

Powerful knowledge and the 'empty' curriculum

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Well google it!

'The world's not about learning facts, well what are those? Well Google it on your phone which is in your pocket, you know, you can find it out' .

(Stephen)

Knowledge and curricula

- Coherence through ‘decluttering and reducing content’

(Sinnema and Aitken)

- Access to ‘powerful knowledge’ *(Young and Muller)*

Curriculum Regulation

Nieveen and Kuiper (2012)

Curriculum De-Regulation

Curriculum Regulation



The New Zealand Curriculum ???



Assessment

National Assessment

Primary and Intermediate Schools

National Standards

Measure reading, writing and mathematics.

Secondary Schools

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

Applicable to the final 3 years of school

NCEA Level 1 = Year 11 (ages 15-16 years)

NCEA Level 2 = Year 12 (ages 16-17 years)

NCEA Level 3 = Year 13 (ages 17-18 years)

The NCEA falls within a *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF)

History Achievement Objectives

Example: Level 6

- Understand how the **causes** and **consequences** of past events that are of significance to New Zealanders shape the lives of people and society.
- Understand how people's **perspectives** on past events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.



*The New Zealand Curriculum 2007
(aligns with Level 1 of the NCEA)*

History Achievement Objectives - all levels

108 words for History

Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Understand how the causes and consequences of past events that are of significance to New Zealanders shape the lives of people and society.	Understand how historical forces and movements have influenced the causes and consequences of events of significance to New Zealanders.	Understand that the causes, consequences, and explanations of historical events that are of significance to New Zealanders are complex and how and why they are contested.
Understand how people's perspectives on past events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.	Understand how people's interpretations of events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.	Understand how trends over time reflect social, economic and political forces.

Alignment of the Curriculum and Assessment

The New Zealand Curriculum (Level 6)

- Understand how the causes and consequences of past events that are of significance to New Zealanders shape the lives of people and society.
- Understand how people's perspectives on past events that are of significance to New Zealanders differ.

Achievement Standards (Level 1)

Achievement Standards	Mode of Assessment
1.1 Carry out an investigation of an historical event, or place of significance to New Zealanders	Internal
1.2 Demonstrate understanding of an historical event, or place of significance to New Zealanders	Internal
1.3 Interpret sources of an historical event of significance to New Zealanders	External
1.4 Demonstrate understanding of different perspectives if people in an historical event of significance to New Zealanders	Internal
1.5 Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event.	External
1.6 Describe how a significant event affected New Zealand society.	External

Examination Questions

NCEA Standard - *Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event.*

Examination Question 2015

Identify and describe the main **causes** that led to your chosen historical event.

What were the short-term and long-term **consequences** of the event for people and / or groups?

Examination Question 2014

Identify and describe the most significant **causes** that led to your chosen event.

What were the **consequences** of your chosen event on people and / or groups?

Examination Question 2013

Write an essay on ONE historical event you have studied this year, using the following question.

Identify and describe the **causes** of _____ What were the most significant **consequences** of _____?

Teacher's Comments

'Really disappointing and didn't provide my students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the event they studied effectively.' *(NZHTA Survey, 2014, Comment 26, p. 40)*

'The examiner wasted 6 months work by myself and my talented pupils – it is stupid and unfair.'
(NZHTA Survey, 2014, Comment 9, p.8)

'A moronic person set this exam. It featured words 'action' and 'reaction' which don't even appear in the standard!!! Are they trying to kill the subject?? ...It was completely unfair and totally unexpected that the whole standard would be sabotaged in this way. One wonders what they will come up with this year.'

(NZHTA Survey, 2015, Comment 54, p.16)

Playing the Game

‘Students should aim to include historiography and some memorised quotes to add impact and authority to their essays. Students could use an actual **vivid short soundbite quote**. Doing these things, or demonstrating these skills, helps to lift an essay out of the ordinary in the marker’s eye.

Neither of those requirements (historiography or quotes) are in the standards or assessment specifications.

NCEA History has become an ‘arms race’ of rising expectations.’

(Jim Frood to AHTA Members, 22 August 2016)

Growing expectations

‘There is the emergence of the super-essay to gain Excellence.’

(NZHTA Survey 2015, Comment 26, p.15)

A 'credit' focus

'Sir we don't care about the interest. Where are the credits?'

'So they get quite credit focused.'

(They ask) – 'So what should we do?, what is the easiest one to do?'

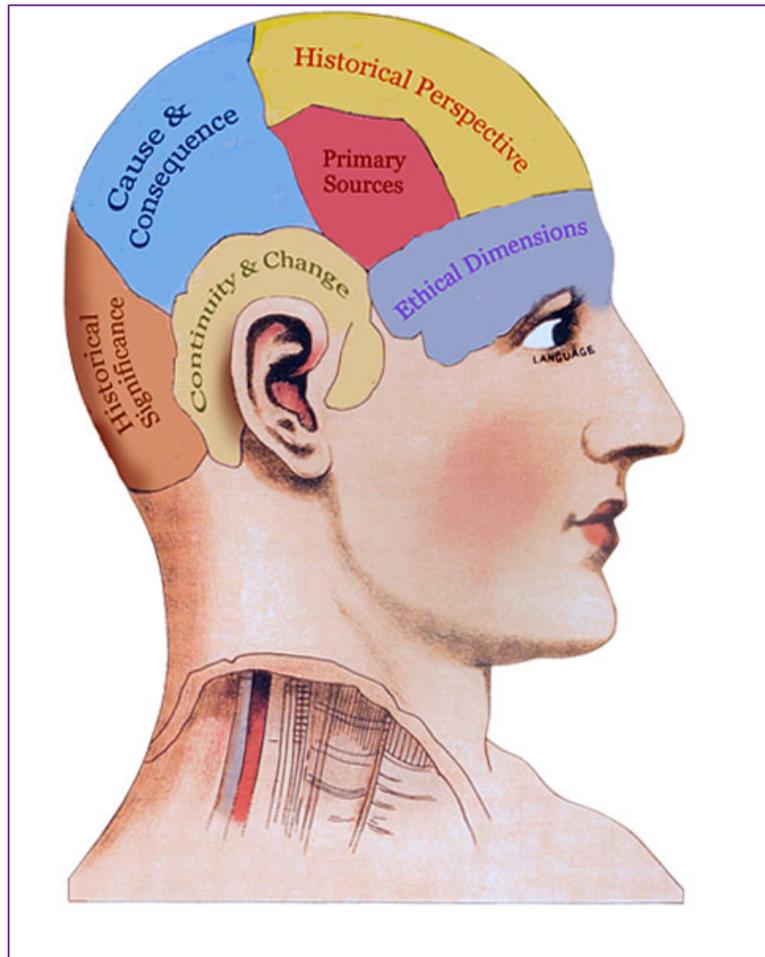
(Stephen)

Narrowing Knowledge

Data shows number of topics typically studied in a year programme. In many cases only one topic is learned for the end-of year examinations and the remaining studies are done as internally assessed tasks.

History			Art History			Classical Studies		
LEVEL	Pre-NCEA Before 2002	Today 2016	LEVEL	Pre-NCEA Before 2002	Today 2016	LEVEL	Pre-NCEA Before 2002	Today 2016
Level 1	7	3	Level 1	-	3	Level 1	-	3
Level 2	5	3	Level 2	4	3	Level 2	5	3
Level 3	3	3	Level 3	4	3	Level 3	5	3

Historical Thinking



Historical Thinking Concepts

- Establish **historical significance**
- Use *primary source evidence*
- Identify *continuity and change*
- Analyse **cause and consequence**
- Take **historical perspectives**, and
- Understand the *ethical dimension* of historical interpretations.

The Historical Thinking Project (Canada)

Narrowing the focus on a single historical event

‘So we just take the Montgomery Bus Boycott) out of black civil rights and ... we don’t want our textbook on black civil rights anymore - we just want one chapter’

(Linda)

Reasons for teachers' choices of knowledge

Knowledge Fit

Begins with the learning outcome that requires verification. What knowledge may be the most suitable to address, apply and illustrate the outcome?

Knowledge Engagement

The motivational needs of learners are the foremost concern. Topics are selected on the basis that they are perceived to be 'high interest' and which may engage students more readily in their learning.

Topics may be chosen because their content has particular relevance to the learners so students can relate to them, or they may be topics which are considered to be 'exotic' in time or place, drama filled, or intriguing.

Largely absent from teachers' explanations

Knowledge Critical

- What knowledge of the past is valuable to know and understand?
- What key concepts and ideas have relevance across periods of history and therefore assist in explaining actions and attitudes in different eras and societies?
- What history will enable students to engage in more abstract ideas about the past, and society today?

The best of this knowledge can be considered to be *powerful knowledge*.

More about carrots and less about sticks

Robert Schwartz 2006

Dilemmas and the future:

- curricula freedom and professional judgement is easily undermined where evaluative mechanisms are tightly controlled - *we need to recalibrate the balance between curriculum deregulation, and curriculum regulation.*
- outcomes forms of curricula and assessment can marginalise and fragment knowledge – *we need to reconsider their piecemeal effects and re-look at how best to integrate knowledge, disciplinary concepts and skills.*