

The Language of Wellbeing: Key Competencies in the NZ Curriculum

To achieve the vision of Confident, Connected, Actively involved lifelong learners...

The following is an extract from the 2007 NZ Curriculum Statement (see pages 12 and 13) with reflections...

Key Competencies

Capabilities for living and lifelong learning

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies five key competencies:

- thinking
- using language, symbols, and texts
- managing self
- relating to others
- participating and contributing.

People use these competencies to live, learn, work, and contribute as active members of their communities.

More complex than skills, the competencies draw also on knowledge, attitudes, and values in ways that lead to action.

They are not separate or stand-alone. They are the key to learning in every learning area.

The development of the competencies is both an end in itself (a goal) and the means by which other ends are achieved. Successful learners make use of the competencies in combination with all the other resources available to them. These include personal goals, other people, community knowledge and values, cultural tools (language, symbols, and texts), and the knowledge and skills found in different learning areas. As they develop the competencies, successful learners are also motivated to use them, recognizing when and how to do so and why.

Opportunities to develop the competencies occur in social contexts. People adopt and adapt practices that they see used and valued by those closest to them, and they make these practices part of their own identity and expertise.

The competencies continue to develop over time, shaped by interactions with people, places, ideas, and things.

Students need to be challenged and supported to develop them in contexts that are increasingly wide- ranging and complex.

Thinking

Thinking is about using creative, critical, and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas. These processes can be applied to purposes such as developing understanding, making decisions, shaping actions, or

2007 NZ Curriculum states: "Schools are required to base their curriculum on the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum, to encourage and model the values, and to develop the key competencies at all year levels." (page 37 and more to page 42).

So is this about both the learner and the educator discovering "a sense of purpose", creating a positive "sense of fulfilment" – positive wellbeing development? Aristotle called it *Eudaimonia* (or wellbeing).

An holistic education to live and thrive in a democracy?

Developing CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS. How does this support the learner's wellbeing, support the learner's academic progress. Does Inquiry, as a process support this?

constructing knowledge. Intellectual curiosity is at the heart of this competency.

Students who are competent thinkers and problem-solvers actively seek, use, and create knowledge. They reflect on their own learning, draw on personal knowledge and intuitions, ask questions, and challenge the basis of assumptions and perceptions.

Using language, symbols, and texts

Using language, symbols, and texts is about working with and making meaning of the codes in which knowledge is expressed. Languages and symbols are systems for representing and communicating information, experiences, and ideas. People use languages and symbols to produce texts of all kinds: written, oral/aural, and visual; informative and imaginative; informal and formal; mathematical, scientific, and technological.

Students who are competent users of language, symbols, and texts can interpret and use words, number, images, movement, metaphor, and technologies in a range of contexts. They recognize how choices of language, symbol, or text affect people's understanding and the ways in which they respond to communications. They confidently use ICT (including, where appropriate, assistive technologies) to access and provide information and to communicate with others.

Managing self

This competency is associated with self-motivation, a "can-do" attitude, and with students seeing themselves as capable learners. It is integral to self-assessment.

Students who manage themselves are enterprising, resourceful, reliable, and resilient. They establish personal goals, make plans, manage projects, and set high standards. They have strategies for meeting challenges. They know when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently.

Relating to others

Relating to others is about interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts. This competency includes the ability to listen actively, recognize different points of view, negotiate, and share ideas.

Students who relate well to others are open to new learning and able to take different roles in different situations. They are aware of how their words and actions affect others. They know when it is appropriate to compete and when it is appropriate to co-operate.

By working effectively together, they can come up with new approaches, ideas, and ways of thinking.

The language we use creates our reality.

2007 NZ Curriculum **Learning Areas** (page 38): None of the strands in the required learning areas is optional...

See the following resources for more information:

- Developing Young Writers in the Classroom (Gail Loane, 2016)
- Clarity in the Classroom (Michael Absolum)

Does the quality of THINKING depend on the depth of knowledge and understanding of language?

Is this about developing AWARENESS and having the language to express it, share it, record it...?

[CASEL website is a great resource.](#)

[CASEL website is great again](#) – Social and Emotional Learning in relation to academic outcomes.

- How do you integrate this into the learning day or learning programme?
- What is the relationship of the educator to the learner, and to learning?

Participating and contributing

This competency is about being actively involved in communities. Communities include family, whānau, and school and those based, for example, on a common interest or culture. They may be drawn together for purposes such as learning, work, celebration, or recreation. They may be local, national, or global.

This competency includes a capacity to contribute appropriately as a group member, to make connections with others, and to create opportunities for others in the group.

- How does the Health and PE learning area support this?
- How could this learning area be integrated throughout the learners' learning experience?

NZ Curriculum states: "The key competencies are both end and means. They are a focus for learning – and they enable learning..." (page 38).

Students who participate and contribute in communities have a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within new contexts. They understand the importance of balancing rights, roles, and responsibilities and of contributing to the quality and sustainability of social, cultural, physical, and economic environments.

Some sources or resources for Critical Thinking Skills

- [Guide to Critical Thinking](#).
- [Critical Thinking - Concept and Tools](#).
- [Diagrams for Understanding Critical Thinking](#).
- [Critical Thinking - How to Grow Your Child's Mind](#).
- [10 Top Tips for Teaching Kids Critical Thinking](#).
- [Critical Thinking Development: A Stage Theory](#) – from The Foundation For Critical Thinking (Linda Elder with Richard Paul).
- [Why We need to Teach Philosophy in the Classroom 2013](#).
- [Being Brainy](#) – a wonderful new resource developed by New Zealand neuroscientists!!

Contact Richard Wisnesky at Community and Public Health for more details on this information sheet (richard.wisnesky@cdhb.health.nz or 03 364 1777).