

Summary of NZATE's Response to Revised English Curriculum 2024

The New Zealand Association for the Teaching of English (NZATE) received a draft of *The New Zealand Curriculum: English Years 7 - 13* on 9 December 2024 with a deadline for feedback on 18 December. Three members of the NZATE Executive had a one-hour meeting with members of the MOE on 10 December where the areas of focus were discussed. Executive disseminated this draft to a focus group of English teachers and curriculum experts and then organised a face-to-face meeting with this group in Wellington on 17 - 18 December.

The following is the summary of our feedback to the MOE. It has been collated within sections that will cover:

- **Areas that NZATE have identified as constructive.**
These aspects were highlighted as being particularly positive. We recognise these components as valuable to an English curriculum in Aotearoa.
- **Aspects that NZATE has identified as concerning or in need of addressing.**
These are aspects that lack development or clarity. We feel they leave too much to chance and need strengthening.
- **NZATE strongly recommends that the following actions are taken.**
These actions are based on the areas that NZATE identifies as being areas of concern and in need of revision, or that complement the constructive aspects already identified.

Areas that NZATE have identified as constructive.

Oral Language

The inclusion of oral language is appreciated, as it acknowledges the importance of spoken communication. There is potential for greater clarity in how progressions are structured, along with explicit support for creating environments conducive to building oral skills.

Text Diversity and Range

The curriculum's emphasis on diverse and varied texts is an identified strength. It supports students in engaging with a wide range of content types, fostering deeper cultural understanding and critical thinking. The "Criteria for Selecting Texts" has the potential to guide meaningful and inclusive text selection.

Cross-Curricular Literacy

The acknowledgment of cross-disciplinary literacy is positive. Incorporating structured literacy approaches into the English curriculum demonstrates alignment with broader educational goals.

Consistency in Delivery

Efforts to standardise the curriculum's delivery are seen as beneficial. Increased detail in learning outcomes could help reduce variability in classroom instruction and provide clear guidance for teachers.

Understand-Know-Do Framework (UKD)

The UKD framework demonstrates clarity and progression across phases. It effectively outlines learning objectives and provides a solid foundation for curriculum development.

Aspects that NZATE has identified as concerning or in need of addressing.

Document Complexity

The curriculum's length and repetitiveness would make it challenging for teachers to engage fully. Some phases, particularly Phases 3 and 4, include content that may be overly ambitious within the available teaching time. NZATE has offered several suggestions for simplification and better organisation.

Progress Outcomes

NZATE raised concerns about inconsistent terminology, varying levels of complexity, and a lack of clear progression between phases. For example, the use of verbs such as "recognise," "analyse," and "evaluate" across phases can create confusion about expectations.

Teaching Considerations Sections

These sections vary in detail and clarity. Some are overly prescriptive, while others lack sufficient guidance. A balanced approach that provides actionable advice without being restrictive is recommended.

Terminology Clarity

Terms like "engage" and "consider" are identified as needing more specific definitions to reduce ambiguity for teachers.

Phase 5 Development

This phase focuses heavily on receptive skills, with less emphasis on text creation and production. Greater balance is needed to support students in developing comprehensive English competencies.

Front-End Vision

NZATE identified that the curriculum would benefit from a clearer purpose statement that outlines its vision and aspirations for English education. This would help teachers align their practices with the broader goals of the curriculum.

NZATE strongly recommends that the following actions are taken.

Review Progress Outcomes

Ensure coherence and alignment with the UKD framework. This included refining the use of verbs and structuring outcomes to support logical progression.

Explicit Text Creation Strand

Introduce a distinct strand for text creation, ensuring this critical component is clearly defined and emphasised across all phases.

Streamlined Layout

Propose an interactive, digital format for the curriculum. This would allow teachers to explore content dynamically, such as viewing a phase in its entirety or tracking progressions over time.

Realistic Text Expectations

Revise text selection criteria to reflect classroom realities while maintaining high standards. Ensure criteria are phased over multiple years for manageability and deeper engagement.

Enhanced Focus on Oral Language

Expand progressions related to oral communication, ensuring explicit reference to skills such as confidence, listening, and structuring ideas.

NZATE expressed a strong commitment to supporting the development of an effective English curriculum that meets the needs of New Zealand kaiako and ākonga. While acknowledging the strengths of the draft, we emphasised the importance of continued collaboration to address identified challenges. Our feedback aimed to ensure the curriculum supports high-quality teaching and learning, fosters equity, and prepares students for future success.