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National Newsletter: Secondary Literacy

Information and resources for Leaders of Literacy in secondary schools | Term 4 2014

Greetings to you all, Kia ora, Kia orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Mālō e lelei, Tālofa lava, Talofa ni.

Through this newsletter we provide a national overview of secondary literacy, discuss issues relevant to our community as they arise, and provide information and links to relevant materials and resources. In this edition we focus on supporting our learners with literacy teaching, promoting critical literacy and building skills for Māori learners.

Denise, Irene, and Mal

Literacy support for external assessments

High stakes are attached to the results from externals so naturally we want our students to be ready for them and experience success. Strengthening their literacy skills will build their confidence.

So how does explicit **literacy** teaching help with this? Three aspects here to consider are:

Using data about the learner

Being well informed with literacy information about each learner, enables us to target learning needs for our students in each subject context. Which students have not achieved the teaching aims? What do I need to do with individual students to help them learn? How can I ensure they will achieve the learning?

Identifying the literacy demands for external standards

Recently we have been breaking down the literacy and language demands of a standard with teachers in a range of learning areas. For example:

Easy	Identify ideas within text
	Connect visual with written text to make simple inference
	Link aspects of information in text and relate to own knowledge on aspect of learning
	Give reasoned and clear interpretation of specified aspect
Harder	Support explanation/analysis with sufficient and relevant evidence

Targeting the learning leading up to externals can make better use of the time available and meet gaps in student knowledge / skills, rather than teach a whole topic again.

Effective literacy practice /monitoring progress

Practice may include breaking down questions and exemplars, practising written responses, literacy activities to support use of relevant and subject-specific language, and having students summarise their own learning. Noting the thinking skills and strategies that students are using, helps us to develop more appropriate and relevant instructional materials to prepare them for externals.

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How can teachers develop critical literacy across the curriculum?

Critical Literacy: Asking questions of texts

'Students today need to be able to decide what is real and authentic. They need both basic literacy and critical literacy skills to deal with the many forms and types of text that are part of their world: to ask questions, to examine viewpoints, and clarify issues and relationships that are important to them and their future.' <http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/blogs/libraries-and-learning/13-10/promoting-critical-literacy>

What are the features of a critical literacy approach?

- Deconstruct the structures and features of texts. Ask questions of the text e.g. Why has the text been constructed in this way?
- Consider the ways in which we, as readers and viewers, are positioned to view the world through this text.
- Explore alternative readings. Consider what has been included and what has been left out. Which aspects of life does the author value? If we were to view the text from different perspectives, would we value those aspects, too? Does the text present unequal positions of power?
- Consider the time and culture in which the text was created. In what ways might the views represented in the text be similar to or different from the views that we hold today? Are there social, cultural and/or political reasons for the differences?
- Analyse the powerful ways in which visual, spoken, written, multimedia and performance texts work.
- Discover the ways in which our feelings, attitudes and values are manipulated by language.

Planting seeds with critical literacy: EdTalks

Susan Sandretto from the University of Otago talks about the broader understanding of 'texts' that we are familiar with, and discusses the notion of texts as being socially constructed. <http://www.edtalks.org/video/planting-seeds-critical-literacy>

How can we support our students to analyse and critique texts?

Key questions might include:

- Whose voice is represented in this text? What perspectives are omitted?
- How is the text influencing you, e.g., does the form of the text influence how you construct meaning?
- How does the language in a text position you as reader, e.g., does the use of passive or active voice position you in a particular way?
- What view of the world and what values does the text present?
- What assumptions about your values and beliefs does the text make?
- Whose interests are served by the text?
- What do the words and images suggest?
- Who is most likely to read this text and why?

Readings:

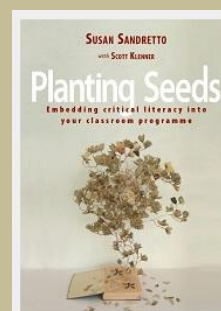
Ladbrook, J. and Probert, E. (2011). Information skills and critical literacy: Where are our digikids with online searching and are their teachers helping? *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 27,1,105-121.

Lee, C.J. (2011). Myths about critical literacy: What teachers need to unlearn. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education [Online]*, 7 (1), 95-102.

Focus on critical literacy:



"Literacy across the curriculum also requires teachers to understand the similarities and differences between the languages, texts, and literacy practices associated with different learning areas." *NZC Update, Issue 23, July 2012.*



Planting Seeds: Embedding critical literacy into your classroom programme

By Susan Sandretto with Scott Klenner, NZCER Press, 2011.

Title also available in e-book format from Mebooks.

School Journals: Stories and Articles about World War I

The June 2014 Level 4 School Journals provide a range of stories and articles about World War I that may be of interest to supplement reading in junior classes. You can access digital copies of the texts, as well as teacher support material here: [School Journal link](#)

Keep in mind that the School Journal is designed for students in years 4-8, and therefore content, reading processes and strategies need to be adapted for junior secondary students.

Strengthening literacy learning for Māori

At the NZLA conference this week one of the many workshops offered had a focus on using a te reo matatini approach using a set of resources. Frances Goulton introduced participants to the series: *He Manu Tuhituhi* – with her workshop on *Teaching Maori Writers*. [He Tuhinga](#) was written for yr 0-8 students but has some valuable resources that can be used with yr 9 and 10 students. This series is underpinned by ideas such as:

- How would Māori do this?
- What is the purpose for writing, for students and, for Maori?
- Who is the audience?

The series provides teachers with material to create learning experiences that are culturally responsive and give students an opportunity to include their own stories in their writing and strengthen their identity. The resources reflect what we need to know e.g. writing for schooling purposes: instructions, recounts, descriptive writing, and scientific explanations.

Another resource to develop literacy learning experiences for Māori students is Jenny Webb's, [A Māori Focused Resource for English Teachers](#). The study reflected Jenny's desire to make a difference in student achievement and engage students in meaningful learning. There are three sections in the report: reflecting student voice, research on this issue, and a collection of resources for the classroom. There are suggestions for texts to be studied that have been popular with students.

TKI also is a source of resources for supporting our Māori learners whether it be a collection of stories, such as myths and legends that have been handed down through the generations, or e-learning resources such as can be found on English Online: <http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/English-Online/Teacher-needs/Teaching-learning-sequences/New-English-Online-units/English-Units-NCEA-Level-2/Maori-media-models>

Finally, Literacy Online offers professional support to teachers: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Teacher-needs/Reviewed-resources/Diversity/Supporting-Maori-learners>



These journals support students in years 4–8 to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the reading demands of all the curriculum areas.



<http://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Maori-Myths-Legends-and-Contemporary-Stories>



<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Resources2/Maori-resources>

Useful Link:

NZQA - Literacy



New University Entrance numeracy and literacy requirements
A2014/013 - 17 Apr 2014

Although this was published earlier this year re some transitional arrangements for UE literacy, you may want to check again to see if some of your students have qualified for UE literacy under the conditions stated here.