

## Geographical Imaginaries in Auckland Secondary Schools

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## Why might we be interested?

- School as only social institution through which we all pass?
- What geographies are taught in Auckland/NZ schools: what is geography in a lightly prescribed curriculum?
- What geographical imaginaries are produced in schools – how do people understand geographical worlds
- How do the practices of schooling constitute these imaginaries – curriculum, assessment, teachers, school organisation
- Responding to challenges of new curriculum

## What is taught?

See handout: Table 2- Achievement standards and settings most often taught by Auckland schools

**External achievement standards:** most popular settings easily identifiable (50%+ majority)

e.g. 88.9% of schools teach Tourism Development with a Rotorua case study in Yr 13 Natural Processes 90701



**Internal achievement standards:** trends less clear

e.g. very diverse. Research topics at each year level, most popular setting in Yr 11 90206 is taught by only 27.6% of schools

## A World of Muriwai, Rotorua, and Bali?

- Of the schools that taught the Yr 11 Resources topic, over 95% used dairying in the Waikato or North Island as the setting
- All schools taught a Yr 12 Natural Landscape, with 86% using the example of the Amazon tropical rainforest
- In Yr 13: 65% of schools studied Muriwai as their Natural Processes example, 88.9% focussed on tourism development in Rotorua for the Cultural Processes topic, and used either Bali or the Gold Coast as their international example

## Factors influencing schools' choice of standards and settings:



- Available resources
- Teachers' familiarity with resources
- Field trips undertaken
- Ability to use a setting to teach different achievement standards

■ Resources commonly used: TKI templates, AGTA templates, textbooks, outside organisations (e.g. World Vision). Often supplemented/ revised/ updated by data from internet etc

- Familiarity with resources: Teachers' preference – Human or Physical Teachers' knowledge/interest in setting



- Field trips:  
Consistent positive feedback
- Limited by time, funding, accessibility, school approval



- Ability to link standards to same setting:  
Broadens conceptual understanding
- Some achievement standards dropped (time constraints)

## ...by whom?

118 HODs interviewed from 29 secondary schools.

Most teachers at Auckland secondary schools:

- Studied at the University of Auckland
- Graduated after 1991
- Have a Bachelor's degree
- Hold a more Arts-orientated rather than Science-orientated Geography degree
- Also teach Social Studies and/or Travel and Tourism

## ...to whom?

See handout: Table 2- Profile data for participating Auckland secondary schools



Schools interviewed = representative sample:

- Deciles 1-10
- Rolls from 516 (Dilworth School)-2932 (Rangitoto College)
- Higher number of Geography classes at Yr 11 than Yr 12 or 13
- Private, public and integrated
- Some offering Cambridge or International Baccalaureate in parallel streams to NCEA

## Education for Sustainability (EFS)

Not taught by 89.7% of schools due to:

- Fear of spreading Geography students, reducing class numbers
- Introduction of new curriculum
- Lack of staff time, energy and resources
- Attitude of teachers/senior management towards sustainability values

However, some schools (34.6%) expressed aspirations to implement EFS in near future.

One school, Auckland Girls Grammar School, has offered full EFS courses at Yr 12 and Yr 13 for two years and has met with much success.

## Conclusion

- Gauge a sense of what geography has become
- Definite geographical imaginaries generated: tourism world of Rotorua
- Resource for teacher associations
- Troubled introduction of education for sustainability
  - Is EFS dead in the water?
  - Can geography make a concerted effort to rescue/capture as platform for a revitalised geography?
  - Does it want to?
  - Should it?