

This newsletter and the Secondary Student Achievement Professional Learning and Development initiative is funded by the Ministry of Education. The providers are The University of Auckland and Te Tapuae o Rehua consortium.

# National Newsletter: English

## Information and resources for middle leaders in secondary schools | Term 4 2014

Welcome to our last newsletter for 2014. These newsletters are published early each term as part of our national coordination role.

As students head towards external assessments the focus is on revision and preparation. The last page of this newsletter looks at the knowledge and skills students need to achieve success in the external standards, particularly in the literary essays. Markers report that the number of students producing rote-learned essays, or trying to 'bend' questions to fit essays previously attempted has reduced. We can hear teachers all over the country emphasizing to students the need to focus on the question and to plan. Students who aspire to merit and excellence also need to be able to write succinctly: quantity is not a synonym for quality. Our term 3 newsletter last year contained some ideas about preparing students for externals. You can access this and other newsletters at: [E-newsletters](#)

We are now looking towards next year. There will be one national workshop provided across the country and we will be seeking your input into the content of this day.

*Cynthia & Trish*

This newsletter contains information on:

- Reviewing your curriculum
- Our facilitator reflections on this year's NZATE conference
- Unpacking the external essay based assessments.

## Curriculum review and design

[Reviewing your curriculum](#) is an online space to support schools in the process of curriculum design and review. It provides access to information, research, tools, resources, and identifies four key questions for guiding a review process.

- What are our priorities for student learning (based on evidence)?
- What knowledge and skills do we need, and what actions shall we take to improve student outcomes?
- What has been the impact of our changes (based on evidence)?
- Where to next? What are our priorities for student learning now?

Reviews could focus on the front part of the document (principles, values, key competencies) or use the English learning statement on p. 18 of the NZC as a starting point. No matter what the approach, it is important to work collaboratively with all stakeholders; teachers, students, whānau and communities.

## Supporting our priority learners

### Supporting Māori learners

The *Getting Started with Ka Hikitia; Accelerating Success; Secondary Education* booklet can be downloaded from [www.minedu.govt.nz/KaHikitia](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/KaHikitia)

One more look at Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017, this Curriculum online site links to several resources to support schools seeking to support the success of their Maori learners. [Publications and resources](#)

### Supporting Pasifika Learners

#### [2013 Pasifika Education Plan](#)

[Pasifika Education Plan – Policy to practice](#) This blog post takes a closer look at the Pasifika Education Plan and the Pasifika Education Implementation Plan. It offers reflective questions, ideas, stories, and resources to support and inspire schools to make a difference for all Pasifika students.

Also go to [pasifika.tki.org.nz](http://pasifika.tki.org.nz) for links to quality resources, research, and other materials for teachers and school leaders.

[Talanoa Ako](#) published by the Ministry contains a section devoted to secondary education.

Email:

[PasifikaUnit@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:PasifikaUnit@minedu.govt.nz)

## NZATE conference reflections

### Cynthia Orr

Reading was the magic of this year's conference for me. Joe Bennett *reading* the mood of his audience and presented an opening keynote address that struck the perfect tone; he was hilariously funny and set, for me, the direction of enjoyment that each of the other authors further developed in quite different, but equally enjoyable ways. I felt honoured that both Dame Fiona Kidman and Michael Pryor had carefully considered their speeches well before the event and had written carefully constructed talks that I believe would be even richer if I were to read them. I was also fortunate to attend two workshops that had a focus on personal reading. Both Heemi McDonald from Kamo High School and David Taylor from Northcote College reminded me that we should not underestimate the reading that students might be doing in their own time, but that personal reading as understood in English, can and should be taught. AND that it can be taught in ways that are fun and differentiated for each learner.

### Yvette Isherwood-Krohn

This year was certainly the most exciting, challenging and worrisome conference for me, because I was a part of the organising committee. However, it soon became apparent that the committee had everything under control (thank you Nicola Bowe for your superb leadership), and I was able to attend some phenomenal workshops. Sian Evans never disappoints, and her workshop on Genre and Auteur theory was no exception. Her enthusiasm for Moulin Rouge was infectious and I am sure the external markers will see the effects thereof in the next few years! Similarly, Iain McGilchrist's humorous and informative workshop, Chicken Club, (because you have to bring a book, book, book) on reading provided plenty of inspiration and mirth.

I was also extremely fortunate to attend workshops by two of the keynote speakers, Jo Bennett and Michael Pryor. Jo Bennett's workshop on effective comedy writing provided me with plenty of useful one-liners that I intend to turn into essay topics for Scholarship practice: *Effective comedy is founded on truth, timing and surprise; Reading literature is consolation in a spiky world; Humour is just truth and common sense dancing* etc. Michael Pryor's interactive workshop on writing Fantasy (a genre I had always considered Science Fiction's poor cousin) had me creating a map of my own fantasy world through guided questions and was so successful that I briefly considered turning my plan into a novel.

These are the reasons the first week of my July school holidays will always be reserved for conference! See you all in Wellington next year!

### Nigel Mitchell

Alan Newall started with a joke. We all laughed, nervously. He said it would be good to develop an application that would mark essays automatically. He then outlined NZQA's vision for the [future of external assessment](#), when exams will be available online, any time, anywhere. Essentially it is a two-step process. The first step is to digitalise all assessment systems, and make dual assessment (online and paper based) available. This should be a reality within three years. Last year all post-marked Scholarship papers were scanned so that reconsideration could occur without the candidate having to send back the paper. The second step is to enhance validity, and create on-demand assessment.

In considering what Computer Based Examinations (CBE) might look like there are a number of key things to consider: how assessment might be enhanced; what kinds of marking applications would be required in different subject areas; how to make the delivery system secure and adaptable. In fact, the more we discussed it, the more issues we came up with. And it's this input from the sector that NZQA are keen to get now. If you have any thoughts or concerns email: [alan.newall@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:alan.newall@nzqa.govt.nz). He stresses that this process is about being ready when the demand is there, rather than forcing a change on people.

And yes he was joking about the automatic essay marking app. Probably.

## What's new?

NZQA's [English subject page](#)

**Moderator newsletter July 2014** includes guidance about [Writing integrated from other parts of English programmes: Level 3](#)

**Clarification documents** for [Level 1](#) have been updated

**Exemplar examination scripts** have been updated for Level 2 and 3 standards and for the Level 1 unfamiliar text standard.

NZQA's [English for Academic Purposes page](#)

**Clarification documents and annotated exemplars** for US 22750 and 22551 are now available at the [English for Academic Purposes subject page](#)

**2014 Best Practice workshops**  
These are run by NZQA. The focus is on *Making judgements in English* - Level 2 writing, and creating Level 2 and 3 visual texts  
[Best practice workshops](#)

### NZQA's Literacy page for

- version 2 of the Level 1 literacy unit standards (26622, 26624, 26625)
- updated cover sheets
- updated evidence sheets.

### Changes to University Entrance

Information can be found in the NZQA Assessment Matters circular [17th April 2014 A2013/024](#).

### National ERO report.

[Raising achievement in secondary schools \(June 2014\)](#) ERO visited 40 secondary schools in 2013 and investigated how well they analysed and responded to their NCEA data. ERO looked for evidence that schools had identified student achievement issues and developed initiatives that improved learning. Although a range of achievement data was considered, the focus for this work was schools' investigation of NCEA Level 2. The report highlights the practices of schools that effectively raised achievement; as well as those of schools that made some or little progress.

## Conference reflections continued

### Trish Holden

I loved the richness of the keynote speakers' language and ideas, e.g. these gems from Joe Bennett (wording may not be totally accurate)

- We teach the stuff of life itself.
- Technology won't change the nature of the human beast.
- Be honest. Take an interest in their [students'] humanity.

I was also taken by Fiona Kidman's reference to the words of Toba Beta "I earn the magic of words by writing, I learn the myth of worlds by imagining."

Ted Dawe talked of young adult fiction 'trying to shine a light in dark places.' It throws readers into situations where they have to think through the consequences of actions. When they face those situations in their real lives they have already thought through these decisions via fiction. He argued that narrative was a more important invention than the wheel as it provides a way for knowledge to be transferred.

Michael Pryor stressed that fantasy readers must be alert to background clues; they have to work harder to recreate the world as normal rules don't apply. After his address I made a vow to read some steampunk (something I am yet to do).

### Megan Taylor (From consumer to contributor at conference)

I don't mind admitting to feeling a little bit daunted by the prospect of presenting for the first time at the NZATE Conference this year. Having consumed so many excellent workshops, presentations and keynotes at NZATE conferences in the past, I felt it was high time I made more of a contribution this year. It's easy to push our students to extend themselves and often much harder to push ourselves, but I'm so glad I did. It was excellent professional development as it helped me to focus on best practice and really examine the whys and hows behind my teaching and learning choices. OK, it was a bit nerve-wracking, but it made my conference experience that little bit richer and more rewarding. If you're looking for a new challenge, now is a good time to start thinking about what you could contribute to next year's conference in Wellington. Regardless of our levels of experience and expertise, we all have something we can pull out of our kete to share. And it always feels good to make a contribution.

### Mal Thompson

**'Through the Lens': Visual Language: production and close viewing at Level Three** (workshop). Helaina Coote & Tamara Proctor-Yuill (St Andrew's College) give students a clear idea of where they are heading for assessment when they connect 'making meaning' (listening, reading, and viewing) and 'creating meaning' (speaking, writing, and presenting) curriculum strands by assessing students with 3.6 and 3.9. An over-arching theme is developed, such as 'marginalisation' with its causes and effects, and related to school issues. A range of texts is used, e.g. "Songs from the Inside", a TV programme (with four local musicians mentoring twelve prison inmates) that inspired the production of a CD. Two aspects I noted were setting up a context, e.g. socio-political or political to support students, and also teaching students to respond critically to ensure success at Level 3. Examples of student work for 3.6 provoked discussion on the visual elements that need to be predominant to develop and sustain the ideas – a good activity for any department.

## Useful links and resources

### English Online

<http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/>

### ESOL Online

<http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/>

### Secondary middle leaders website

Information, tools and resources to support secondary middle leaders

[Secondary middle leaders](#)

### Secondary Education Portal

Contains links to many key resources and websites. There is a separate section for middle leaders.

<http://secondary.tki.org.nz/>

### Secondary Literacy online

[Secondary literacy online](#) and [subject specific resources](#)

### Success for All

[Including Students with High Needs \(ERO June 2010\)/](#)

[ERO Review Process: National Evaluation Topics](#)

[NZ Education Policies: Special Education](#)

### Secondary Focus updates in the Education Gazette

Pages for last two years at [TKI Curriculum resources](#)

### Down the Back of the Chair

[www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz)

Phone 0800 660 662 to order copies of Ministry teaching resources.

### The Teachers Council

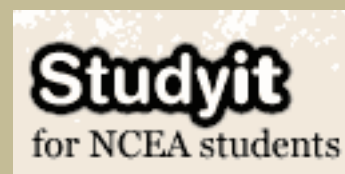
for details of the Registered Teacher Criteria.

### Educational Leaders

<http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/>

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<http://creativecommons.org.nz/>



# Unpacking the external essay assessments

The essay standards require students to produce a critical response to a specific question, applying knowledge from the studied text(s). There are four specific elements they need to show mastery of in producing that response.

## 1. TEXT KNOWLEDGE:

### Purpose and audience

- Genre
- Narrative point of view
- Social/ political/ historic contexts of the text

### Ideas

- Plot
- Characterisation
- Settings
- Themes/messages

### Language features

- Text conventions
- Style
- Authorial voice
- Tone

### Structure

- Genre
- Narrative structure(s)

### Possible Evidence

*Technical language*                      *Appropriate quotations woven into paragraphs*  
*Evidence from the text*                      *Evidence about the text*  
*Discussion of writer's purpose and impact on the reader/ audience*  
*Discussion of social/ political/ historic contexts and impact on the reader/ audience.*

*For film - point made first, evidence second rather than technique first.*

## 2. ASSESSMENT KNOWLEDGE:

- Understanding the key words of the achievement standard
- Personal engagement with the text

### Possible Evidence

*Genuine personal response/ argument*  
**Describe** - outline the specified ideas/ style/ language features used in the text "on the lines"  
**Explain:** "between the lines" or "beyond the lines" + awareness of the intention of the author/ director and/or the author/director – audience relationship  
**Analyse:**

- Explore more than one reading of the text.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of choices made in the construction of the text (evaluative language)]
- Analysis-related terminology
- Understand the text as a construct (e.g, suggest alternatives, make judgements).

**To what extent:**

- Taking a position on the text
- Discuss the text as a vehicle for societal or contextual analysis
- Philosophical discussion.

## 3. QUESTION KNOWLEDGE:

- How to choose the best question for your knowledge of the text
- How to choose the best question for your text

### Possible Evidence

- Using key words from the question throughout the answer
- Cue words (e.g. synonyms for words in the question)
- Defining the key words from the question (either directly or evidenced through the answer)
- Use of appropriate and accurate technical language
- Connect aspect of the text from the question to the whole text.

## 4. ESSAY KNOWLEDGE:

- Addressing both parts of the question (in an integrated way)
- Essay structure
- Developing a coherent argument

### Possible Evidence

*Connectives*                      *Transition words*                      *Topic sentences or phrases*  
*Sophisticated vocabulary*  
*Sticking to the point/ argument as developed in the introduction*  
*Thought provoking conclusion(s).*

## Contact Details

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Team Solutions welcomes Jenny, who has recently been appointed English facilitator based in Auckland.

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If you are receiving this newsletter in error or if you are aware of anyone whom you think would benefit from receiving it (particularly any new heads of department in your area) we would appreciate hearing from you.

Suggestions for improvements and possible content for future newsletters are welcome.