Walker (2003) comments that curriculum ideals are created by social groups "to function at a certain time and place" and that a curriculum's relationship to the society that supports it raises fascinating questions (p. 72).

A curriculum's purpose and design usually involves decision-makers' beliefs about what values need to be encouraged and modelled, what counts as knowledge, and what knowledge matters for a society and its peoples in time and place (Hinchey, 2004; O'Neill, Clark & Openshaw, 2004; Phillips, 2002). In *A Curriculum for Life: Schools for a Democratic Learning Society*, the British educator John Quicke (1999) reflects on curriculum purpose and design in terms of embedding ideas about learning that have the most value with reference to the "educational needs of the students to be taught and the social and political context in which teaching and learning takes place" (p. 1). This presupposes a political positioning

as interest groups attempt to maintain or establish dominance through policy-making. Therefore, curriculum needs to be read as a politically motivated process, and interpreted as a statement of policy decisions that signal desired educational outcomes.

Revisiting the 1989 Education Act and amendments' reforms (<http://www.legislation.govt.nz>) and traditions of New Zealand's schooling curriculum is not the work of this paper. However, I engage with the New Zealand Curriculum as a reshaping of its parent policy, the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (NZ Ministry of Education, 1993). Influential educators have argued that curriculum policy reforms do not change or interrupt much in the schooling curriculum because of enduring curriculum values, intentions and teachers' work in the enacted curriculum (Beane, 2004; Brown, 2008; Eisner, 2008; Hargreaves, 1989). John Hattie (2005) has discussed New Zealand curriculum reform in *What Is the Nature of Evidence that Makes a Difference to Learning?* Hattie comments on how little seems to change: "...we seem to experience a once-a-decade-bump where the old curricula is repackaged, new names invented, much is added, and little is subtracted, and the classrooms continue on as much as before" (p. 14). Surely, the angst and effort of curriculum reform processes makes a difference to teachers' work in classrooms and prompts private reflection. Change might manifest as teacher disturbance. For example, tensions in place in the NZC between conceptions of ends-means, outcomes-based policy and a process-inquiry policy (Mckernan, 2008; Stenhouse, 1975) invite curriculum critique. If the NZC policy seeks to respond to the "pace of social change" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4), then teachers and students are not distanced from these social processes that shape a curriculum relationship.

Findings of an earlier history curriculum-focused research project, *Talking History* (Hunter & Farthing, 2004) revealed that few history teachers communicated understandings of curriculum other than as programme guidance for topic selection, and external assessment direction. The research drew on a large regional cohort of highly experienced history curriculum leaders and history teachers with over five years of classroom experience. Findings indicated history teachers' limited engagement with the nature and purpose of curriculum itself, and presented evidence of a professional disconnect between curriculum intention and the enacted history curriculum. I contend that teachers' professional learning and pedagogical content knowledge needs to be grounded in engagement with professional conversations and readings about curriculum purpose and processes. The NZC's policy intent opens a space for teachers and educators to become actively involved in the critique of curriculum they engage with and play out in pedagogy. With this awareness, interpretation of curriculum framing (including assessment) and identification of conflicting curriculum conceptions may lead to shifts in school and classroom cultures and pedagogies.

### COMPETING CONCEPTIONS OF HISTORY IN THE NZC POLICY

The NZC policy intentions for history in senior secondary classrooms (Years 11–13) need to be understood in terms of whose interests and values history serves in the national curriculum. Ways history is conceptualised in its social sciences learning area location needs to be read alongside the NZC's aspirations, principles, desired pedagogies and school decision-making across all learning areas. The NZC's strong citizenship orientation is evident in its vision of "what we want for young people" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). This includes important links to the work of history such as "identity", Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural history through the Treaty of Waitangi partnership, and a sense of cultural heritage and traditions. The principles embody what is deemed important in the formalised or accountable curriculum. The Treaty of Waitangi principle conveys a tacit requirement of historical understandings of nineteenth century Pakeha colonising processes, and Maori responses to affirm New Zealand's "unique identity" (p. 9). The principle of Cultural Diversity has a strong historical focus with explicit mention that the curriculum "... values the histories and traditions of all its peoples" (p. 9). Values to be encouraged and explored by New Zealand students include a valuing of and respect for cultural diversity in terms of languages and heritages. This all seems coherent and indicates support for the place of history in the national curriculum.

History as a subject construction is located in the NZC Social Sciences Learning Area. This has been the case since the 1993 NZCF reforms (Hunter & Farthing, 2007, 2008, 2009). However, the social sciences learning area's explanation gives minimal attention to the purpose or nature of history in the national curriculum. A single statement that supports historical thinking refers to history as "Continuity and Change: students learn about past events, experiences, and actions and the

changing ways in which these have been interpreted over time. This helps them to understand the past and the present and to imagine possible futures" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 30).

History is conceptualised by six achievement objectives across Levels 6–8/ Years 11–13 of the social sciences. The history objectives embed policy visions and decisions as anticipated history outcomes. They also determine history programme content and pedagogy for twenty-first century students. Each history objective is events-based with particular emphasis on past events' significance to New Zealanders. The language and tenor of the objectives enables teachers to reconstruct custom and practice topics and perpetuate traditional knowledge claims. This means school history is often experienced as the reproduction of a body of disconnected experiences and transmitted facts (Hunter & Farthing, 2004, 2009). The task of assigning causes to events takes precedence rather than paying too much attention to their interpretations of human agency. A focus on human agency is located at a personal level to enhance historical thinking and reflection. Human agency is also culturally embedded and socially expressed as images and stories people use to reiterate a past in the present (den Heyer, 2003). A contemporary history curriculum needs to be more than objectives-based about events in the past. History pedagogy also needs to engage with how what happened is constructed (Fallace & Neem, 2005).

History objectives in the NZC are not designed to integrate historical thinking with other social sciences subject constructions involving social, cultural, political, economic and geographic contexts and ideas. Accordingly, history appears as a defensive and isolated curriculum within the social sciences. The question, why is the social sciences learning area the only NZC learning area that has introduced bounded subject territories in formulating its senior secondary levels' achievement objectives? has to be asked. This is in distinct contrast to the wording of the social sciences explanatory statement: "Why study the social sciences?" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 30). History achievement objectives align with the National Certificate of Educational Achievement's (NCEA) Levels 1–3 history achievement standards (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment>) and history scholarship standard (<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/>). The history curriculum and its assessment processes are inextricably linked.

Close reading of the NZC reveals that history is not confined to the social

sciences. Generic NZC dimensions of key competencies, effective pedagogy, teaching as inquiry, and e-learning offer policy opportunities for historical thinking in relation to teachers' work and engagement with students. In later sections of this paper, I focus on curriculum discourses that link to the constructivist and sociocultural underpinnings of key competencies and teacher inquiry as possibilities for history. A place for historical thinking across a range of contexts and processes is evident in the learning areas of Science, The Arts, Learning Languages, and Technology. Interestingly, each of these learning areas have clear statements in relation to their complementary disciplines' bodies of knowledge, and indicate strong emphases on contextual and conceptual shaping in their Years 11–13 achievement objectives.

Learning Languages signals the significance of the representation of the past: "Oral, written, and visual forms of language link us to the past and give us access to new and different streams of thought and to beliefs and cultural practices" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 24). The Science learning area includes different cultures and periods of history that have contributed to the development of science (p. 28). The nature of science strand signals the connection of new ideas to current and historical knowledge. The Technology learning area looks at technology "as a field of human activity ... exploring historical examples of technology from a variety of contexts" (p. 32). Temporal connections and the "socially embedded nature of technology" are emphasised, particularly in relation to historical issues (p. 32). Level 8 technology objectives consider historical locations and influences. The Arts learning area statement emphasises historical contexts, cultural practices and histories (pp. 20–21), particularly in relation to dance, drama, and music achievement objectives. History and historical thinking is conceived within social constructivist discourses and rich social and cultural contexts within all these NZC learning areas. This is in stark contrast to the straitjacketed and contradictory conception of history in the social sciences learning area. Why has this happened, and what prevailing curriculum discourses have maintained history's defensive curriculum positioning?

#### **DISCOURSES IN PLAY IN CURRICULUM POLICY AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY**

The NZC was constructed by educational and curriculum interest groups including teachers and researchers. It reflects politically informed decision-making processes leading to its 2007 publication and full implementation in 2010. Therefore, it is no surprise that the NZC is a kind of

curriculum compromise, where a range of visions and ideologies about curriculum purpose, agency, and desired educational outcomes for New Zealand citizens co-exist—a little like the groups in society that the curriculum relates to. Theorists have long identified features of competing ideologies within national curriculum framing (Eisner & Vallance, 1974; McGee, 1995; Schiro, 2008; Schubert, 2003). In their recent writings, American educators challenge ways schooling curriculum embed "questionable assumptions" (Eisner, 2008), and a lack of critique of reproduced and enduring values (Brown, 2008). Elliot Eisner (2008) offers a reason for ways particular ideologies endure. He reminds teachers that we are socialised into curriculum from the time we first engage with curriculum as learners, describing this process as "professional "socialisation". This continuing process involves a curriculum's claims to knowledge, cultural values, traditions, practices and teacher interpretation.

The notion of discourse can be explained as embedding curriculum visions and ideologies as an active process. Discourse is all about language, and ways we construct and communicate ideas, values, and experiences to make meaning. The NZC policy is a broad curriculum discourse, but it also embeds a range of internal discourses as language and voices that compete noisily with each other. Discourses are maintained by ideas and beliefs about knowledge, pedagogy, and cultural notions that teachers express and play out in their practice. As discourse practice or production, teachers will endorse preferred procedures and material practices as desired ways of seeing and doing. For example, history teachers take on discursive practices that play out in the pedagogy their students engage with. The cultural theorist Joe Kincheloe viewed discursive practices as "a set of tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessing of authority, and who must listen..." (2005, p. 13). Identifying discourses in the NZC policy gives us a clearer understanding of ways teachers interpret curriculum, and choose to either engage or disengage from change processes.

Loosely grouped curriculum discourses compete in New Zealand's intended curriculum and assessment policies (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d., <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/>), and the enacted secondary curriculum. They are identified in this paper as scholar traditional; learner centred/experiential, social constructivist and social efficiency. So what do they look like? What work do they do in the history curriculum and history pedagogy? When writing about pedagogy, my understandings are informed by a number of conceptions visualised for history as a meaning-making practice that involves the relational idea of teaching and learning (Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1994, 1997; Loughran, 2006). This is expanded by the Māori concept of *ako* (Tuhiwai-Smith in Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002). Pedagogy in history offers a framework for discussions about the processes of teaching and learning. I am influenced by the Australian educator Diana Mulcahy's (2006) conception of pedagogy as an "emergent property or product of 'intra-action' among persons, places, processes and things" (p. 57). A further dimension of pedagogy acknowledges that the ways we do our work as teachers affects students' lives and expectations. In this sense, pedagogy is viewed as supporting intellectual engagement (Luke, 2006; Shulman; 1987) and connectedness to wider contexts to enhance ways of knowing (Hunter & Farthing, 2007).

#### **SCHOLAR TRADITIONAL DISCOURSE AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY**

Scholar traditional discourses look to historical antecedents and involve academic and disciplinary knowledge frameworks. These discourses generally privilege great works of the humanities and liberal arts as "best wisdom and knowledge" (Schubert, 2003, p. 45). Over two decades ago, Hargreaves (1989) challenged the unquestioned pre-eminence of traditional high status subject-based academic curriculum in light of knowledge claims about perceived cultural capital, tightly bound subject communities and "pedagogical conservatism" (p. 33). Findings of the Talking History research project (Hunter & Farthing, 2004) showed that this was the dominant discourse articulated by experienced teachers when reflecting on the nature of history in the New Zealand curriculum, and their pedagogical preferences. This research evidence also showed that history teachers quickly became assimilated into this discourse in practice as a culture of school history. Teachers with well over twenty years' experience expressed recurring ideas about history's superiority as an academic subject, and history's worth for the intellectual development of "whole" thinking young people. Furthermore, history was seen as validation of teacher identity as a scholarly teacher. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the NZC conception of history has become a reduced and narrow shadow of

history's disciplinary grounding, with its concentration on the substantive content-driven and topic-focused reproduction of events and their causes and effects. In this curriculum discourse, critique of history's identity and nature and purpose is viewed with suspicion. Evidence from history classroom-based research (Hunter & Farthing, 2008, 2009) showed that Year 11–13 students view the history they engage with as truthful and authoritative despite reliance on dated and uncritiqued textual narrative.

By clinging to traditional beliefs about history's so-called intellectual rigour, historical processes of identity work, conceptual thinking and interrogation of representations of history are avoided in pedagogy. An example of this can be seen in the recent removal of NCEA achievement standards (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment>) that assessed students' historical thinking in relation to identity, and conceptual thinking (these emphases were introduced when history standards were first developed in 2000–2002). Traditional scholar discourses reject thinking about the constructed, narrative, and representative dimensions of history. Despite history's placement in a conceptual and multidisciplinary social sciences learning area, teachers who ascribe to traditional scholar discourses generally avoid social or cultural orientations in history. This is seen in some history teachers' perceptions about social studies as a "non-academic" or low status subject and rejection of any notion of subject integration. The bounded history territory that curriculum developers and representatives of history teachers carved out in the NZC social sciences exemplifies this thinking.

Curriculum theorists have signalled problems for contemporary pedagogy with this discourse as "isolated" curricula not able to "engage learners with the principles needed to handle most of life's challenging circumstances" (Brown, 2008, p. 297). In a similar vein, Eisner (2008) comments, "The kind of problem that the average citizen addresses are ... transdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. They are seldom adequately addressed through a single discipline" (p. 15). The NZC's history curriculum sustains the legacy of this scholar discourse through an outcomes-oriented, ends-means model of curriculum. If teachers' traditional practices are informed by scholar discourses, the NZC's vision, values principles, teacher inquiry and effective pedagogy are unlikely to be engaged with for students' learning.

#### **LEARNER-CENTRED/EXPERIENTIAL DISCOURSES AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY**

Learner-centred ideology is identified in curriculum discourses that emphasise self-actualisation (Eisner & Vallance, 1974), progressive (Ellis, 2004), and experientialist notions. Knowledge is theorised as personal development, creative self-expression and personalised learning drawing on social constructivist thinking. John Dewey's ideas of pragmatism and progressivism have influenced this curriculum discourse in terms of pedagogic shifts from teacher control of subject matter, to a focus on student experiences and inputs into learning. The NZC manifests a learner-centred/experiential discourse in envisioning social studies in history's home social sciences learning area, and dimensions of effective pedagogy, teaching inquiry, and school-based curriculum decision-making. Its principles as foundations of schools' curriculum review, decision-making and accountability put "students at the centre of teaching and learning" (NZ Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). The NZC key competencies as capabilities for lifelong learning are evaluated across all primary and secondary subject constructions including history. The competencies embed learner-centred discourses of favoured approaches to pedagogy such as inquiry learning.

Learner-centred/experiential discourses signal opportunities for history pedagogy in terms of conceptions of history's social and everyday life orientation that the history education scholar Peter Seixas (2004) has described as "mutual and interpenetrating" (p. 134). Whilst underplayed in history curriculum and assessment documentation, these discourses prevail in social studies in the social sciences learning area and in social studies teacher professional learning resources. The New Zealand Ministry of Education's social sciences curriculum research initiative, *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences: Tikanga ā Iwi: Best Evidence Synthesis* (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008), supports the NZC social sciences learning area. Learner-centred/experiential and social constructivist discourses underpin the BES "mechanisms" of connections, alignment, community, and interest. Aitken and Sinnema included research narratives and cases to exemplify these four mechanisms in action and application. Hunter and Farthing's (2007) research, "Connecting Learners with Their Past as a Way into History", is storied in the BES to exemplify classroom-based history pedagogy with Year 11 students within a large co-ed secondary school's history curriculum.

#### **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST DISCOURSES AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY**

Social constructivist curriculum ideology projects wide-ranging visions of knowledge that involve thinking about structures, social issues, social justice, social changes and social futures. These discourses focus on teachers and students as agentive integrated social beings with the ability to "interpret and reconstruct society" (Schiro, 2008, pp. 143–145). The NZC's social sciences subject constructs other than history and economics play out constructivist discourses in their pedagogic emphasis of concepts and ideas, tentative generalisations and broader themes that build on prior experiences, learning and understandings. Likewise, the NZC learning areas of The Arts, and Technology offer opportunities for history inquiry, problem-based pedagogy and decision-making in a range of potentially rich contexts. Findings of recent classroom-based history research (Hunter & Farthing, 2009) of student voice and prevalent history discourses show that Year 11–13 history students make connections between history and social studies subject constructs. This is evident in the confident articulation of language and concepts developed in social studies, and then applied to their thinking about history.

Constructivist orientations of history pedagogy develop understandings of the socially and culturally constructed nature of history. For school history this involves thinking about ways history is constructed and represented. A shift to a conception of history that is identified more fully in terms of purpose, processes, and production (Simpson & Halse, 2005; Hunter, in press) may be possible through these discourses. As discussed previously, research that explored history teachers' perceptions of the history curriculum (Hunter & Farthing, 2004) provided evidence of a dominant traditional scholar discourse. In contrast, younger history teachers with less than five years' experience articulated constructivist discourses with emphasis on socially informed, issues-based history pedagogy. This reflected their recent engagement with historical thinking/processes, and contexts for study in the academy.

Critical constructivist discourses in history enhance the personal and subjective in history and act on real-life problems (Schubert, 2003). By way of example, historical contexts may focus on social justice, cultural practices, religion, and media and popular culture. Postmodern conceptions of history are glimpsed in critical discourses where questions are asked of curriculum conceptions. In the case of history, teachers might interrogate the relationship between curriculum discourses and pedagogic knowledge,

or explore what contexts are valued, or deemed disturbing, or absent in the history curriculum in relation to the skills and dispositions developed.

### **SOCIAL EFFICIENCY DISCOURSES AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY**

Social efficiency discourses reflect behaviourist theories of converting needs into purposes and objectives (Schubert, 2003) and changes in behaviour and organisation, such as teacher effectiveness, and competency initiatives. Social efficiency discourses are evident in curriculum objectives and outcomes, planning and evaluation, linear curriculum frameworks, and models of curriculum planning. Social efficiency discourses include conceptions and values of managerial processes, standards alignment, performance indicators, and accounting to meet educational expectations. The NZC's outcomes-based policy embeds social efficiency discourses. Schools and teacher accountability and evidence-based practice are key elements of this discourse.

The language of standards and objectives permeate the NZC. In the senior secondary school curriculum, achievement objectives have developed a life of their own—generating curriculum alignments with the NCEA history achievement standards. The history curriculum is powerfully shaped by social efficiency discourses that sit very comfortably with traditional scholar discourses. The NCEA history achievement standards are currently being aligned with the limited history objectives (<http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz>). As a consequence, history's curriculum identity is reduced further to a limited and static conception. This reduction is evident in the NCEA Levels 1 and 2 externally examined essay history standards and their assessment specifications. These essay standards have little to do with history thinking in their standardised generic and technical requirements. Interestingly, when schools advertise their positions for history teachers, they seek teachers of NCEA history, rather than history. American history educators Kelly, Meuwissen, and Vansledright (2007) express alarm about the policy rhetoric of curriculum reforms that seek higher standards and accountability, and the impacts on history curriculum. They pose a significant question that equally applies to the construction of the New Zealand history curriculum:

"...how do existing history standards and formal curricula officialize certain orientations toward historical knowledge and traditions through which that knowledge is taught?" (2007, p. 117, as cited by Hunter, in press).

### **THE NZC KEY COMPETENCIES OFFER POLICY POSSIBILITIES FOR HISTORY**

Conflicting curriculum discourses shape barriers that sustain confusion about history's curriculum identity, and promote teacher suspicion of policy motives. History seems to get locked in a kind of curriculum straitjacket. Reflexivity of history curriculum discourses as played out in pedagogy might invite "discursive repositioning" (Davies & Harré, 1990/2001) to generate pedagogic shifts and open spaces for rethinking the intended and enacted history curriculum. In seeking ways to shift this state of affairs to a positive dynamic, I contend that the NZC key competencies present a policy way forward. The learner-centred/experiential, and social constructivist nature of the competencies offer possibilities for professional conversations about history and critique of history discourses and pedagogies. The competencies are about students' lifelong learning and the complex interplay of knowledge, attitudes, values, skills processes and dispositions. This seeming coherence also provides a model for teachers' expansive thinking about history's purpose, processes, and production. Thinking about competencies as a kind of lifejacket for history was initially explored in *History Students Voice Their Thinking: An Opening for Professional Conversations* (Hunter & Farthing, 2009). This writing explored Year 11–13 students' prevalent history discourses. For this paper's purpose, Table 1 presents features that identify history's curriculum potential in terms of dimensions of historical thinking and understandings of history's purpose; historical processes and forms of representation; history's agency, relational and personal efficacy; and history's value through its connections and contributions to society. As such, these historical dimensions reflect the competencies' intra-active conceptualisation of knowledge, attitudes, values, skills processes and dispositions. They indicate possibilities for teachers to talk about history as a meaning-making practice of great value for students' lifelong learning. See Table 1.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENT**

An Aotearoa New Zealand history curriculum for students in the twenty-first century must hook into the diverse life-worlds of students and acknowledge that students are not distanced from history. History is found in their family and communities' cultural practices and languages, the places they move across, their search for historical antecedents of global issues of interest, and their engagement with popular history through media and interactive experiences beyond the classroom. The Talking History classroom-based research project (Hunter & Farthing, 2007, 2008, 2009) found unexpected sophistication in ways many history students' expressed historical understandings and views of the history they experienced in the school curriculum. By Year 13, a certain passivity and disengagement was indicated (2009). Students' voices and preferences tell us much about history discourse practices that are alive and well in the school curriculum and co-construct students' historical thinking and attitudes towards history.

Current educational debate that plays out in the public media focuses largely on student disengagement in schooling contexts. The history curriculum is not immune from this, as it can also be a site of disengagement for young men and women. This paper has signalled the NZC policy as the starting point for teachers and educators to actively critique policy intentions and conceptions of history, and to identify curriculum discourses that have shaped professional socialisation and are manifest in history pedagogy. Accordingly, professional learning needs to take curriculum thinking into account. A seeming coherence of curriculum policy is often taken for granted and we need to look beneath the surface to identify belief systems and discourses that inform history pedagogy. The curriculum theorist William Schubert (2003) has urged teachers to explore their understandings of curriculum as a reflexive exercise through phases of professional careers. In seeking a policy way forward for rethinking history, key competencies present a teacher space of possibility to reflect on our relationship with history curriculum.

## THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM'S KEY COMPETENCIES AND HISTORY PEDAGOGY

### Thinking and history pedagogy involves

Knowledge claims, historical consciousness;  
Curiosity, questioning the significance of history, historical antecedents of contemporary issues;  
Lived experience and human agency, diverse historical experience and perspectives (gendered and cultural), minimised or absent voices, contestation, imagination, empathy;  
Narrative, constructed and interpreted nature of history, grand narratives, sources and evidence;  
Engaging with language, concepts and ideas in historical contexts (social, political, cultural, geographic, economic) and sources of information and evidence;  
Historical relationships (temporality, causal, change and continuity, connections and shaping);  
Processes as research method, valuing, argument, problem solving, reflection, production, communication.

### Using language, symbols, and texts and history pedagogy involves

Identification of ways history is represented through a range of communication modes: narrative including oral, visual, literary, technologies, taonga, music, dance, drama, cultural sites; digital technologies;  
Ways lived experiences of the past are recorded, communicated, preserved, archived, valued, re-created, re-storied;  
Concepts, ideas, symbolic language as communicated in records of the past and interpreted in the present;  
History's sources of evidence and information in relation to historical contexts, time and place settings, and audience;  
Interpretation of historical representation: bias, propaganda, purpose, motivation, limitations of evidence;  
Responding to historical modes of communication: viewing, reading, listening, interacting, retelling, analysis, imagination, empathy, aesthetic;  
Conventions of historical research production and writing.

### Relating to others in history pedagogy involves

Considering beliefs and viewpoints;  
Engagement with contexts of history perceived as personally challenging or not valued;  
Collaborative activities;  
Reflection of historical thinking and views, involvement in discussion and debate;  
Interest in contested histories, minimised or absent voices;  
Researching history in the wider community;  
Interest in diverse histories and perspectives.

### Managing self and history pedagogy involves

Interest, enjoyment, and preparedness to engage in history activities and handle requirements and expectations of history learning;  
Seeing the purpose of history study;  
Organisation of texts, sources and materials for pedagogy, manages assessment milestones;  
Alignment with steps and expectations of activities and research processes;  
Seeks clarification when unsure.

### Participating and contributing in history pedagogy involves

Personal and social impact in terms of aspirations and civic efficacy;  
Understanding of the place and purpose of history in society;  
Awareness of the diversity of historical experience in Aotearoa New Zealand, significance of colonial processes and the Treaty of Waitangi in the present and for society in the future;  
Making sense of contemporary issues, drawing on history thinking to engage in school, community, and wider society's activities....

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