



Curriculum Advisory Group | Hui Toru, 25-26 August 2022 Key Messages and Outputs

Purpose

This document summarises key messages from the Curriculum Advisory Group hui which took place over 25-26 August.

This document is not intended to provide detailed minutes but to function as a high-level summary of key messages and outputs, and particularly so that we can involve the sector as the CAG's priorities continue to emerge and evolve.

Background

The CAG held its previous hui in May 2022 as a special, out-of-cycle wānanga to further understand the Ministry's curriculum work programme and hear the Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre leadership team describe their system-level priorities and concerns.

Hui Toru was intended as the next substantive opportunity for the CAG to mahitahi – focusing on refining and prioritising the areas in which its advice would be most impactful and transformational for the benefit of all ākonga across Aotearoa New Zealand.

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The CAG made strong progress in their collective desire to advance their strategic priorities. Given the breadth of the overall brief which the Ministry has provided to the CAG, it was seen as critical that the group collectively focus on a few strategic priorities which would make the greatest impact across the curriculum system.

Getting clear about what these priorities were, and how they might be approached, formed the core of the CAG's kōrero over these two days.

One metaphor the CAG started to explore was the notion of 'curriculum' as a networked system, much like a city. They discussed that what matters in urban design is infrastructure, access and pathways – a networked system which:

- Is well-laid out and clearly signposted to enhance a learner's agency,
- 'Makes it easy' for learners to move between education settings and mediums, without negatively impacting progress, and
- Sustains universal entitlement and access for all ākonga.

They agreed that they wanted their advice to inform the most critical, infrastructural elements of this 'urban design'.

So, they asked:

“What are the most key ‘infrastructural’ issues to address and opportunities to take forward?”



a) Influencing the Ministry's curriculum and assessment work programme

- The CAG reflected on the sector's sense of being "overwhelmed" by the scale of changes in the curriculum change programme. Many of the changes are positive and exciting, however, they are also difficult to make sense of in their full scale.
- There was a collective desire for the CAG to play a more active role as change leaders across this mahi, by supporting the Ministry to:
 - build excitement for the changes;
 - connect the changes back to Aotearoa New Zealand's aspirations for the education system, as described through Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation;
 - 'defragment' the different pieces of the work programme so that it forms one coherent 'whole'
- This work will form an ongoing, and crucial, aspect of the CAG's role as critical advisor to Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre but would require them to be aware of what changes were landing, and when.
- It was agreed that a small working group would be formed to build a scoping framework, describing the problem, what we know, and explore next steps. This would help make sure that the CAG could focus energy on those things which they can influence (in curriculum and assessment), rather than feel they had to resolve all of the wider environmental challenges like teacher/kaiako supply and overall wellbeing).

b) Common concepts of progress across the curriculum

- At the CAG's previous hui, members discussed the potential for a connective concept which binds the curricula together. This might support shared understandings of learner progress and progression across the breadth of education pathways¹. This involves both:
 - a conceptual element: i.e. "How can we support kaiako to understand children's progress across the system as 'growing/tipu, deepening/puāwei and expanding/whaitua' their capabilities?";
 - A trust element: i.e. even if we can agree a common framework or concept for progress - without the trust of the sector, we cannot access the information we need. To help the system adapt and improve (e.g., how to arrest the well-documented decline in achievement between Years 4-8). This is essential to us building a 'system that learns'.

¹ The CAG discussed its sense that the concepts of 'progress' and 'progression' seem to be used interchangeably across government and the sector. The group disagrees that these concepts are the same and wish to seek clarity on this.



- The CAG discussed how such unifying concepts of progress need to recognise the needs of learners at different stages in their development.
- What might those universal values be to help us think across the system? For example, as a starting point, what are the similarities between te ao Māori and Pākehā understandings of education? How can we approach this in a way which does create a universal set of values which could come at the expense of localised knowledge?
- Members discussed how understandings of progress between the Ministry and sector are not always aligned.
- There was also a fundamental tension about a curriculum's purpose, namely, is it about growing people, or is it a tool to understand what people need to know and do? Do these paradigms differ across different curricula?

c) Authentically honouring Te Tiriti through curriculum

- The CAG also re-engaged with the 'gnarly' challenge of how to reconcile the notions of "bicultural" and "indigenous" curriculum in the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.
- There was some consensus that the education system currently limits the mana of Te Tiriti, mātauranga Māori and mana ōrite. This is not an easy fix and will require deep, systemic change.
- To see Te Tiriti honoured and lived through the vehicle of curriculum, the CAG discussed:
 - Schools, kura and institutions protecting the identity and wellbeing of all ākonga, with iwi, hāpu and whānau doing the same, and
 - How 'access' is at the heart of indigenous curricula.
 - The importance of mana whenuatanga as an essential, intrinsic feature of indigenous curricula.



Next steps

Much came from the rich discussion across the two days, including the beginnings of a CAG work programme through the establishment of smaller, working groups to continue this mahi outside of the regular meeting cadence by focussing on different (but very much related) actions.

In the lead up to November, the CAG committed to progressing work in a few key areas:

1. Influencing the Ministry's curriculum and assessment work programme

As above, it was agreed that a small working group would be formed to build a scoping framework for the CAG's role vis a vis the curriculum and assessment work programme. This would clearly describe the problem, what we know, and explore next steps.

2. "Identifying 'game-changers'"

The CAG clearly heard that the Ministry does not always have access to the information it needs to understand the health of the system (especially progress and achievement information).

A small group agreed to prepare a guided kōrero with Ellen MacGregor-Reid, Hautū Te Poutāhū, and other Ministry curriculum leaders to expand on earlier conversations about the specific *types* of information they need from across the system to truly 'change the game'.

Any/all CAG members would then be invited to attend this kōrero.

3. Understanding paradigms of progress/progression

Getting to grips with the different ways/things the curricula value, measure, and share will help the CAG evolve its priority of building more coherence and consistency across the curriculum pathways.

Accordingly, a working group agreed to explore, with key Ministry thought-leaders, the underpinning paradigms (or 'concepts') of 'progress' in-play across the different curricula – and developments underway in the change programme (where these were far enough along in their development).

4. Growing common concepts of progress/progression

Closely related to (3) was an action to begin describing the need for a rationalisation and consistency across/above/beneath the various curricula to help make coherent these diverse concepts of progress and progression.

By creating a coherent construct, or way of relating these concepts of progress and progression, learners can be supported throughout their entire educational journey and growing understandings of progress beyond knowledge acquisition to take into account the whole of the learner – and the associated values/concepts.



It was acknowledged that this action may need to await the completion of (2). There is also a relationship between the curriculum and assessment work programme (1) and the “progress” element of this action item.

5. Authentically honouring Te Tiriti through curriculum

Following the engaging kōrero at Hui Toru, the CAG co-chairs have invited a further small working group to come together to explore next steps for progressing this strategic CAG priority.

To begin this work, a small rōpū would ask themselves: “if our system truly and authentically honoured Te Tiriti, what can we agree might look different to what we are currently seeing day to day?”

The CAG’s next hui is scheduled for November 2022.