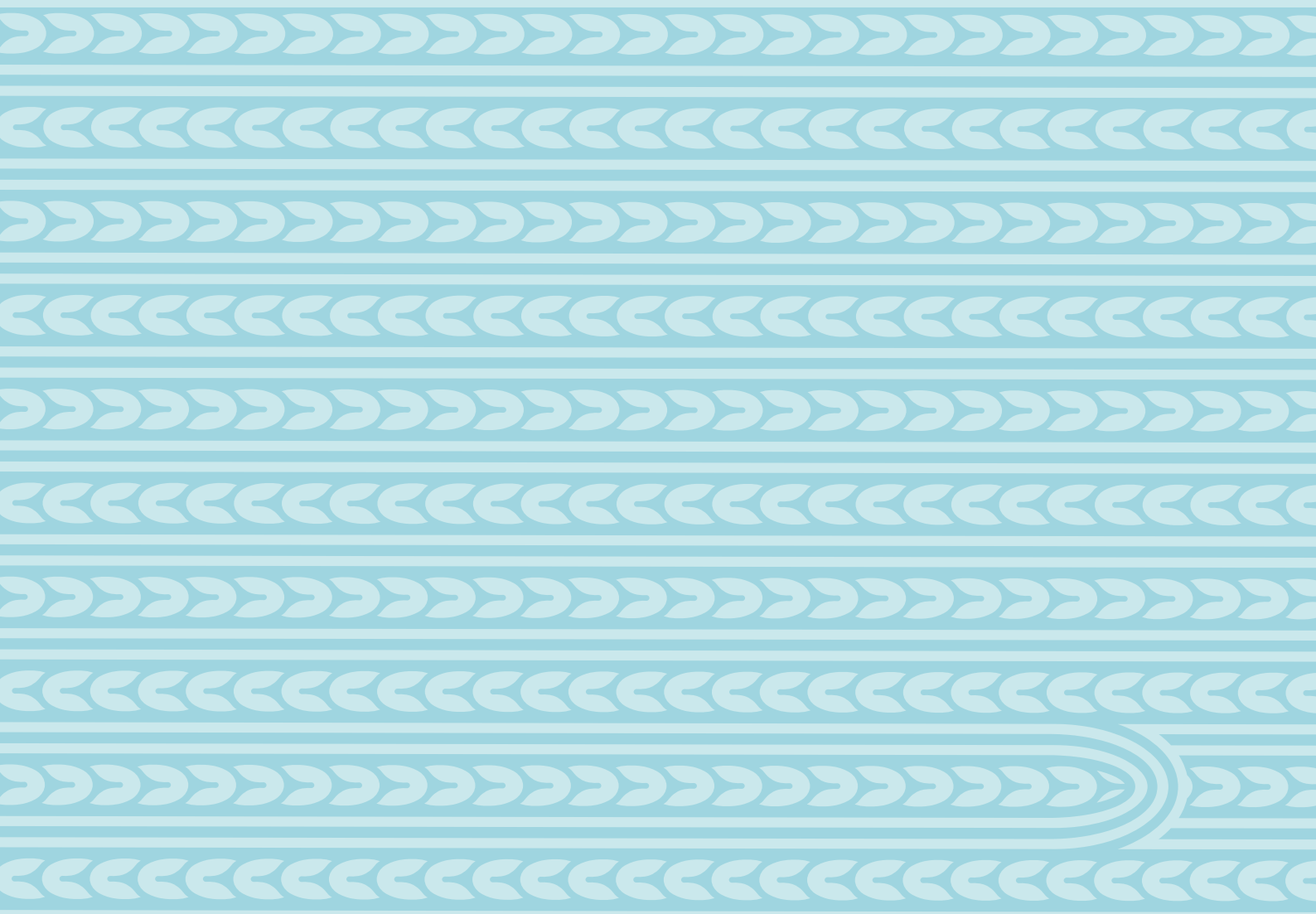


Social Sciences learning area

Feedback on components of
The New Zealand Curriculum
Refresh

Rachel Bolstad, Sue McDowall, and Jess Mazengarb



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Summary

This report provides analysis of feedback on the draft Social Sciences learning area, as a part of *The New Zealand Curriculum Refresh*. Feedback was gathered through a survey for teachers (completed by groups of teachers from 91 schools) and six facilitated conversations with government agencies and organisations with an interest in social sciences.

School feedback on the Social Sciences learning area

Teacher groups were generally positive about most aspects of the curriculum design, though they were more likely to agree than strongly agree to most statements in the survey. Many agreed or strongly agreed that the Purpose statement provides a clear description of the contribution of the social sciences to learning (79%), that the content under Understand Know Do captures what is important to learn (83%), and that the Big Ideas make it clear that this learning is integral to all learning experiences in social sciences (83%). Teacher groups liked the way the Purpose statement and overview called out the “learning that matters” and the image showing the interweaving of Understand Know Do. Just under three-quarters (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that the content is clear and easy to use.

Over 80% of teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed that the progression statements for the Know and Do parts of the curriculum fitted into their current social sciences programmes or would usefully add to what they already do.

Some teacher groups commented that the Do statements were the strongest parts of the curriculum. Some liked the ways in which they could see competencies and values woven together with knowledge in the Do statements. However, some teachers thought certain aspects would be too conceptually difficult or not engaging for their students.

Years 9–10 teachers tended to be less strongly positive than teachers of other year levels; however, there was a range of different views expressed by teachers at each year level. Some teachers were critical of certain aspects of the design or had questions about how to interpret some parts of the document.

Some teacher groups expressed concern about the focus on history at the expense of geography, economics, and commerce, or on history at the expense of a focus on the present and the future. Others expressed concern about a perceived focus on the local and national at the expense of the global. Other critical comments suggested progress outcomes were either too low or too high for students at those year levels, or that the step-up between year levels was too big.

Teachers indicated that challenges for teaching social sciences included lack of teacher confidence and knowledge, time, and resources. The greatest opportunities teachers saw for teaching social sciences included the opportunities for deeper and more authentic learning for students, and opportunities to connect with their local communities.

Government agencies' feedback on the Social Sciences learning area

The government agencies were generally positive about the Social Sciences learning area and could see the aspirations of their agencies reflected in the content. Some agencies suggested that the Purpose statement and other aspects of the content could be more clearly linked to the Vision for Young People. They felt the Vision's aspiration to care for the environment was not strongly reflected in the social sciences content. Some commented that the social sciences content was underpinned by an "anthropocentric" view which does not reflect te ao Māori perspectives, or contemporary views of environmental sustainability. Noting contemporary social and economic challenges facing Aotearoa including climate change, technological change, and socioeconomic unrest, some agencies suggested topics and contexts that could support young people to learn new concepts to underpin the future (such as circular economies), as well as supporting learners to understand and cope with uncertainties and unknowns.

1. Introduction and methods

This report provides analysis of feedback on the draft Social Sciences learning area, as a part of *The New Zealand Curriculum Refresh*. Feedback was gathered from late March to early June 2022 through:

- a school survey for groups of teachers to give feedback on both the draft Vision for Young People and the draft Social Sciences learning area
- facilitated conversations with government agencies and organisations about the Vision and social sciences content.

During the same period, tamariki and rangatahi between ages 5 and 25 years also gave feedback on the Vision for Young People through an online survey (1,725 responses) and 16 focus groups. An analysis of all feedback on the draft Vision for Young People will be shared in a separate report.

Schools were invited to register their interest in giving feedback on the draft curriculum content and attend an online meeting with the Ministry to be briefed on the feedback process. Schools were then sent the draft curriculum content and a link to the online survey.

Schools were asked to unpack the draft curriculum content (both the Vision and social sciences) and shape their survey responses as groups of teachers in year grouping levels (Years 1–3, 4–6, 7–8, and 9–10). Teachers were asked to indicate how many teachers worked together on each survey response. The survey did not include an option for Years 11–13 teachers. Schools could return more than one survey, often from groups of teachers working at different levels.

Response rate

The school survey received 154 survey responses; however, response rates varied across questions. Most questions received 129–144 responses. Where appropriate, the tables and graphs indicate the total number of responses (*n*) for the corresponding question. For questions where respondents were asked to select one response from a set of options, the percentages given are calculated using the total number of responses for that question. For questions where respondents were asked to select as many options as applicable from a set, percentages are calculated using the total number of survey respondents.

Of the 154 responses, 149 came from 91 schools. A further five responses were not associated with a specified school. Most of the identified schools (84%) returned one or two surveys. A few returned three or more, but some were incomplete.

Just over a third of responses were from Years 9–10 teachers (Table 1). While there was no option in the survey to select Years 11–13, teacher comments indicate that some of these teachers also teach senior social sciences subjects. Around a quarter of responses were from each of Years 1–3 and Years 4–6 teachers, with the smallest proportion of responses being from Years 7–8 teachers.

Most survey responses were completed by groups of three or more teachers. Twenty-six responses (17% of all responses) were from individual teachers. Table 2 shows how many teachers were included in each survey response, for each year-level grouping. Additional demographic information about the responding schools is provided in Appendix 1.

TABLE 1 Teacher responses by year level(s) taught (*n* = 154)

Year levels	Count	Percentage
Years 1–3	40	26
Years 4–6	42	28
Years 7–8	16	11
Years 9–10	54	36

TABLE 2 Number of teachers responding by year level(s) taught (*n* = 152)

		Number of teachers per response				
	Number of survey responses	1	2	3	4	More Than 4
Years 1–3	40	5	2	7	9	17
Years 4–6	42	6	2	5	18	11
Years 7–8	16	2	2	2	1	9
Years 9–10	54	13	1	3	7	30

Generalisability of the survey data

The school survey approach aimed to gather feedback from a wide range of school types, regions, and year levels taught. The survey was voluntary. As the samples for the survey are self-selecting, the survey cannot be considered “representative” of all schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, and findings cannot be generalised. This report describes the characteristics of the samples that were achieved in each survey (see Appendix 1). Where appropriate, we report findings against some of these variables.

Facilitated conversations with agencies and organisations

The Ministry of Education reached out to a number of other government agencies and organisations whose work programmes were seen to have a connection to the Social Sciences learning area.

Facilitated conversations were held with six agencies:

- Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment
- Department of Conservation
- Ministry for the Environment
- Office of the Retirement Commissioner
- Ministry of Culture and Heritage
- Human Rights Commission.

The agencies gave consent to be named in the report as having provided feedback; however, specific feedback is not attributed to specific agencies in this report.

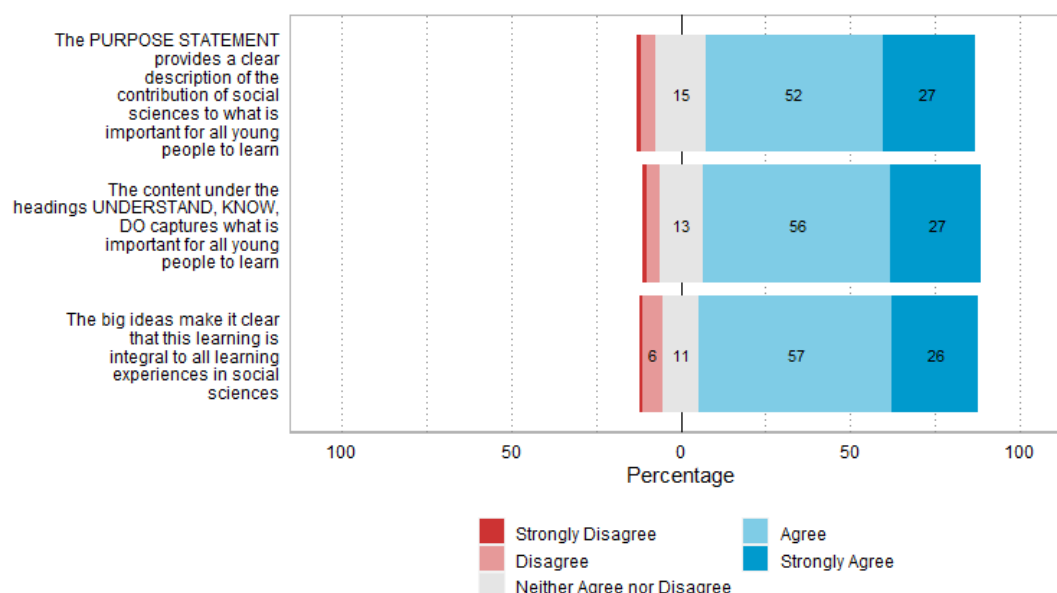
2. Social Sciences learning area —school feedback

The school survey included 31 questions which asked teachers to rate their agreement with statements about the Social Sciences learning area on a 5-point scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), 21 open comment questions, and a few other closed questions where teachers could choose multiple options.

Purpose statement, Understand Know Do, and Big Ideas

Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed that the Purpose statement provides a clear description of the contribution of the social sciences to what is important for all young people to learn, and that the content under the headings Understand, Know, and Do capture what is important for all young people to learn. Teacher groups also generally agreed that the big ideas make it clear that this learning is integral to all learning experiences in the social sciences (Figure 1). Teachers were more likely to agree than strongly agree with each of these statements. There were some small differences across year group levels. Years 1–3 and 4–6 teachers tended to be slightly more strongly in agreement, and Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement.

FIGURE 1 Purpose, Understand Know Do, and Big Ideas ($n = 144$)



Comments about the Purpose statement

Teachers were asked to comment on the extent to which the Purpose statement provides a clear description of the contribution of the social sciences to what is important for all young people to learn. There were 63 comments. More than half of the comments about the Purpose statement were positive, and around a quarter indicated a concern or critique.

Positive responses

Teacher groups commented on the clarity of the Purpose statement in capturing the importance of the social sciences and its contribution to the New Zealand curriculum.

Outlines where this specific curriculum fits in the bigger picture in the NZ curriculum. States a clear purpose or fit for this subject. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Opening sentence of the Purpose statement nails it in a nutshell. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Helps to build the importance of the social sciences. Helps to explain what the social sciences is and why it is important (Years 9–10 teachers)

Teacher groups also liked the rich, authentic, and meaningful contexts for learning.

We like the focus on current and important issues for society and choosing relevant and meaningful contexts. (Years 1–3 teachers)

It is clear that learning will improve because opportunities for deep, authentic, age-appropriate learning are there. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Several groups also responded favourably to the focus on diversity and inclusion.

Good flavour of diversity; like not just Māori, but everyone who has chosen this land as their home. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Others appreciated the guidance provided for choosing topics, such as the list of questions provided.

I also think the listed questions for selecting meaningful topics are useful for kaiako to reflect on whether the contexts they choose for learning are fit for this purpose. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Further positive comments related to the focus on history, ethics, and citizenship.

Concerns

A smaller proportion of respondents expressed concerns about the Purpose statement. The most frequently expressed concern related to the focus on Aotearoa New Zealand at the expense of global contexts.

The Purpose statement does not refer to global contexts enough. It is heavily weighted to Aotearoa (which is important); however, there is more to social sciences than just NZ. We do not feel this is adequately reflected in the Purpose statement. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Very NZ focused—not a bad thing but could acknowledge global aspects as well. Could include the wider Pacific context. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Other concerns included the perceived lack of focus on geography, on future-focused issues, and on the range of cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand. Some groups also expressed concern about the amount of information, the wordiness of the information, and how the weaving would work.

Comments about the Understand Know Do content

The survey asked teachers to comment on the Understand Know Do content and whether this content captured what is important for all young people to learn. There were 66 comments. Over half the comments were positive. Just over one-quarter expressed a concern. Around one-quarter made suggestions.

Positive responses

Teacher groups commented favourably about the clarity and precision of the Understand Know Do framework. They liked the way it called out the “learning that matters” and the image showing the interweaving of Understand, Know, and Do.

The visual makes it clear that they shouldn’t stand alone but woven together. That is when the magic happens. (Years 4–6 teachers)

This framework is so effective—we are now using it ourselves to plan our next Hauora unit of learning. Teachers are forced to think critically about what is most important for our learners in our context. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Teacher groups voiced approval of the way the big ideas were captured in the Understand statements (especially the focus on Aotearoa New Zealand histories), the comprehensive nature of the Know statements, and the value of the Do statements in supporting inquiry learning, critical thinking, and perspective taking.

It caters for a diverse range of cultures. Heavily focused on Māori, but can be used across cultures as well. The big ideas part is clear and easy to understand. (Years 7–8 teachers)

The Know contexts are clear and we cannot think of any other contexts that need to be added. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We believe the ‘Do’ provides a basis which we can go from for inquiry learning. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Other positive comments included the adaptability of the model to students with differing abilities including students with additional learning needs.

Concerns

The concerns teachers most frequently expressed about the Understand Know Do content related to the perceived omission or underemphasis of content they considered to be important in the Social Sciences learning area. For example, some groups expressed concern about the focus on history at the expense of geography, economics, and commerce, or on history at the expense of a focus on the present and the future. Others expressed concern about a perceived focus on the local and national at the expense of the global.

Suggestions

Suggestions covered the need for further support to use the information, the importance of testing and moderating the content, and time for teachers to familiarise themselves with it.

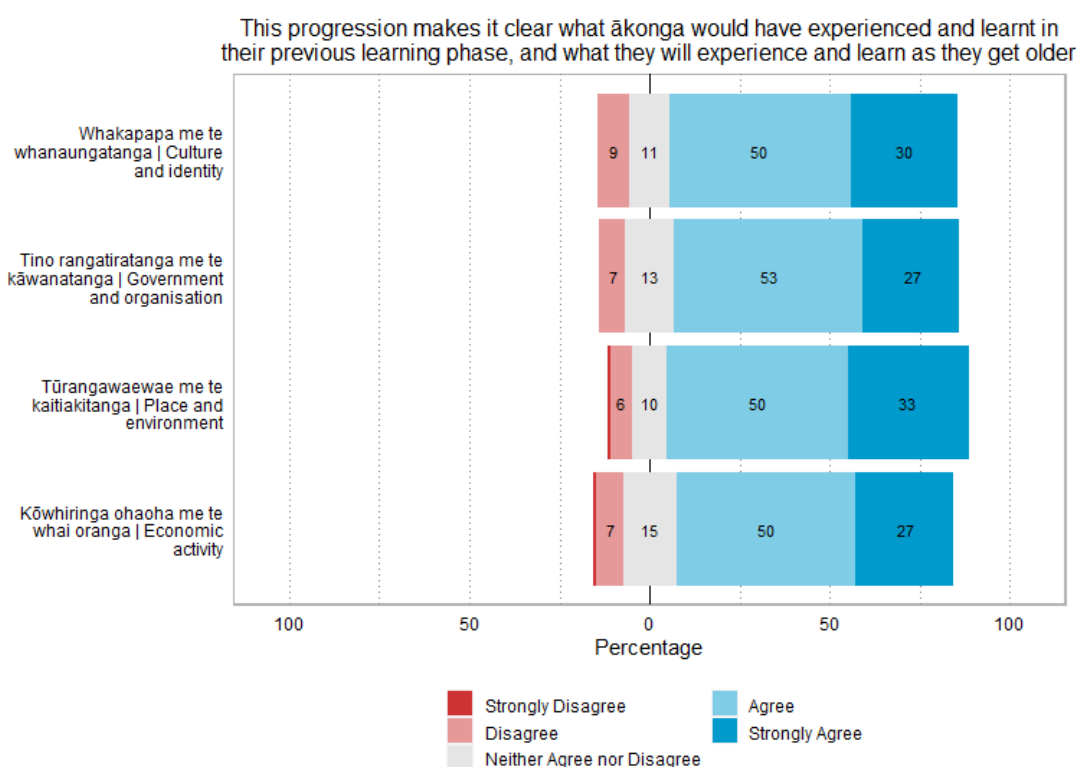
Progressions for contexts under “Know”

Teachers were asked about the draft progressions for each of the four contexts under “Know”. These contexts are:

- Whakapapa me te whanaungatanga | Culture and identity
- Tino rangatiratanga me te kāwanatanga | Government and organisation
- Tūrangawaewae me te kaitiakitanga | Place and environment
- Kōwhiringa ohaoaha me te whai oranga | Economic activity.

Teachers were asked whether each progression “makes it clear what ākonga would have experienced and learnt in their previous learning phase, and what they will experience and learn as they get older”. Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed, and a quarter to a third strongly agreed. Years 1–3 and 4–6 teachers tended to be slightly more strongly in agreement, and Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement.

FIGURE 2 Progressions for contexts under “Know”



Comments about progression in the contexts under “Know”

The survey asked teachers to comment on progression in the contexts under the Know statements. There were 60 comments. Just over one-quarter were positive, just under two-thirds expressed concern, and just over one-fifth made suggestions.

Positive responses

Most of the positive responses were general statements about the suitability of the progressions overall.

All give a clear progression of what is needed to be taught at each level. The progressions build on each other and there is good coverage. (Years 7–8 teachers)

In a few instances, groups of teachers were more specific and highlighted an area they particularly liked.

Great to see Economic activity in Y4–6 statements. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Concerns

The negative responses to the Know statement progressions tended to be more specific and more detailed than the positive responses. The most frequent concern was the jump between the Years 4–6 phase and the Years 7–8 phase of learning. Many of the teacher groups who commented raised this as a general concern.

The step from 4–6 to 7–8 is very big between all areas. (Years 4–6 teachers)

A big step up from Years 4–6 to Years 7–8. This would be a challenge for teachers in Years 7–8 to cover in a 2-year cycle. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Some raised this as a concern for particular area, such as Economic activity.

Culture and identify Years 7–8 seems like a big jump from Years 4–6. (Years 7–8 teachers)

The Place and environment and Economic activity concepts in Years 7–8 need to be touched on in the earlier years. (Years 1–3 teachers)

We felt that some of the progressions for Years 7 and 8 were possibly too hard for Years 7 and 8 students to comprehend and that they need to be simplified. Economic activity—too big and too hard. Some of the proposed material in Years 7–10 is currently in L1 and L2 Economics. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Consistent with this concern was some teachers' view that the difficulty level of the Knows was too low at Years 1–3 and 4–6 in some places.

The concepts suggested at Years 1–3 and 4–6 are very low level. For example, in Tino rangatiratanga me te kāwanatanga, the concept that 'People belong to groups and have roles and responsibilities that help sustain these groups'. Why is it expected that this concept will take three years to cover? This kind of 'low bar' expectation of younger ākonga will result in pressure being put onto older students to learn more complex concepts that they, arguably, may not be well prepared to comprehend because we have spent so long teaching very basic ideas. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Conversely, a few groups of teachers also expressed concern that the Economic activity Know would be too challenging for students in Years 1–3.

We noticed in the Economic activity that it was very meaty and for the Years 1–3 there was a lot for them. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Economic activity is very heavy—full on—especially the Years 1–3. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Another frequent concern was the perceived “repetition” of the Knows across the phases of learning.

There is also a great risk of topic fatigue with repetition of some aspects across the years (similar across the progressions) which will negatively impact on students' developing knowledge, their enjoyment of the social sciences and the uptake of senior social science subjects. (Years 9–10 teachers)

A related concern mentioned by several groups, especially at the Years 9–10 level, was that because the statements at each phase were “vague” or “broad”, differences in teacher interpretation might lead to repetition of contexts and content.

Although the Knows make this information clear in a high-level conceptual sense, they are still vague in terms of what this would mean for a school. This could be an issue due to the fact that without clear, consistent communication between feeder schools and their subsequent secondary schools you could have repetition in contexts being covered. (Years 9–10 teachers)

A stronger indication and clarification of the progression and scaffolding over the years other than changing the verbs is needed. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Gives us a general idea of concepts that have been covered but we are not aware of the contexts that have been studied. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Suggestions

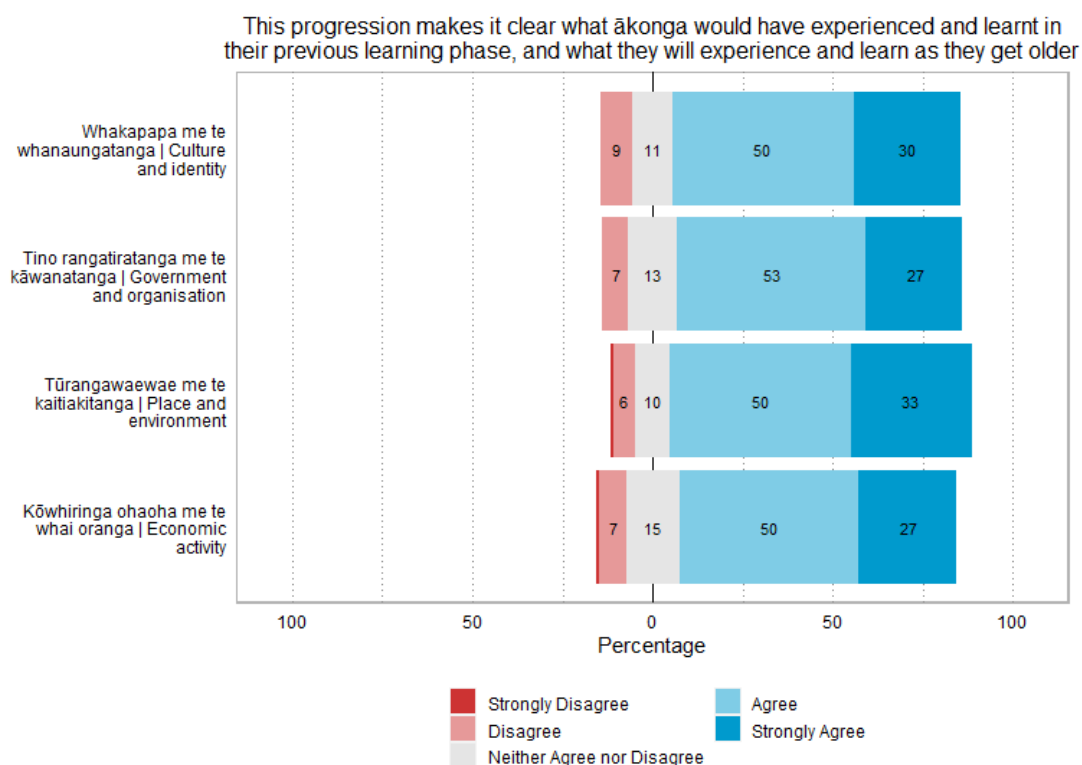
The suggestions included the need for teachers to be supported to teach the material covered, alternative wording, the need for certain knowledge to be taught earlier or later than suggested in the draft document or located within different sections of the draft document.

Progressions for practices under “Do”

Teachers were asked about the draft progressions for “Do—inquiry practices that bring rigor to learning”. These practices are:

- Thinking conceptually
- Researching in social sciences
- Exploring values and perspectives
- Taking social action.

Teachers were asked whether each inquiry practice progression, “makes it clear what inquiry practices particular to exploring social sciences ākonga would have developed in their previous learning phase, and what they will develop as they get older”. Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed, and more than a third strongly agreed. Years 7–8 teachers were particularly positive about two practices, though the number of Years 7–8 teachers responding to the survey was comparatively low compared with other year-level groupings. Half strongly agreed for the practice “thinking conceptually”, and 44% strongly agreed for the practice “researching in social sciences”. Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement for each practice.

FIGURE 3 Progressions for inquiry practices under “Do”

Comments about progressions for practices under “Do”

The survey asked teachers to comment on the progression of the Do statements. There were 41 comments. Approximately one-third were positive, two-thirds were concerns, and there was a small proportion of queries, suggestions, or other comments.

Positive responses

As with the Know statements, most of the positive responses to the Do statements were general comments about the progressions overall. Teachers could see how one phase built upon another.

Each ‘Do’ learning phase builds on the previous phase and the layout makes it easy to follow. The statements seem appropriate for the year levels. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We like how it is framed and builds on from the previous year but allows children to extend themselves with the year above. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Development and progress are logical and easy to understand—will be good to see how these work in practical situations. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some groups liked the ways in which they could see competencies and values woven together with knowledge in the Do statements.

Brings the ‘front end of the old curriculum’ the key competencies to where they should be woven naturally through all learning to make it rich, authentic, real, and truly understood. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Often this is the part that has been missed in the past when teachers have been planning and teaching units of work. There have been times when students have not gotten to the 'so what?' part and they are left floundering and they cannot talk about the learning that has taken place for them. Having the DO part forces teachers to ensure that students do get 'so what?' opportunities in their learning. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Others commented on the clarity or appropriateness of the language used.

These are probably the most clearly written part of the entire document. (Years 4–6 teachers).

We like how the language is already translated for teachers into child speak which is age appropriate and should be easily understood by parents. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Concerns

Most of the concerns about the Do statements were that the expectations were too high.

Years 1–3 not clear vocab and high expectations of what they are expected to do. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Not sure if 'Taking social action' is applicable for Years 4–6 year groups as it feels very big for where children are cognitively in Years 4–6. (Years 4–6 teachers)

There is a clear progression; however, the level of sophistication appears too high, especially at Years 9–10. This seems to be at a level that would be equivalent to an NCEA level. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some groups of teachers commented on the difficulty of the literacy demands of the progressions.

Concerns over literacy levels of students and the range of literacy with classes will impact on the students' ability to meet and articulate their ideas at any of these levels. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Others felt that the Do statements were too broad and that there was not enough specificity.

The skills are still too broad. Too much is left to chance. (Years 4–6 teachers)

While these are a significant improvement, they lack clear and concise, measurable descriptors. They also lack significant skills lists—using the words 'maps and data' for example is not sufficient. What kind of map? Graphs such as a bar graph or a pie chart? These need specifying to ensure an equitable education across schools. (Years 9–10 teachers)

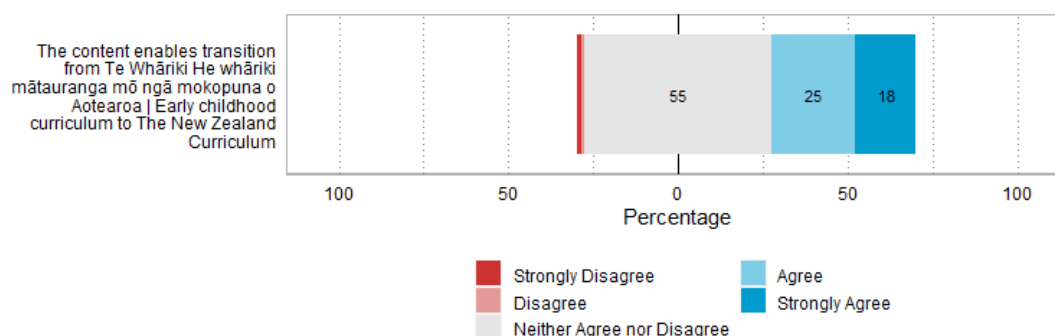
Others wanted a better sense that the Dos encompassed the experiences of *all students living in Aotearoa New Zealand*.

Much of this seemed very subjective and did not appear to take into account experiences of immigrant families. (Years 4–6 teachers)

More variations of all cultures ... to better understand to build perspectives. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Transition from *Te Whāriki*

Teachers were asked whether the content in the draft enables transition from from *Te Whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* | Early childhood curriculum to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Figure 4). More than half said they neither agreed nor disagreed, with some commenting that they were not familiar with *Te Whāriki*. Amongst Years 1–3 teachers who answered this question, 60% agreed or strongly agreed (29% strongly agreed), and a third neither agreed nor disagreed.

FIGURE 4 Transition from *Te Whāriki* to *The New Zealand Curriculum*

There were 41 comments, more than half of which said that the teachers responding were not familiar enough with *Te Whāriki* to offer an opinion. Comments from those Years 1–3 teacher groups who agreed or strongly agreed include:

It gives lots of room to explore, play, and ask questions.

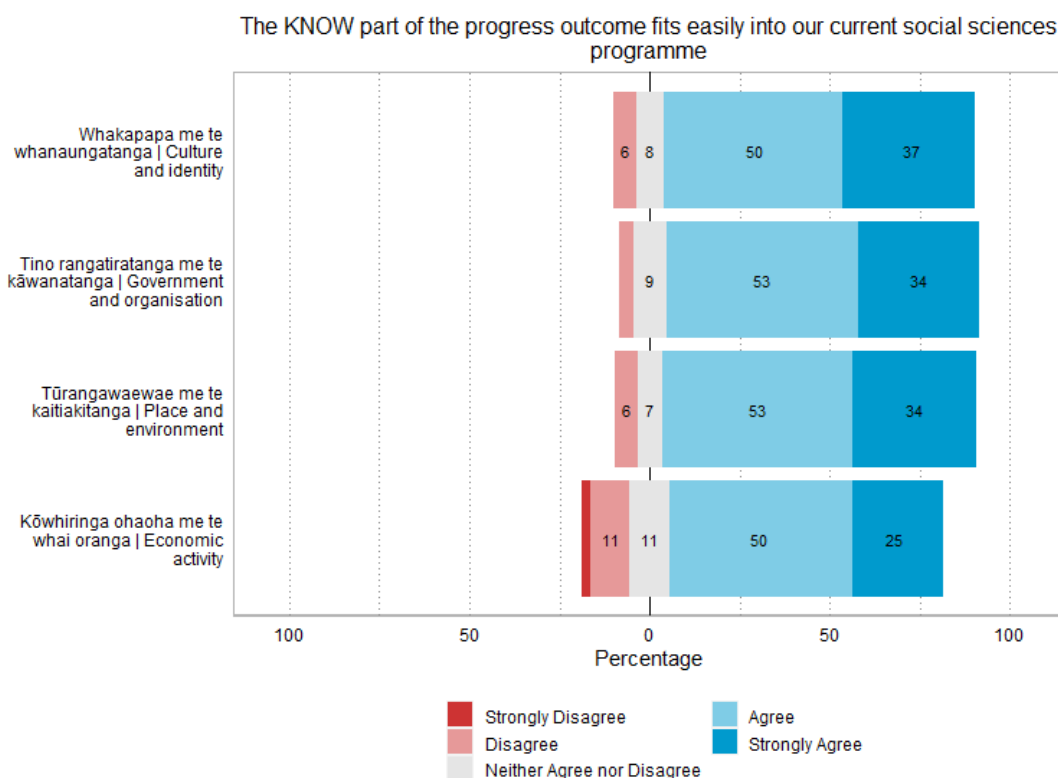
This makes for valuable conversations and really knowing the learner.

Two Years 1–3 groups disagreed or strongly disagreed, but only one provided a comment:

No obvious transition between the two. Only two of the Know strands relate to *Te Whāriki*. (Years 1–3 teachers)

How easily the “Know” part of progress outcomes fits into current social sciences

Teachers were asked how easily the “Know” part of the progress outcomes fits into their school's current social sciences. Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed, and more than a third strongly agreed with all items except for *Kōwhiringa ohaoha me te whai oranga | Economic activity*. The most disagreement came from Years 9–10 teachers (22% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing), and the least from Years 1–3 (6% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing).

FIGURE 5 How easily “Know” fits into current social sciences

Years 1–3 and 4–6 teachers were the most likely to strongly agree that Whakapapa me te whanaungatanga | Culture and identity fits easily into their current programmes (53% and 44% strongly agreeing, respectively). The responses were similar for Tūrangawaewae me te kaitiakitanga | Place and environment, with strong agreement from 50% of Years 1–3 teachers and 47% of Years 4–6 teachers. Some Years 9–10 teachers (16–18%) disagreed that these two contexts fitted easily into their current social sciences.

There were 47 comments. Over one-third of these were positive, over one-fifth of these were concerns, and over one-quarter were other comments or suggestions.

Positive responses

Some teachers said the “Know” part of the progress outcomes was a good fit to their current social sciences and that it was “stuff we do already”. Some said it also provided a useful addition or stretch to what they were already doing.

Reinforces the ‘understand’ well. Great how it’s broken down into what the children need to know. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Worded more clearly in new curriculum. Feel like this now extends (in a positive way) thinking and understanding. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We feel as though aspects have fit into units of our current two-year cycle. We think that we can better incorporate Tino Rangatiratanga. (Years 7–8 teachers)

I feel that the knowledge prescribed by this section will fit well into our current curriculum, and where it does not fit perfectly will give us an opportunity to restructure and clarify the essential content knowledge we aim to teach. (Years 9–10 teacher)

Some teachers liked that the Know statements, “are high level enough that schools can make decisions that link to their local contexts and the needs of their students and communities”.

It means that teachers can choose specific contexts that are engaging, meaningful, and relevant for their students. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Concerns

Some Years 9–10 teachers expressed concerns. Some were concerned about how much work would be involved to redevelop their current junior social science programmes. Some felt there wasn’t enough specificity at Years 9–10 to prepare students for senior subjects such as geography and classical studies.

The place and environment do not fit our current programme at all. There is a lot of emphasis here on climate change which we currently don’t teach in the junior school. There is no room for other rich geography topics in here which is disappointing. The economic activity work we currently do not teach either so this will be a big change for us. (Years 9–10 teachers)

There are ways that we can alter current topics taught—however, this ‘refresh’ which we are calling a ‘rewrite’ is going to require a considerable amount of work. There are limited opportunities to prepare our students for senior geography through these new ‘Knows’. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some teachers were concerned about the levels being set too high for students.

Many of the key questions are very high level, seems more like the Year 7–8 especially (government, place, economic activity). Quite complicated for this level. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We feel that a lot of what we currently teach has been assigned to levels below. This is a worry, as through our Kāhui Ako, we heard first hand that most of our contributing schools do little to no social science in their programmes. So we will have students arrive with piecemeal knowledge. (Years 9–10 teachers)

One group of Years 7–8 teachers was concerned about the amount they might need to cover.

There is a HUGE amount to cover, so much it will be difficult to do in any depth. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Other comments and suggestions

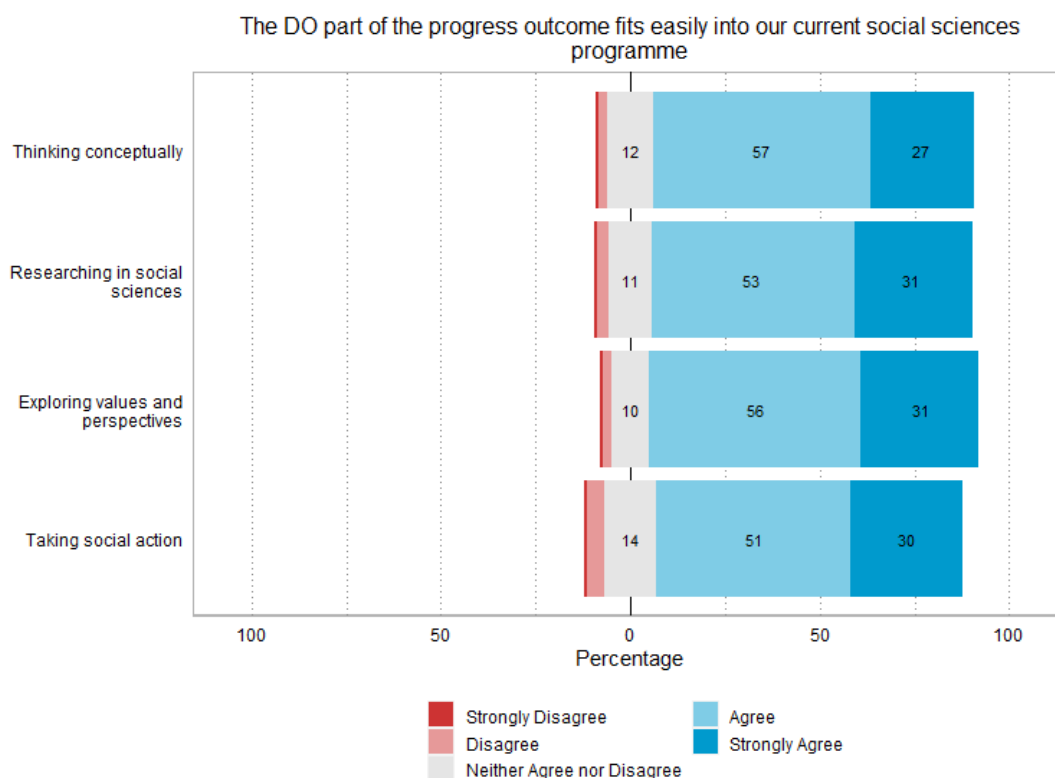
Other comments included requests for further clarification, and resources that could support teachers in particular areas, such as economics. Several indicated that the new content would involve making changes to the current programme which would involve time and effort. For example:

Please clarify the difference between ‘economic systems’ in Years 7–8 (Economic activity) and ‘systems and laws’ (Years 7–8 Government and organisation) and ‘systems of government’ in Years 9–10 Government and organisation. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Economic activity aspect of [social sciences] has always been challenging to teach. It would be good to have some quality resources developed to teach these progressions. (Years 4–6 teachers)

How easily the “Do” part of progress outcomes fits into current social sciences

Teachers were asked how easily the “Do” part of the progress outcomes fits into their school’s current social sciences. Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed with the fit for each practice. Years 1–3 and 4–6 teachers tended to be slightly more in agreement, and Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement for each practice.

FIGURE 6 How easily “Do” fits into current social sciences

There were 46 comments. One-quarter were positive, over two-fifths were concerns, one-fifth were suggestions, and there was a small proportion of queries or other comments.

Positive responses

Some positive comments indicated teachers were generally happy with the “Do” progress outcomes but thought they might be a stretch for some learners.

These are quite aspirational for our students but with guidance and teaching [are] appropriate. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We think these are fine, perhaps just a little ambitious for many of our Year 9s and Year 10s. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some liked that the language was accessible, and that parts of the “Do” progress outcome were about learning to relate to others.

In the DO part the third bullet point is new—we like how it is specifically teaching children to relate to others. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Really like the part about using kind words—this is written so it’s clear for students as well as teachers. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We are very happy with the I CAN and I AM statements in child speak. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Concerns

Many comments included a mix of positive comments and concerns. Some thought it was “very wordy”. Teachers wondered whether the intentions of the curriculum could be realised in practice.

Last ‘Do’ (social action), [we] like the idea but is this achievable in a crowded curriculum? (Years 1–3 teachers)

The Do section is the strongest part of the whole draft; however, we are still concerned about consistency across Aotearoa with this draft. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some teachers thought certain aspects would be too conceptually difficult or not engaging for their students.

We find it difficult to get excited about some aspects and wondered how we were going to motivate students for some aspects—especially those that seem abstract concepts rather than concrete things. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Too hard and too much for Years 9 and 10 students. Too academic for young people. (Years 9–10 teachers)

The skills and thinking required for the values and social action aspects are very sophisticated and many of our students will struggle with these. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Teachers from a special school commented that additional guidance would be useful to support learners who may need more scaffolding.

Some students have difficulty taking on another person’s perspective or understanding complex abstract concepts such as the critical thinking skills. We need to scaffold much of this learning. It would be good to have some guidance on how to get to level 1–3 for varied learners and learning styles. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Some teachers felt certain things were missing from the progress outcomes under “Do”.

[It] is missing communication, evaluating, and working collaboratively ‘Transfer conceptual understandings’ is not built up in any other part of the curriculum to this point. (Years 9–10 teachers)

A greater variety of skills other than inquiry/research skills should be included such as knowing the basic geography of New Zealand—key places and place names, being able to create a bar/pie graph, interpret cartoons, write an essay, read and interpret a map, create and draw conclusions from a population pyramid etc. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Suggestions

Suggestions included providing support for teachers, using more student-friendly language, adding subheadings in the Do section, and providing additional resources and templates to help teachers.

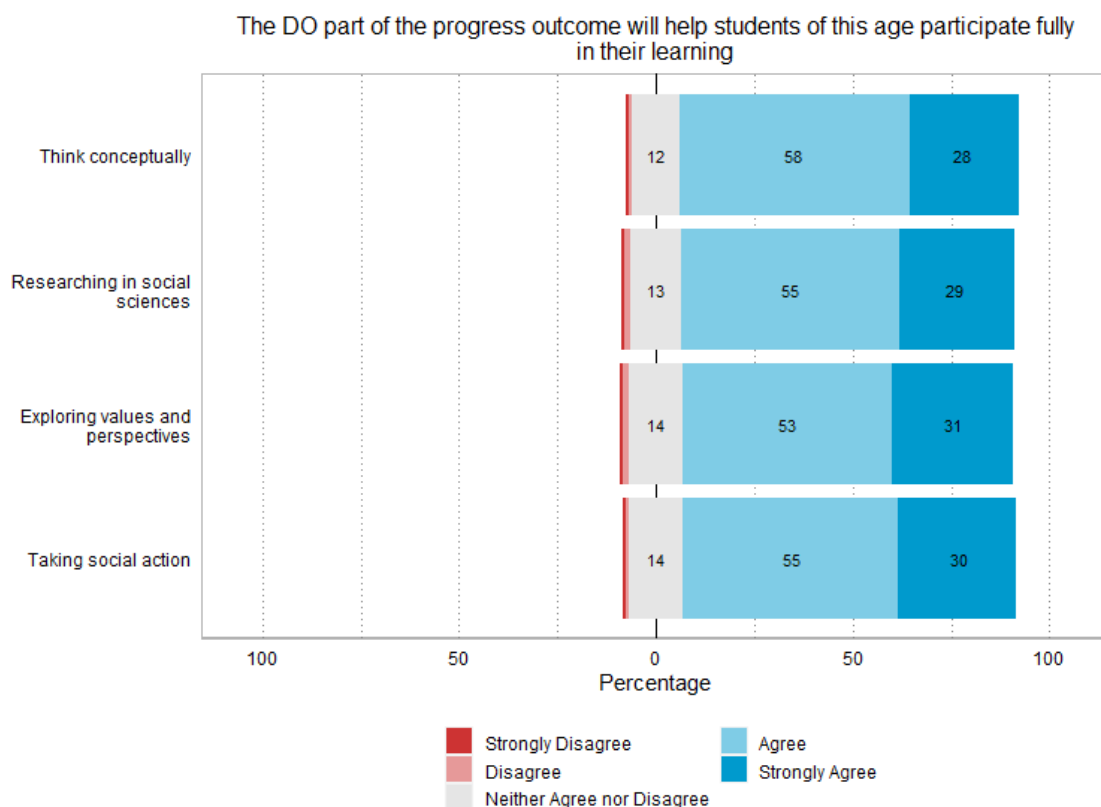
Subheadings in the Do section applying to each of these questions would be helpful to help us locate this information. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We want templates/resources/scaffolds at each progress outcome to help deliver these in the classroom. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Whether the “Do” part of progress outcomes helps students participate fully in their learning

Teachers were asked whether they thought the “Do” part of the progress outcomes would help students to fully participate in their learning. Most teacher groups agreed or strongly agreed for each practice. Years 1–3 and 4–6 teachers tended to be slightly more in agreement, and Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement for each practice.

FIGURE 7 Whether “Do” progress outcomes help students participate fully in their learning



There were 37 comments. Just under one-third were positive, just under one-third were concerns, just under one-quarter were suggestions, and there was a small proportion of other comments.

Positive responses

Teachers made a range of positive comments about this question.

Social action: great idea for a whole class to take on a social problem especially a local one in their community that has a direct outcome for the students. (Years 1–3 teachers)

It is great how the Do section is spelled out to show teachers what it means to inquire with a social science lense and the statements are very kid friendly and can be easily understood by students of all ages. Each phase builds on the previous phase so that students are developing their social science inquiry skills. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Really great stuff here! (Years 7–8 teachers)

Lots of scope for student engagement and application of learning. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Concerns

Most of the comments expressing concern reiterated themes noted earlier, including concern that the expectations were “too high level” for most Years 9–10 students, and that students may not come with the prior learning they would need from earlier year levels. One teacher group commented that:

It will be important that leaders and kaiako understand that the ‘Do’s’ are not the summative assessment, but skills that add rigor to social sciences. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Suggestions

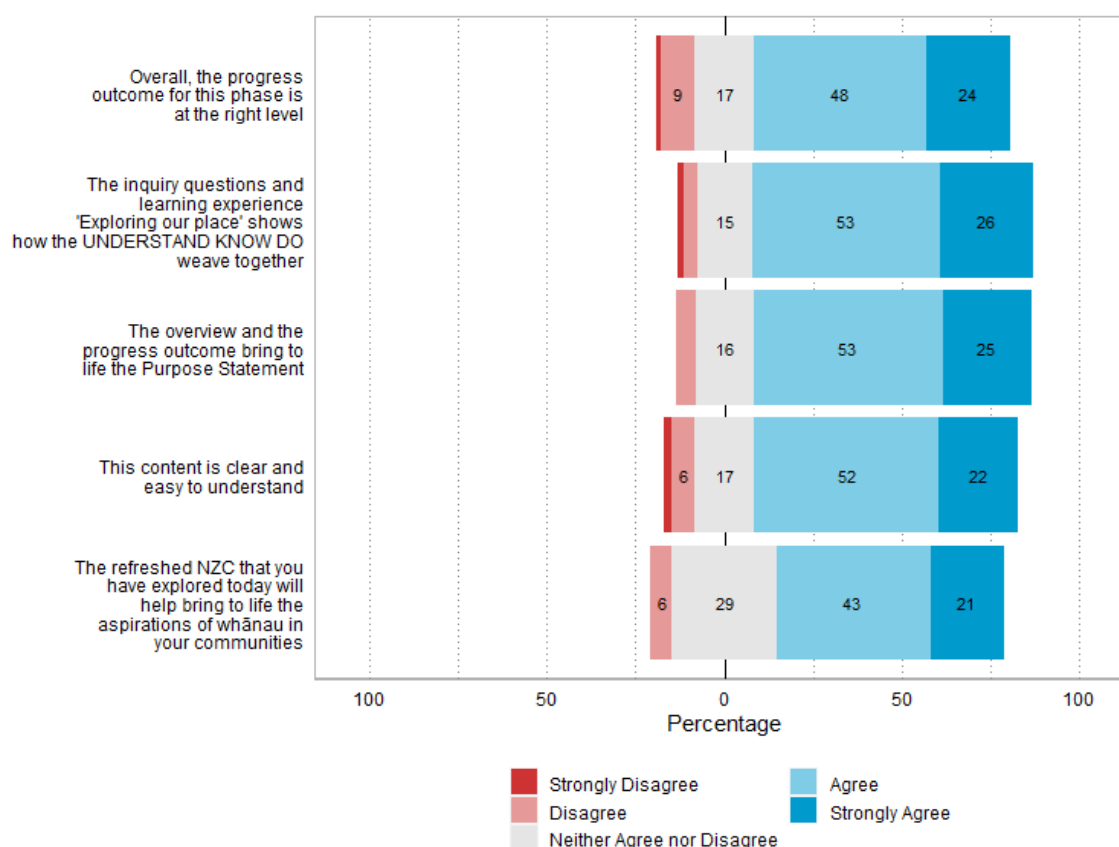
The suggestions included the provision of support, resources, and examples for teachers.

Overall views on the draft social sciences curriculum

Teachers were asked whether the progress outcomes were at the right level overall. While, in general, most teachers agreed or strongly agreed, 27% of Years 9–10 teachers neither agreed nor disagreed, and 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Teachers mostly agreed or strongly agreed that the “exploring our place” example given in the draft to illustrate potential learning experiences shows how “Understand Know Do” weave together. Teachers mostly agreed or strongly agreed that the overview and programmes outcome bring to life the Purpose statement, and that the content is clear and easy to understand. Teachers were the most ambivalent about the statement that the refreshed curriculum content they had reviewed “will help bring to life the aspirations of whānau in your communities”, with 29% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

FIGURE 8 Overall views on the draft social sciences curriculum



Level of progress outcomes

There were 56 comments on the level of the progress outcomes. Over one-third were positive, over two-fifths were concerns, and there was a small proportion of suggestions, queries, or other comments.

Many teachers thought the progress outcomes were overall at the right level.

Pitched at the right level for Years 1–3. (Years 1–3 teachers)

On the whole we think the progress outcomes for Years 1–3, Years 4–6, and Years 7–8 are at the right level for our students. It is great to see them altogether on the same page so that teachers see understand, know, and do as a whole picture. (Years 4–6 teachers)

I think this level will be challenging for many of our students; however, I view this as the level to aim for. (Years 9–10 teacher)

One teacher from a sole-charge school that teaches Years 1–8 in one room commented that

I’m super excited by this know, can do, approach and the use of progress outcomes. I can see how much easier it will be to deliver curriculum content across the ages without feeling like I’m turning in circles making sure I reach all needs in terms of AOs and learning outcomes. (Years 1–8 teacher)

Teachers who expressed concern reiterated many of the same concerns that have already been noted: concerns that the expectations are too high for many students; that there is too much to cover; that students may not come with the learning they need from earlier levels; that literacy levels may be a challenge to achieving the intentions of the curriculum; and aspects some teachers felt were missing (e.g., physical geography).

How the Know, Understand, and Do elements weave together

There were 45 comments about whether the “exploring our place” example shows how the Know, Understand, and Do elements weave together. Just under half offered a critique or concern, around a third made a positive comment, and around a fifth offered a suggestion.

Positive comments included:

It is fabulous. (Years 1–3 teachers)

All sit extremely well around the Key Competencies. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Love the examples—very helpful. (Years 4–6 teachers)

This should be put much earlier in the curriculum document as is the most useful page in determining how to practically implement this programme in the classroom. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Critiques or concerns included comments that it was “a lot to cover” and that it doesn’t explicitly weave in the “Do” aspect.

We feel like there needs to be more clarity around how each element is implemented. The example looks like it is solely focused on the Know section and that is great but it would also be good to see some examples of what the Do would look like. Is this where we use our own inquiry model? (Years 1–3 teachers)

They show the weaving together well; however, it is a LOT to cover in one unit. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some comments alluded to a desire to see more global contexts.

Potentially still lacking in the area of global concepts. We see the importance of exploring SS [social sciences] in relation to our community and Aotearoa, but we are trying to build ‘global citizens’

and there doesn't seem to be much opportunity to look beyond our own environment. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Suggestions included:

- using colour-coding and headings to show the Understand, Know, and Do more clearly
- having more examples, ideas, and resources to help teachers weave the elements together for different contexts.

Other comments included:

This is comforting if [you are] an experienced teacher. If [you are] a beginning teacher this may be overwhelming. (Years 9–10 teachers)

The learning outcomes generally are helpful, but the lack of specific content to be covered will mean repetition and subject fatigue and disconnect between feeder schools into secondary schools. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Suggestions for additional learning experiences that could be described

The survey provided teacher groups with the chance to suggest learning opportunities they would like to see described in addition to those already in the draft. There were 80 comments. Teacher groups suggested a range of additional topics including:

- geography
- government
- civil rights and human rights, including gender equity
- future issues, such as the future of work
- issues related to the environment, climate change, and sustainability such as food production and food security, fast fashion, and plastics pollution
- global issues such as migration and refugees
- the global community
- financial literacy and financial capability
- journalism, misinformation, information skills, and critical literacy.

Some examples of these suggestions are shown below:

Social action plan different ways to understand and use different types of information from a variety of sources. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Make sure there's a balance of global and local. (Years 7–8 teachers)

More links to specific geography skills and knowledge. More links to New Zealand in a global context specified. More links to economic impact on society and politics. (Years 9–10 teachers)

A government and organisation context. (Years 9–10 teachers)

There were a few comments relating to pedagogy. These touched on topics such as the value of curriculum integration and collaborative group work.

Learning through play means you don't have children sitting on a mat with a teacher in front ... nor whole class teaching; it's more individual PLUS it's a modern learning variable space (e.g., open plan) ... so has its own challenges. (Years 1–3 teachers)

These are not learning experiences but it would be really useful to also include examples of how a social science inquiry (Understand Know Do) can be linked to other learning areas in the curriculum, particularly literacy but also maths, science, learning languages, technology, the arts, and health and physical education. (Years 4–6 teachers).

In addition, many groups suggested including more detail about the topics included, exemplars, and guidance on how to plan and teach a unit of work.

Need some exemplars to be given for units of work so we know what we are aiming for. (Years 4–6 teachers)

The learning experiences are great, we are just struggling [to understand] how all of this would fit into the class programme. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Bringing to life the Purpose statement

There were 28 comments about how the overview and progress outcomes bring to life the Purpose statement. Positive responses included:

[It] talks about communities, culture, and wellbeing. The Purpose statement is heard in the progress outcomes. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Yes, absolutely, it all links beautifully! (Years 7–8 teachers)

Some teachers commented that bringing the Purpose statement to life “will only happen with implementation”.

Visually this document looks like they link together; however, until we’ve trialled this we don’t actually know. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Some wanted more practical guidance or had queries about how to use the curriculum.

It matches the 3 interwoven elements but not sure if it brings it to life. It needs more specific, practical classroom ideas. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Can [we] begin with any of the three areas (e.g., first ‘Do’, then ‘Know’, and ‘Understand’)? If completed in any order will we get progress outcomes for each? (Years 1–3 teachers)

Some teachers were more critical. Comments included:

The progress outcome is very useful but page 21 [the ‘Exploring our place’ example] is another layer which is confusing. (Years 9–10 teachers)

They are certainly consistent, but they do lack ‘life’—it’s a very narrow view and understanding of the world and our team thinks it lacks global perspective, is repetitive and will result in complacency and disengagement—it might backfire on the genuine and needed purposes for the change. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Whether it is clear and easy to understand

There were 50 comments about whether the content is clear and easy to use. Around a fifth agreed, saying that it is “presented well” and “visually clear”.

Easy to follow and understand. Easy to measure children’s achievement and understanding of the inquiry practices. (Years 1–3 teachers)

It has more guts to it than the 2007 NZC. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some teachers who were less in agreement commented on the language, terminology, or typography in the document.

Lots of new terms to digest. (Years 1–3 teachers)

A bit clunky. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Language is too complex, [it] shouldn't be this difficult to interpret. (Years 9–10 teachers)

So many pages that seem to say the same thing. Know and Understand? Are these not the same thing? Some things seem like headings but aren't. There's bold and italic font all over the place. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Some commented that parts of the curriculum were “too vague”, or reiterated dissatisfaction about disciplinary content they felt was underdeveloped, such as geography and international/global contexts.

It's too 'grey' as to what students will cover in previous learning experiences. There needs to be more direction between levels. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some comments suggested that teachers and kaiako will need a lot of support to become familiar and confident using the curriculum.

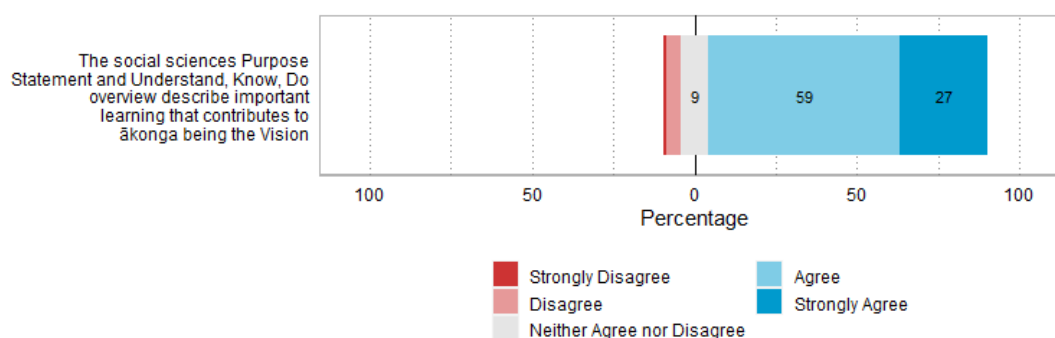
We are still trying to get the old set up out of our head. We wonder what will replace the LOs? (Years 4–6 teachers)

I think it will take some time, professional learning and discussion to fully comprehend the contextual meanings of many of the terms used throughout this document. A glossary of terms could be helpful to define these terms, particularly as many pertain to contextualised concepts. (Years 9–10 teachers)

How the social sciences content contributes to young people “being” the Vision

The survey asked teachers for feedback on the draft Vision for Young People. This feedback will be reported separately. With regards to the social sciences, teachers were asked if the draft social sciences curriculum content “describe[s] the important learning that contributes to ākonga being the Vision”. Most agreed or strongly agreed. Years 9–10 teachers tended to be slightly less strongly in agreement for both questions, but still tended to agree.

FIGURE 9 Social sciences in relation to the Vision



There were 24 comments in relation to the question about whether the social sciences content contributes to young people “being” the Vision. Positive comments said they saw “clear links” and could “see themselves and their ākonga reflected in the learning”. Other positive comments included:

We love how political, authentic, and real it is. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Covers different cultures, inclusivity, and diversity. Links our bicultural and multicultural society. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Those who disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed, had a range of comments. For example, some felt it was “too New Zealand-centric”, or that it would be confusing for teachers to implement.

Too many ways to interpret it which will lead to big issues later. Not enough structure for us to know what to do. (Years 9–10 teachers)

One teacher group noted that:

Kaitiakitanga was not explicitly mentioned anywhere else in the draft [other than the Vision]. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Some said they needed more explicit examples to understand how to support learning to achieve the Vision.

Good intentions, but we look forward to the explicit examples and resources. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Can you tell me what learning looks like within this Vision? (Years 9–10 teachers)

A few critiqued the way the question was asked, suggesting that “perhaps saying the ākongā are at the heart of the Vision, instead of them being the Vision, would make it clearer”.

Whether it will help bring to life the aspirations of whānau

There were 55 comments about whether this curriculum will help bring to life the aspirations of whānau in their communities. Many of the primary teachers who commented were positive.

We think you have done a great job at fleshing out the key concepts. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Excited to share with our community. (Years 1–3 teachers)

We have a multicultural community who value both Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural heritage and the acknowledgement of our current multicultural society. Whānau appreciate the cultural celebrations that we have because 1) they enjoy learning about other cultures and 2) they feel valued when we celebrate their culture. Our whānau will also appreciate that the social sciences goes beyond Aotearoa New Zealand and also looks at other parts of the world. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Others said what matters most is what teachers do.

It isn’t necessarily the curriculum that brings life. It is the way that kaiako bring the curriculum alive that brings life. This curriculum does provide that opportunity for this to happen though. (Years 4–6 teachers)

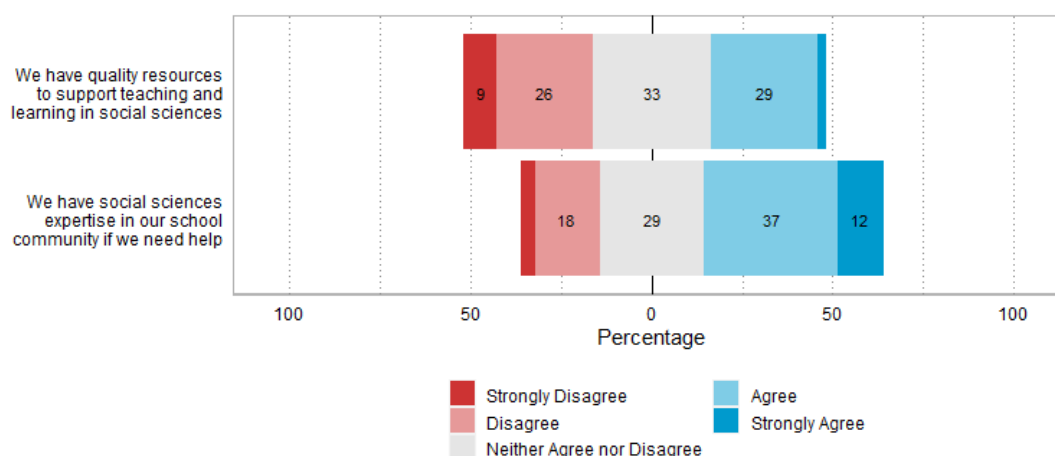
Some teachers said it was hard to say as they are not yet sure what the aspirations are of whānau in their communities, and further engagement and consultation were needed.

We don’t have a clear understanding of what the aspirations of our whānau explicitly are—it would be awesome to hear how other schools have tapped into this—not just in a general sense but more directly linked to curriculum. (Years 9–10 teachers)

There will be a large need for community consultation. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Social sciences support and resources

Teachers were asked whether they have quality resources to support teaching and learning in social sciences, and whether they have social sciences expertise in their school community if they need help. Years 9–10 teachers were the most positive on both questions, with 48% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the first statement and 66% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the second statement. Years 4–6 and 7–8 teachers were the most likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they have quality resources (45% and 57% respectively).

FIGURE 10 Social sciences support and resources

Access to quality resources

There were 75 comments about access to quality resources, expressing a range of views. Some teachers commented that they have lots of resources, including those they have developed or compiled themselves, and materials they find online.

They are predominantly those we developed for our own programmes internally or with small, effective networks of like-minded and competent colleagues. (Years 9–10 teachers)

There are a lot of great resources on TKI (and we are looking forward to the new online platform) and Journal Surf. These link to the national curriculum and we feel that we are able to teach the national contexts adequately. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Some teachers said they “always appreciate more resources”. Some teachers commented that, while they do have some good resources, these will need updating and adapting, and some kinds of resources are more difficult to find.

We would always appreciate more! (Years 9–10 teachers)

There are a few good quality resources out there but most are quite old now. It would be really nice if the MOE supported us by commissioning top quality resources that were freely (or at minimal cost) available for schools. (Years 9–10 teachers)

I teach in the lower South Island and am finding it difficult to find interesting local pre-European resources. National and international are much easier to find resources on. (Years 9–10 teacher)

Some teachers felt there were generally too few resources available and not enough that were good quality.

Lots of people starting to send out some resources but lots of backline master type stuff (we call these shut up sheets). (Years 1–3 teachers)

There is nothing apart from the few, dated, no user-friendly things on TKI. Alternatively, we have to pay for things ourselves. (Years 4–6 teachers)

We think it is somewhat alarming to see how many publishers are jumping on the bandwagon looking to make a buck. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Specific resource requests mentioned by teachers included:

- resources linking to local iwi and mana whenua
- focused resources, especially on new topics such as human rights, iwi and hapū issues, and government
- examples of ‘Dos’ and ‘Understands’ as with the ‘Know’ page (p. 15)
- relationships and access to local people and local stories
- more visual resources; for example, quality photos, videos, and images of life in New Zealand
- resources suitable for learners at the levels they teach.

Several teachers commented that it was important for resources to be up-to-date and easily findable, ideally all in one place.

A comprehensive directory of online social sciences resources would be helpful—it is all there but hunting it out is time consuming for teachers. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Access to expertise

There were 53 comments about access to expertise in the school community, expressing a range of views. Some teachers said that the social sciences expertise in their school comes from their own staff. Some identified additional sources of expertise.

We are already working with our Kāhui Ako, mana whenua, departments and schools (and individuals) in our university and polytechnic, colleagues in other centres and overseas. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Our local museum/art gallery is great. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Local iwi have come on board. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Some identified challenges including budgetary constraints on how many sources of expertise they could draw on, knowing who to go to, and overdemand from schools on mana whenua.

We believe we will struggle accessing quality info from local iwi—who are under resourced and under pressure from a lot of areas. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Limited resourcing—often difficult to find out where there is expertise and how to access it. (Years 1–3 teachers)

It takes long periods of time to achieve a relationship and access to the knowledge and stories of the local iwi. (Years 4–6 teachers)

One group of teachers commented that:

We are all full-time employed. Thus it would be great to have a collective group working on these new resources and connections. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Top three topic-specific resources needed for future teaching and learning

Teachers were asked to indicate from a list of options what their top three topic-specific resource needs are for future teaching and learning. Over half included Diversity in their top three, followed by Sustainability and Human rights.

TABLE 3 Top three topic-specific resources needed

Topic	Percentage
Diversity	50
Sustainability	36
Human rights	32
Civics	31
Climate change	29
Financial literacy	28
Other	6

There were 29 additional comments. Some teachers expressed a desire for local content, local stories, iwi and mana whenua histories. Additional comments about topic-specific resources included:

Diversity—It would be great to have a range of resources for students that link to diversity in our country. This includes cultures, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, and achievements. (Years 4–6 teachers)

A lot more about government and how to teach this to tamariki. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Financial literacy is not a part of the social sciences curriculum but if you require us to teach this, we would require resources on this. (Years 9–10 teachers)

The obsession with civics might suit politicians and panderers—we find that historical and human rights contexts provide plentiful opportunities. We see no need to dump more into our already overcrowded curriculum. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Preferred kinds of support

Teachers were asked what kinds of support they might find useful. The most commonly selected option was examples of programmes of learning (lesson plans), followed by online learning modules and facilitated workshops in our school (Table 4).

TABLE 4 Preferred types and modes of support

Type of support	Mode	Percentage
Examples of programmes of learning (lesson plans)	Self-directed	64
Online learning modules	Guided	63
Facilitated workshops in our school	Supported	58
Videos of best practice	Self-directed	41
Facilitated workshops offsite	Supported	35
Podcasts from thought leaders or experts	Guided	34
Online scheduled webinars	Supported	28
Peer-to-peer networks	Supported	27
A help line we can ring for advice from an expert facilitator	Supported	16

There were 20 additional comments. Some teachers commented that “a combination of various approaches is required”. Time and funding was a theme.

Teacher workload needs to be addressed when considering these options. Teacher Only Days could address these. (Years 1–3 teachers)

We have MOE PLD [professional learning and development] and we are just emerging from a pandemic. Staff are fragile and so we are taking things slowly and not wanting too many voices or things to do. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Some teachers wanted “rich unit plans backed up by detailed lesson plans, assessments, assessment rubric, and exemplars of moderated student work at each progress outcome”. Other teachers felt confident they would be fine with the supports available.

We guess they all have their place but we are used to sorting all this for ourselves both in social studies and our senior disciplines and have it well in hand. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some teachers expressed a strong desire for in-person and in-school professional support that was tailored to their school and community.

We are acutely aware that being located at the bottom of the South Island (as with other more remote places) we often operate solo and have different community expectations and aspirations to other locations in the country. We would really value some real person support from someone who knows our area and is able to help us make connections and make the refreshed curriculum relevant to our kids. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Greatest challenges for teaching the social sciences

There were 115 responses to the question about the main challenges teachers saw in teaching social sciences, expressing a range of views. The main challenges for teaching the social sciences identified by the groups of teachers included a perceived lack of teacher confidence and knowledge, resources, and time. These three challenges were often related.

Teacher confidence and knowledge

Teacher groups frequently mentioned the challenge of how to equip teachers with the confidence and knowledge needed to teach the new social sciences curriculum, and especially those aspects of the curriculum they saw as “sensitive”.

Up-skilling staff with localised curriculum, accurate history knowledge ensuring we are being authentic. (Years 1–3 teachers)

It is sometimes challenging when we don’t know a lot about the topic ourselves to give quality teaching experiences. It is important to have a clear direction so that the learning can be specific. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Teacher confidence with contentious/sensitive topics. (Years 7–8 teachers)

A few commented on the challenge of dealing with their own unconscious bias.

Teacher knowledge or range of knowledge can be impacted by their own perspectives. (Years 7–8 teachers)

Confronting our own bias. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Resources

Many teachers identified finding appropriate material and people resources to teach the new curriculum as a challenge. Teachers were especially concerned about finding resources specific to their local area and resources representing a range of different perspectives.

Having the appropriate up-to-date resources and access to real-life experts. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Accessing real and relevant support people who know our area. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Finding resources that are up-to-date, at the right level, and presented from a range of points of view. Making sure that voices that have often been overlooked are included. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Time

Related to the challenge of teacher knowledge and teaching resources was the challenge of time. For some, this challenge related to finding the time needed to familiarise themselves with the new curriculum. For others, the time challenge related to finding the time to adapt their current programmes and resources—or to create new ones—to align with the new curriculum.

Finding the time to unpack the new document properly—having the time and support to do it right. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Many groups also saw time to engage with their communities about the changes as a challenge, especially in communities with diverse interests and needs. Others were concerned about “negative parent backlash”.

There may be some backlash from our parent community There are some sensitive topics that people have avoided in the past. (Years 4–6 teachers)

And for others, the time challenge was about finding time in the school day to teach the new content.

Time in the school timetable to actually teach it all now that social science has expanded its scope so significantly. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Engaging all students

Another frequently mentioned challenge was how to engage all students in the new social sciences curriculum.

Boredom. This ‘refresh’ has removed our ability to examine local issues and compare them on a global scale. It is so strongly focused on New Zealand that we fear our learners will arrive at Years 9 and 10 and just be ‘over it’. We fear for the future of our senior subjects. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Engaging content for the range of diverse learners. There is great diversity in the knowledge that students bring with them to high school. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Greatest opportunities for teaching the social sciences

As well as commenting on the greatest challenges for teaching the social sciences, the teacher groups provided comments about the greatest opportunities. There were 111 responses to this question. Most responses related to opportunities for student learning.

Students' opportunities to learn

Some teacher groups commented on the opportunities for deeper learning.

I think this gives us an opportunity to ensure there is a stronger linkage of learning across these years. Centring learning around a progression of defined specific ideas, knowledge, and skills should affect the deepening of student learning in our learning area, and enhance our students' understanding about why it is that we learn about the social sciences. It gives us a more coherent focus for what we should be teaching and learning. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Some commented on the opportunities for more authentic learning.

Making learning real. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Using real-world examples in our teaching. (Years 9–10 teachers)

EOTC: To use our local area to teach social sciences, to teach children to treasure their inheritance and to take their place in the world. The ability to visit and live the curriculum. (Years 1–3 teachers)

The sheer scope of possibility in terms of teaching with passion, tapping into the energy and interests of our students, and bringing the world to life in a meaningful way. (Years 9–10 teachers)

And others commented on the opportunities for greater student agency.

To have a curriculum that reflects our community's needs and that our kids believe that they can make a change, understand each other better. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Ensuring that we are meeting the needs of students at a time when the world is rapidly changing and global issues are at the forefront of students' thinking and concerns. (Years 7–8 teachers)

The teacher groups also commented on the opportunities for students to learn more about themselves and others, and to develop the capacity to recognise different perspectives.

Belonging—know who you are. Knowing how to behave in your own environment and others. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Learning to be a good citizen and being open-minded to the different genders, cultures, and beliefs in our community. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Creating more well-rounded, knowledgeable, and empathetic individuals. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Inclusive and valuing others' opinions even if you don't agree. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Many teacher groups also commented positively on the inclusion of Aotearoa New Zealand's histories.

ANZH is finally being acknowledged and taught. (Years 1–3 teachers)

Pedagogical affordances

Several groups commented on the affordances the structure the social science curriculum provided for pedagogical approaches they saw as important, such as curriculum integration or grouping students across year levels.

Being able to develop a truly integrated curriculum that caters to our wide range of ages and stages. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Having something that feels more locally based to hang our hat on. Also being a small school with mixed level classes we love the framework of 0–3, 4–6, 7–8. (Years 4–6 teachers)

Opportunities to connect with the local community

And finally, the teacher groups valued opportunities to connect with their local community, including other schools in their area.

Forming meaningful relationships with our community and families. (Years 1–3 teachers)

People and our community and our own local curriculum. Developing pride. (Years 1–3 teachers)

The greatest opportunity to fully explore lies in involving our local communities. (Years 9–10 teachers)

Can be COL driven. Collaboration can occur. (Years 9–10 teachers)

3. Social Sciences learning area —agency feedback

All six agencies consulted by the Ministry of Education gave feedback on the draft social sciences content. Some agencies gave brief feedback, while others gave extensive feedback. The agencies also gave feedback on the draft Vision for Young People. The feedback on the Vision will be reported separately.

Feedback on the Purpose statement

Positive feedback on the Purpose statement from agencies and organisations included:

- The Purpose statement provides a clear understanding of the contributions of social sciences.
- The Purpose statement contains clear reference to human rights and human rights concepts.
- Great to see that the natural environment and sustainability both feature in the Purpose statement.

Some agencies made suggestions to strengthen or improve the Purpose statement. One agency suggested that the Purpose statement could be more clearly linked to the Vision for Young People.

For example, consider how ‘taking positive action as informed, ethical and empathetic citizens’ links with the ‘we are kaitiaki for our environment’.

Two agencies made suggestions about strengthening the visibility of the environment, sustainability, and the interrelationships between people, places, cultures, and systems. One agency noted that:

This draft curriculum intends to weave together the ‘Understand’ ‘Know’ and ‘Do’—it is important to see kaitiakitanga, sustainability, regeneration, etc. woven across all three elements and not stronger in one than the other.

It was suggested that better examples were needed of how kaitiakitanga can be demonstrated “in the ‘Do’”, to “support teachers and ākonga to be aware of the range of ways they can take positive action and share knowledge”.

One agency suggested amending the fourth bullet point under the heading “Pedagogy: Selecting meaningful topics” with the additions shown in bold:

How will the topic support ākonga-led inquiries into societal, **cultural, and environmental** issues in the rohe, the local area, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the world?

Finally, one of the agencies wondered if mātauranga Māori could be strengthened in the Purpose statement, and therefore linked back to the Vision statement

by going beyond statements like ‘sustainability’ and ‘regeneration’—which are Western concepts. Could the use of manaakitanga, aroha, and whanaungatanga be included here?

Use of terminology and concepts that align with agencies' priorities

Agencies were asked which aspects of the curriculum content connect most strongly with their agencies' priorities, and whether they felt the draft curriculum content was using terminology and concepts correctly. Agencies were generally positive about what they saw in the draft.

Roles rights and responsibilities—in text and over progressions. Love how it reads. In line with what we are asked about and correspondence to—quite parallel to the work of [our agency].

[We] like the way of weaving economic and social ideas. The way we think of the economy is more and more a means to wellbeing not purely financial dimensions. Brings in the concept of doughnut economy. Allows wellbeing of all sorts.

[The concepts and terminology] feel reasonably comfortable. Love the Understand Know Do structure and head hand heart.

One agency that works on New Zealanders' financial capability said they “can see a home” for this in the Know statement, and that the terms familiar to this concept “are used well”.

Another agency is working on projects that are centred around meaningful jobs, connection to community, and climate change action, and commented that:

Social sciences content and model provide a good platform for all of these—provided the tools are there for the teachers to tackle them.

One agency that works on matters relating to the environment felt the connection to their agency was strongest in the Know context “Tūrangawaewae me te kaitiakitanga | Place and environment”. The group identified opportunities for tweaking the language in the curriculum to strengthen the focus on kaitiakitanga and inspire and encourage learners towards positive, action-focused solutions to environmental challenges.

How could the language be more positive and hopeful around people and the environment? Could language that currently centres around impacts, environmental degradation, unsustainable use of the environment, etc. be reframed to be more positive and solutions-focused?

This group suggested this could be addressed in the progress outcome ‘key questions/ learning experiences’ on page 15.

Instead of framing it as exploring what negative things have occurred—could there be more questions around exploring what could be done? [Our agency] could provide examples of what some amazing communities, individuals, and organisations have done as case studies.

It was suggested that these adjustments could

strengthen the curriculum's ability to support teachers and students to make the connection between environmental challenges and people as part of the solution—and the interdependence of environmental health and human wellbeing.

This group also thought use of the word “regeneration” needed to be clarified as they thought it was being used in different ways that may have different implications. The term “regeneration of resources” is used in some places, and elsewhere the word “regeneration” is used alone with more open-ended implications.

It may be necessary to be more explicit around what regeneration (and sustainability) means in this ‘economic activity’ context. Is regeneration being used appropriately here—should regeneration be used when referring to economic models that prioritise material gain? Or is the regeneration

referenced here referring to genuine regeneration models that prioritise the wellbeing of the environment?

This agency gave further feedback on the way that human relationships to the environment seemed to be framed in the curriculum, saying that

The wording in the current draft, e.g., control, use, ownership etc ... reflect an anthropocentric approach.

The agency felt this did not reflect the holistic relationships between humans and the environment and the collective responsibilities signalled in the Vision. They also noted that Te Ao Māori and other Indigenous worldviews have an “eco-centric” approach, seeing people as part of the environment and inherently connected to it.

We need to reflect that the environment has its own needs and manages itself, that people do not sit above it or ‘own’ or ‘control’ it.

They recommended changes to the Big Idea “relationships and connections between people, across boundaries, and with the environment shape societies”, noting that

The statement of how people ‘shape’ the environment, does not go far enough to highlight the negative impact people have on the environment. The wording should reflect the two-way interaction with the environment, that it has on us, and that we have on it (both positively and negatively).

Feedback on Understand, Know, and Do

Agencies were asked whether the short descriptions under the headings Understand, Know, and Do (page 6 in the draft) capture what is important for all young people to learn in social sciences, and whether there is anything they felt was missing or would change.

Some agencies reiterated earlier feedback, including strengthening messages about young people learning to care for the environment, and strengthening the explicit links back to the Vision statement. A group from one agency said they were not sure if the descriptions on page 6 “translate the Do”.

One agency suggested that circular economy and bioeconomy would be great topics.

New Zealand will need to shift to a more circular economy over the next decade. Understanding, knowledge, action [is a] really good framing for this.

This group talked about all the changes and unknowns that characterise the world and New Zealand in the years ahead, noting the challenges of climate change, technological change, and socioeconomic unrest.

Where in this framework is there the ability for young people to be able to navigate this change, feel empowered through this, and also safe with the change?

They commented that the construct of “Understand” is “as much about what we don’t know as what we do know”. They felt it was important for young people to learn how to learn and live with uncertainties and unknowns.

Grappling with unknowns is not necessarily resolving them, but being able to support young people to learn and live with them; for example, being able to act and make decisions in the face of uncertainty or different possibilities that could emerge in the future.

Another agency noted the Years 1–3 “Do” progress outcome that says, “I can say what I think using kind words” and were “curious about this choice of wording”. They thought it was good that some of the emotional effects of learning were visible in the social sciences draft content and the Vision.

One agency felt that the Do section “is well written” but said that teachers will need scaffolding including resources to support certain areas; for example, financial capabilities, and learning how to “keep these conversations safe” and “without bias”, recognising the cultural and social implications of talking and learning about household finances.

Clear and easy to use

Several agencies thought the draft curriculum was clear and easy to use. One agency thought that “Compared to many other countries it is very progressive and where it should be”.

Another agency thought the Big Ideas in “Understand” and the “Know” sections were easier to get to grips with, while “Do” seemed less clear in intent.

Sometimes described as processes, other times inquiry practices or action taken as a result of learning.

How well the curriculum could support the agencies’ aspirations

Several agencies felt that this curriculum could help to bring to life the aspirations and strategic priorities of their agencies. An agency that has a focus on people and the environment suggested that “there is a lot of potential for this curriculum to support conservation and environmental education/education for sustainability” and noted that “we are facing urgent biodiversity and climate crises, alongside impacts on cultural heritage, which must be addressed by our national curriculum document”. This agency said that

While there is a focus on the environment, especially climate change, we struggled to find key aspects to support learning about the environment/kaitiakitanga scaffolded throughout the framework [and while] there is also lots of opportunity for the taking action component, we can’t see it integrated through the curriculum just yet.

Another agency said

There is a need for resources and support for schools, teachers, and students to enable emissions reduction and climate education in schools.

APPENDIX 1

School survey demographics

The tables below provide additional information about school characteristics by survey response. Some schools returned more than one survey; for example, from teachers at different year levels.

TABLE 5 School decile

Decile	Count	Percentage
1	11	6
2	5	3
3	3	2
4	17	11
5	13	8
6	10	6
7	13	8
8	18	12
9	19	12
10	42	27
Not answered	6	4

TABLE 6 School roll

	Count	Percentage
0–100	4	3
101–300	37	24
301–500	40	26
501–1,000	39	25
>1,000	29	19
Not answered	5	3

TABLE 7 School type

	Count	Percentage
Composite	4	3
Contributing	56	34
Full primary	29	19
Intermediate	8	5
Secondary (Years 7–10)	1	1
Secondary (Years 7–15)	21	14
Secondary (Years 9–15)	29	19
Special school	1	1
Not answered	5	3

TABLE 8 Urban area

	Count	Percentage
Main urban area	117	76
Secondary urban area	5	3
Minor urban area	11	7
Rural area	16	10
Not answered	5	3

TABLE 9 **Region**

	Count	Percentage
Auckland	44	29
Bay of Plenty/ Waiaariki	3	2
Canterbury/ Chatham Islands	25	16
Hawke's Bay/ Tairāwhiti	3	2
Nelson/ Marlborough/ West Coast	7	5
Otago/Southland	14	9
Tai Tokerau	8	5
Taranaki/ Whanganui/ Manawatu	7	5
Waikato	11	7
Wellington	27	18
Not answered	5	3

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