



TE HUNGA RANGAHAU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

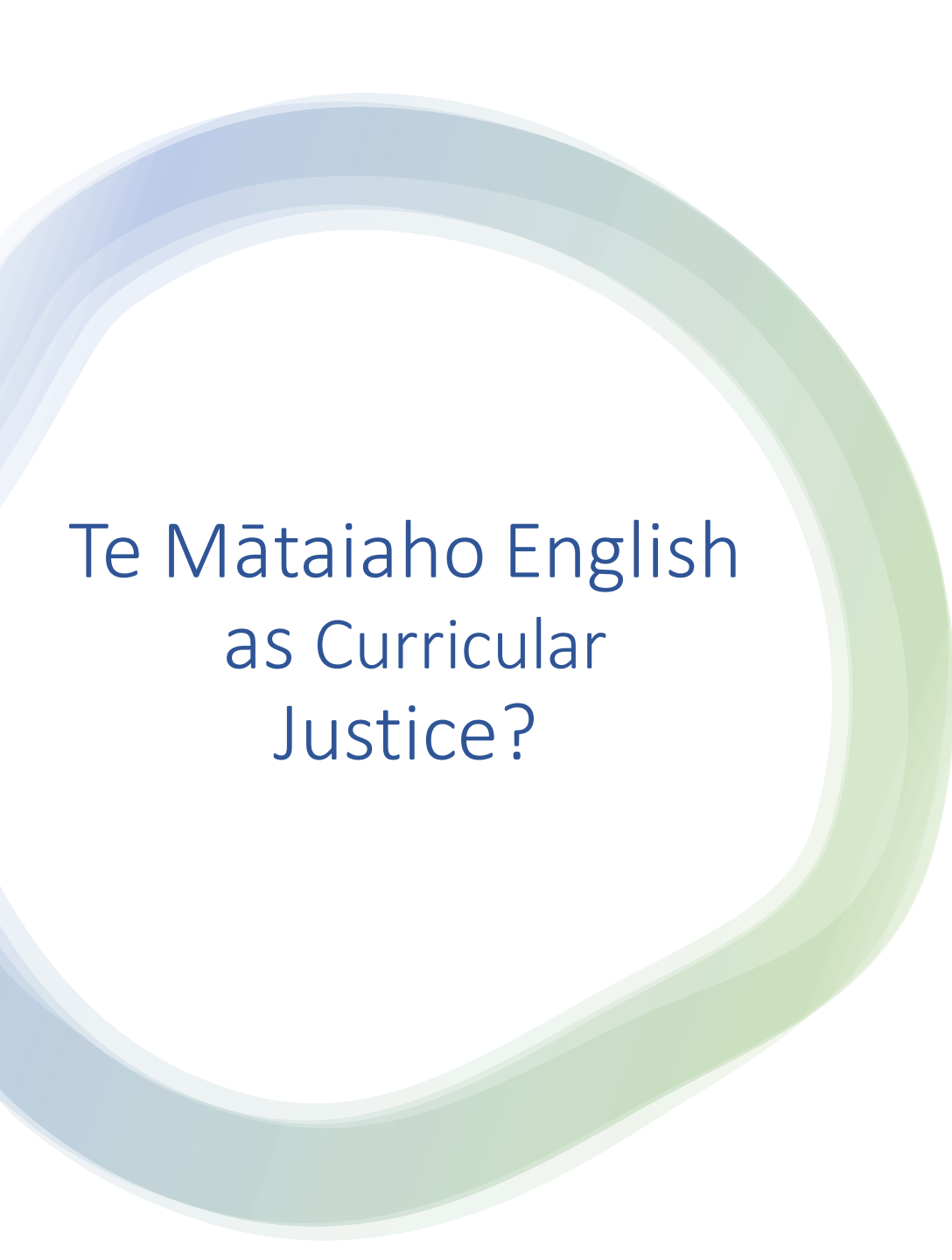
NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Te Mātaiaho English as Curricular Justice?

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Te Mātaiaho produces a version of curricular justice which aims to give effect to Te Tiriti and address long-standing inequities in education in Aotearoa New Zealand. We examine Te Mātaiaho's vision for subject English and its construction of students' identities as fundamental to a curriculum that advances both bicultural nationhood and just outcomes for all students. We draw on Raewyn Connell's (2010) model of curricular justice, and Nancy Fraser's (2017) notion of progressive neoliberalism to explore the opportunities and implications for subject English within Te Mātaiaho's vision. How might these frameworks for justice help to critique the development of educational policy and support the implementation of Te Mātaiaho's vision for bicultural nationhood and just outcomes for all students.

"This requires us to rethink the issue of justice in education *around the issue of curriculum*. (Connell's emphasis, 1993, p.19)

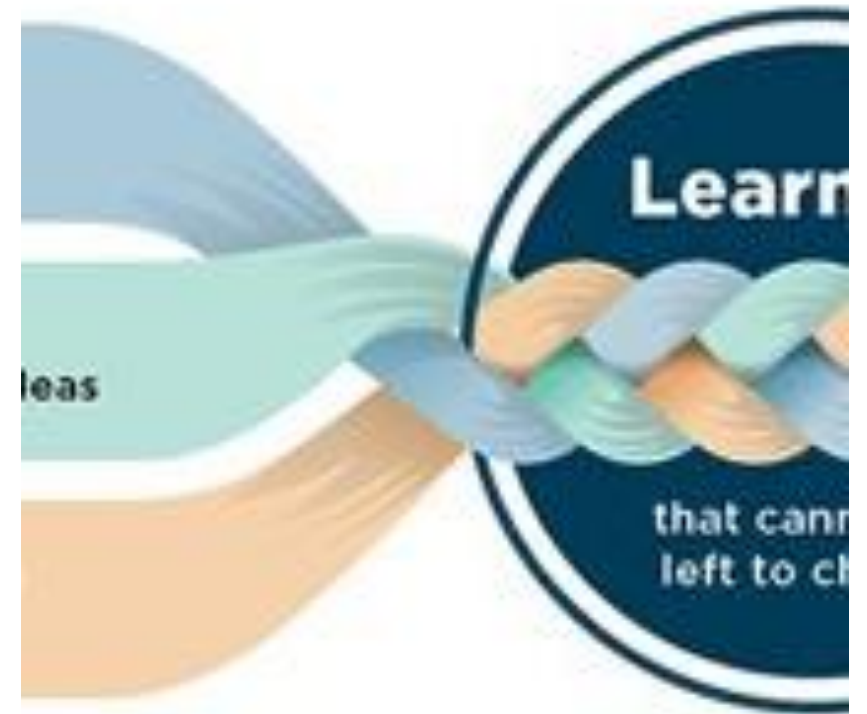
Connell's 3 Principles of Curricular Justice

1. The interests of the least advantaged
2. Participation of common schooling
3. **The historical production of equality**

Notions of
Curricular Justice

Righting a Wrong: Te Mātaiaho as constitutive & productive discourse

- Policy as constitutive discourse that produces meanings about education (Ball et al, 2014)
 - In as much as Te Mātaiho seeks to address longstanding inequalities to "*enable fair and equitable educational processes and outcomes for Māori and all ākonga...who have historically been left behind or situated on the margins*" the document can be read as producing a version of curricular justice.
 - We have arrived at a significant 'curriculum moment' - critique is vital and we need to ask: **why *this* version of curricular justice now?**
- *A caveat and setting the limits of our critique**

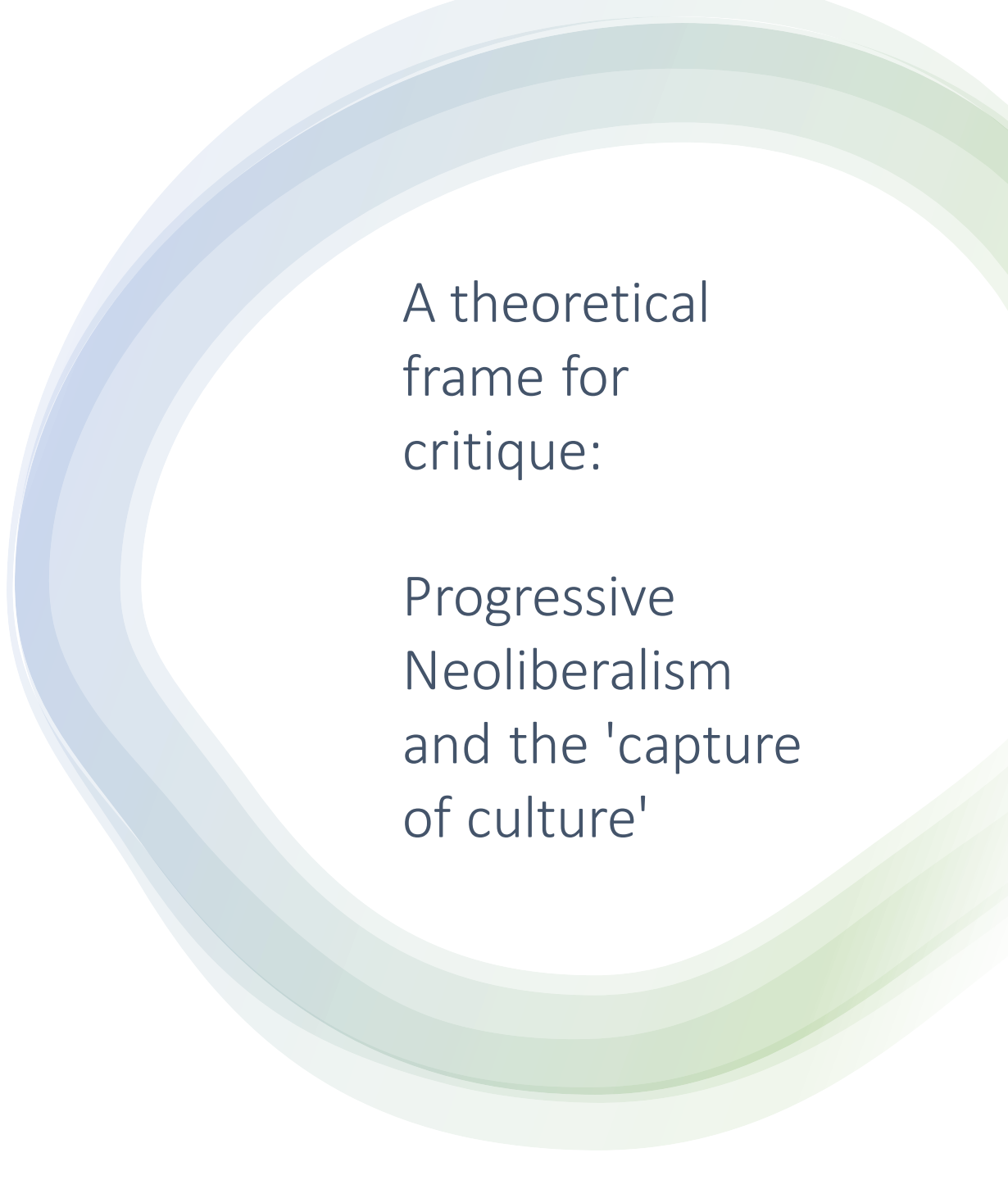


- Fraser (2017) "a finance-centred political economy tied to a progressive politics of recognition" offering a commitment to society without challenging economic arrangements (p.3)

- A 'hegemonic bloc' and broader cultural power so that policy looks and feels progressive (and partly is)

- Slater and Means (2022) argue that elements of progressive neoliberalism permeate education discourses.

- To what extent and in what ways might Te Mātaiaho share *some* aspects of progressive neoliberalism?

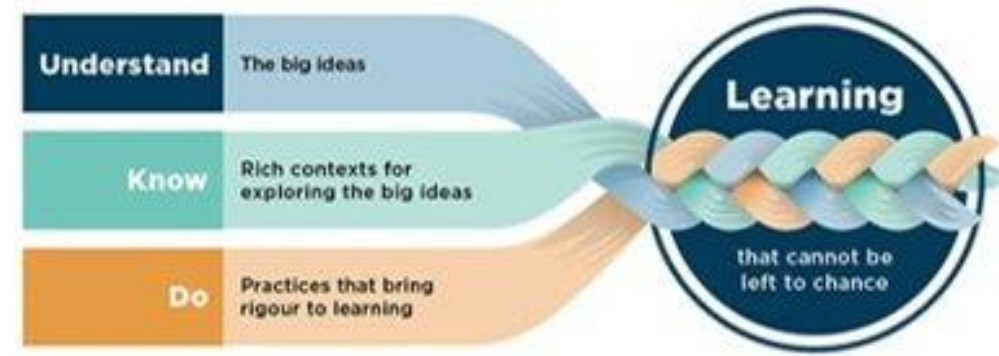


A theoretical
frame for
critique:

Progressive
Neoliberalism
and the 'capture
of culture'

Arriving at Te Mātaiaho

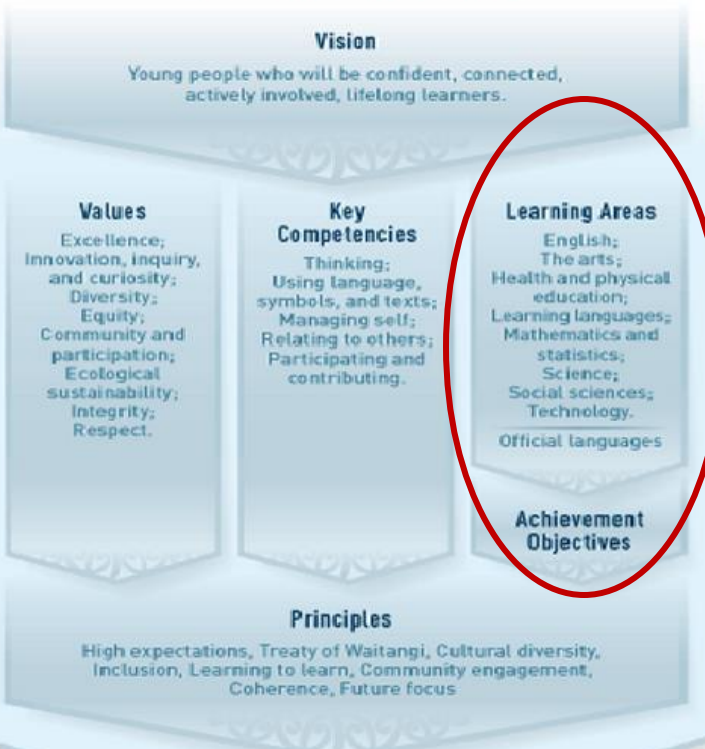
The policy context



The threading of values through the strands of **Understand**, **Know** and **Do**.

(MoE, 2007, p.7)

Directions for Learning



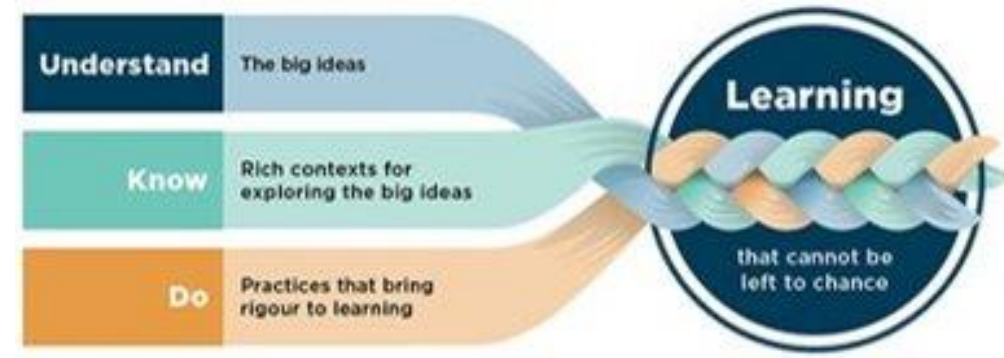
- ❑ *Te Mātaiaho* presents a shift from isolated values and achievement objectives of the 2007 New Zealand Curriculum, towards strands of 'learning that matters'.
- ❑ English joins others learning areas with a threaded learning focus of : **Understand**, **Know** and **Do**.
- ❑ The **Understand** strand presents *Big Ideas* which offer a sustained values-based framing of English centred on *Te Mātaiaho's* wider vision of curricular justice – which positions mātauranga Māori at its centre.
- ❑ These understandings envision specific relationships of knowledge and identity, highlighting the “importance of different world-views” as well as “enduring ideas that all ākonga can relate to and access” (MoE, 2023a, p.23).

English

Implications on subject construction



Implications on subject English

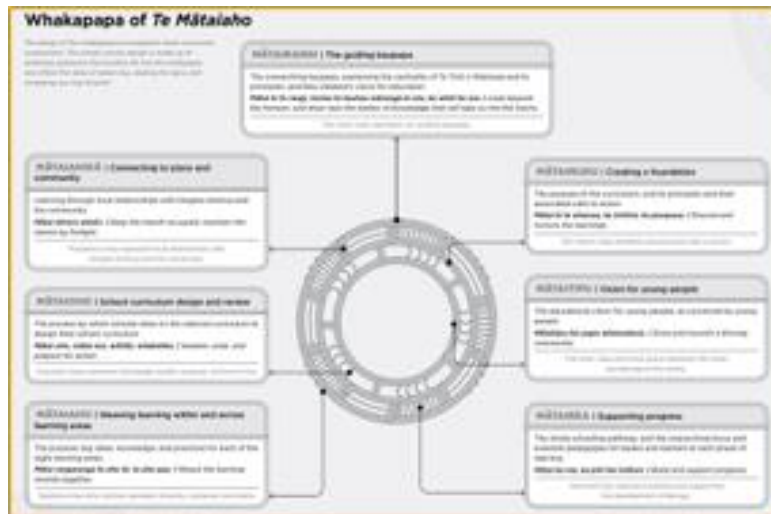


Te Mātaiaho's mission:

- 'give effect' to Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- is inclusive to the needs of diverse learners
- clear about the learning that matters
- is easy to use

- ❑ Key imperatives of *Te Mataiaho*'s wider vision of curricular justice: *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, *place-based and bicultural identity*, *ways of knowing and knowledge equivalence*, and *notions of school leaders as curriculum activists* are identified within this developing policy landscape.

- ❑ Engaging with the changes brought forward by Te Mātaiaho, discourses of subject English (Locke, 2005) are employed to help explore the opportunities and challenges for curriculum implementation.



Te Mātaiaho's whakapapa, containing its vision for learners

Te Mātaiaho

Navigating discourses of subject English

Big Ideas for subject English



Cultural heritage:

Appreciation
Deference
Acculturation

The stories of Aotearoa New Zealand are unique taonga tuku iho.

Literature and language represent knowledge and experience shared across time and place. Through the literatures of tangata whenua, tangata Tiriti, and those who have come from around Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, we understand where we have come from, who we are, and what it means to live in the Pacific nation of Aotearoa New Zealand. The literatures and languages of Aotearoa New Zealand have hononga (connections) beyond our shores and connect us to global literary and linguistic traditions.



Personal growth:

Self-realisation
Creative exploration
Personal integration

Language and literature give us insights into ourselves and others.

Our linguistic and cultural resources are part of our whakapapa; they help us to understand ourselves and others, and they enable others to understand us. **As we understand more about ourselves through our encounters with literature and other texts, we also come to understand and appreciate more about other people and their perspectives.**



Textual and sub-textual skills:

Formal mastery
Pragmatic competence
Social adeptness

Communication depends on shared codes and conventions.

Shared codes and conventions enable us to make sense of what is heard, read, and seen. They change over time and are used differently in different contexts. **How we use language in Aotearoa New Zealand has been shaped by our histories and linguistic heritages, and the encounters between them.**

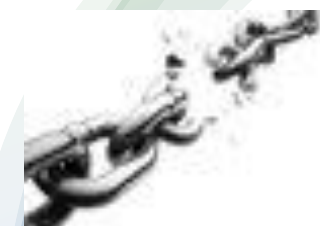


Critical practice:

Linguistic analysis
Detachment
Social transformation

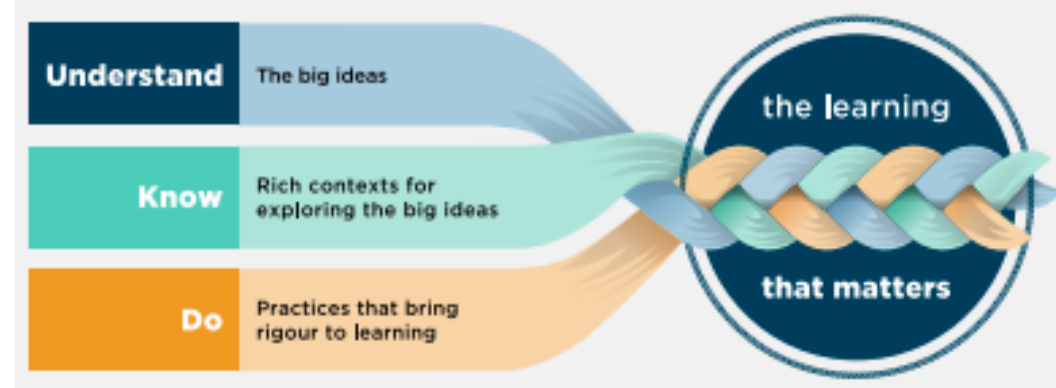
Literature, language, and texts embody power relationships.

Throughout history, literature, language, and texts have been used to uplift and share, and to dominate and exclude. Recognising and using the power and influence of literature, language, and texts give us tools to advocate for ourselves and others. Exploring the effects of colonisation on our languages and literatures is an important part of understanding power relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Affordances

To give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi



i. Threading learning with social values

- ❑ In the 2007 curriculum, references to Te Tiriti partnership and identity were largely isolated to the (front-end). English offered an 'awareness of biculturalism', but was otherwise contextually neutral.
- ❑ *Te Mātaiaho* (MoE, 2023a) positions Te Tiriti as the “central pillar” that frames “who we are, where we come from and what makes us a unique country” (p.9).
- ❑ English embodies language which prompts students to actively participate as bicultural beings within a place-based Te Tiriti context, and this construction is threaded across the English learning progressions. “our linguistic and cultural resources are part of our whakapapa” and one that is living and enduring (p.5).

*Ko te reo tōku tuakiri,
ko te reo tōku ahurei,
ko te reo te ora.*

- language is my identity, language is my uniqueness, language is life” (MoE, 2023b, p.2).



Te Tiriti o Waitangi ~ 1840

Affordances

Nationhood & a new cultural heritage



ii. Place-based and bicultural identities

- ❑ Constructions of subject English offer a new cultural heritage, creating an identity for students within a place-based and bi-cultural consciousness. Specifically, the Big Idea:

The stories of Aotearoa New Zealand are unique taonga tuku iho, anchors national identity as located within Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (tracing ancestry and connections to the Pacific Ocean) and Māori cultural consciousness as 'taonga tuhu iho' (ancestors' treasures to be nurtured) (MoE, 2023b, p.5).

- ❑ This signifies a departure from historical discourses of subject English which centre New Zealand as the 'antipodes' to a British and European way of *understanding, knowing, and doing*.
- ❑ *Te Mātaiaho* asserts that this knowledge begins locally, within partnerships within local communities and *iwi* (Māori tribe).
 - ❑ English frames a bicultural and pluralistic personal growth mission, drawing upon students' cultural literary resources while also appreciating the stories of others.

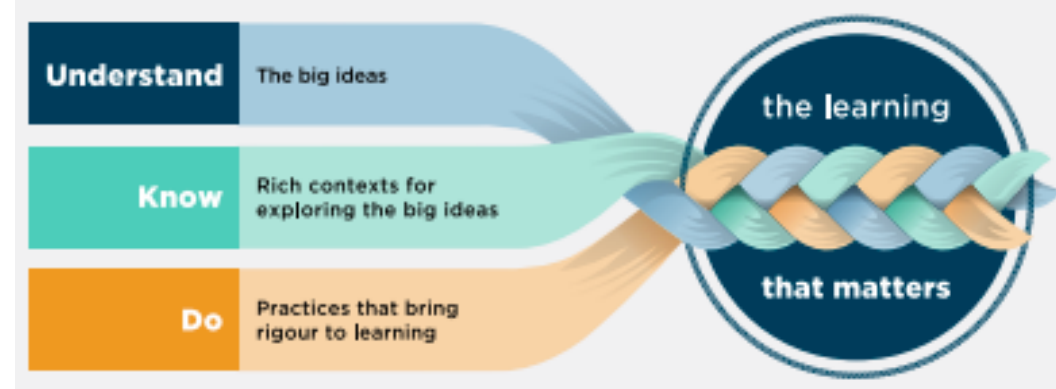


Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa
the great Pacific Ocean connector



Affordances

Mana ōrite & Knowledge equivalence



iii. Ways of knowing: mana ōrite

Understand

Literature, language, and texts embody power relationships.

Know

Text Purposes and audiences

Do

Critical analysis

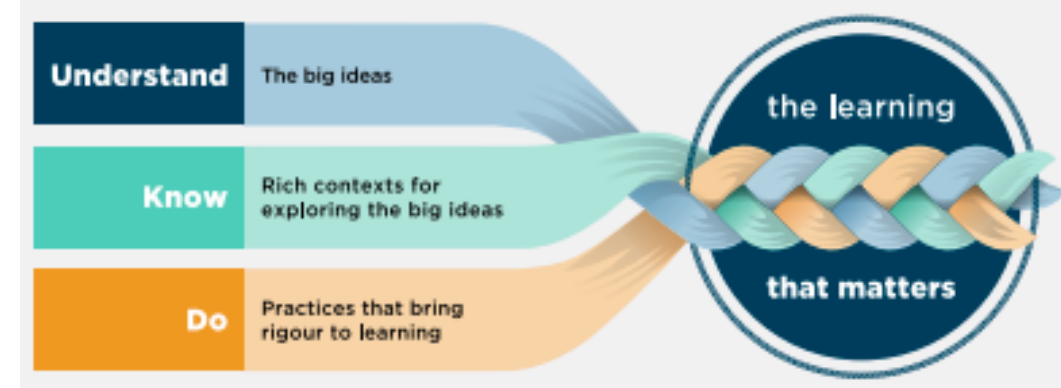
- ❑ *Te Mātaiaho* espouses discursive themes of critical literacy (Sandretto et al., 2022) towards recognising the historical tensions of biculturalism through the threading of the three strands in order to provide students with "tools to advocate for ourselves and others" (MoE,2023b, p.5)
- ❑ This begins with the **Big Idea**: "*Literature, language, and texts embody power relationships*" and is developed through the **Know** strand: *text purposes and audiences*, builds on this understanding through exploration of the language and texts students are exposed to and construct for others as "not neutral" (p.5).
- ❑ The **Do** strand: *critical analysis*, offers a lens to weave the strands together where texts are analysed to "interpret and challenge" relationships of "language, ideas, and power" through students' own text production (p.13).



Affordances

School partnerships

iv. Teachers as curriculum activists



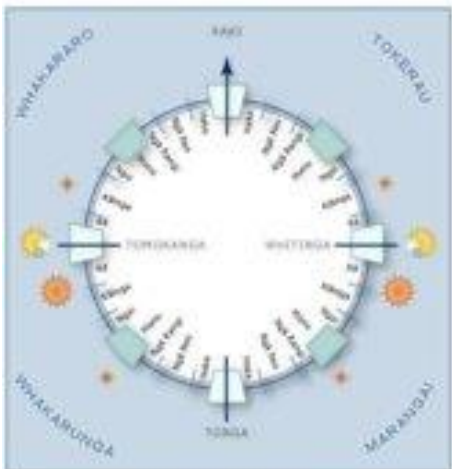
- ❑ *Te Mātaiaho* lists a range of ‘calls for action for school leaders’ stating that “transformation within and through education and schooling requires leadership that is courageous, resilient, and productively disruptive” (MoE, 2023a, p.8).

- Busy teachers may no longer jump past the value statements of English and go straight to the achievement standards but are rather charged to develop these values through a more holistic learner-centred and place-based curriculum.

- ❑ It is through enactment of these values that teachers take the role of curriculum activists in determining how they give voice to the socio-cultural knowledges of their local communities as part of broader knowledge and literary merit of subject English."

- ❖ **Teach in more holistic and responsive ways;**
- ❖ **Teach in more equitable and inclusive ways;**
- ❖ **Focus on the most important aspects of the English learning area;**
- ❖ **Focus on the language and stories of Aotearoa.**

(McDowall et al., 2023)



Challenges

Te Mātaiaho's version of curricular justice for subject English.



Constructions of 'Antipodes'



Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa
the great Pacific Ocean connector



A new cultural heritage and place-based construction of students

- ❑ *Aspires* for mana ōrite - English contains references to 'our stories' as “unique taonga tuku iho” (treasures to us) (MoE, 2023b, p.5).
 - ❑ Yet links between mātauranga Māori and subject knowledge remain implicit.
- ❑ The consequence of a decentralised school model demonstrates a missed opportunity to strengthen Te Mātaiaho’s dual aims of knowledge equivalence and clearer guidance about ‘learning that matters’.
- ❑ Communities and schools that are more readily able to tap into its knowledge and cultural capital will continue to hold its advantage over those that are disadvantaged.
- ❑ Identity (and its expression) focuses towards notions of wellbeing, rather than society.

Challenges

Affirmation or transformation?



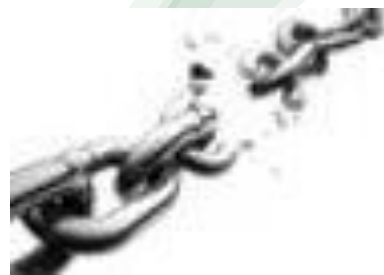
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Te Mātaiaho's version of curricular justice

Te Mātaiaho is not a neutral document; it holds significant ontological implications over both subject English and the identity of young people.

- ❑ There is exists a risk of a deterministic understanding of student identity focused on ethnicity and place, and risks creates silences in pursuit of wider curricular justice.
- ❑ Notions of school and curriculum activism are narrowed to assert young peoples' potential for transformative change as culturally located beings, subverting potential critique to wider hegemonic neoliberal ideologies (Fraser, 2017).



Challenges

Negotiating the knowledge question



Know

Text Purposes and audiences

Ideas within, across, and beyond texts

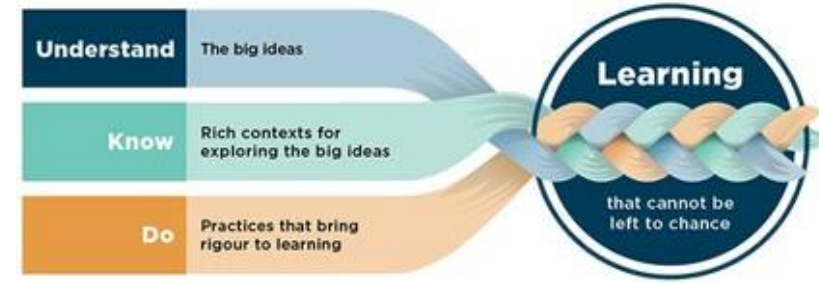
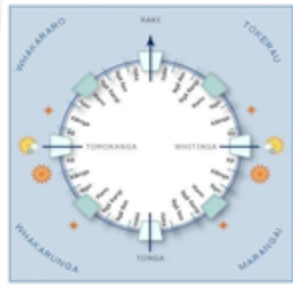
Features and structures of language

Values over Knowledge?

- ❑ A reduced focus on disciplinary knowledge is evident in the articulation of the **Know** strand, which is adapted from the 2007 curriculum's sub strands of:
 - purposes and audiences,*
 - ideas,*
 - structure, and*
 - language features.*
- ❑ In Te Mātaiaho's **Know** strand, *features and structures of language* are presented as one rather than separate progressions (MoE, 2023b, p.5).
- ❑ Greater focus is given towards affirming students' intent (ideas and purpose), while diminishing the value and impact of students' textual mastery and production.
- ❑ Discourses of cultural heritage, personal growth, textual mastery and critical literacy (Locke, 2005) are presented across the strands, yet provide limited coherence to how these constructions might be developed in classroom practice, and the outcomes of learners.

Challenges

Supporting school leaders



Feedback from the field

NZCER - Subject survey feedback conducted on draft English Te Mātaiaho, where teacher responses (139) identified the following challenges towards implementation:

- Understanding what to teach and when;
 - Teacher confidence, knowledge, time, and resources;
 - Translating the content of the refreshed learning area for their local contexts;
 - Student engagement with the refreshed content;
 - And how to assess the refreshed English learning area.
- (McDowall et al.,2023)

Of the 70,000 teachers currently employed in the primary and secondary sectors, 69% are European, 11% Māori, 3.3% Pacific, 3.8 Asian, 0.3% other ethnicities, and 11% undisclosed (Education Counts, 2020) (p. 117).

Sandretto, S., Tilson, J., & Shafer, D. (2021). Critical literacy praxis in Aotearoa New Zealand. In *The Handbook of Critical Literacies* (pp. 117–124).

APPENDIX A School survey demographics

English learning area survey—School demographics by respondent

School decile	Count	Percentage
1	9	5
2	9	5
3	11	6
4	19	10
5	5	3
6	11	6
7	10	5
8	12	6
9	35	19
10	51	27
NA	16	9

Urban area	Count	Percentage
Main urban area	149	79
Secondary urban area	7	4
Minor urban area	1	1
Rural area	15	8
NA	16	9

Education region	Count	Percentage
Auckland	95	51
Bay of Plenty/Wairariki	4	2
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	19	10
Hawke's Bay/Tairāwhiti	11	6
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	3	2
Otago/Southland	2	1
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	4	2
Waikato	11	6
Wellington	24	13
NA	15	8

(McDowall et al.,2023, p.45)

Subject English and curricular justice



The need to address ongoing questions about:

- Disciplinary knowledge in subject English and the role this plays in improving educational outcomes.
- The place and value of mātauranga Māori, Māori oral and literacy traditions in subject English.
- The role and limits of critical literacy.
- The role of subject English in a curricular justice project.

The historical production of equality

- Equality cannot be static; it is always in the process of being produced.
- Notions of curricular justice in relation to Te Mātaiaho should remain incomplete and unsettled.
- Curriculum should be interrogated as a product of historical, economic and political forces.
- The ongoing value of critique and capacity to embrace tension and complexity.



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Q&A

Titiro whakamuri
Kōkiri whakamua

‘look back and reflect so we can move forward’



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