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National Newsletter: English

Information and resources for middle leaders in secondary schools | Term 1 2015

Kia ora tatou. Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2015.

This newsletter contains:

- 2015 support, including dates for National Workshops.
- National Standards Data: Where to find it and what it might tell you about your new Year Nines.
- Identifying and supporting English Language Learners in your class
- Knowing learners as readers

What support do we provide?

- A national workshop focusing on engaging students, particularly priority learners, in English from Years 9 -11. (NCEA Level 1). See sidebar for details of dates, venues and links to enrol.
- A newsletter at the start of each term. This is sent to all schools in hard copy. We send it to HODs on our mailing lists and it is published online through TKI and on English Online.
- Some support for regional clusters and subject associations.
- In-depth work in schools that have been granted MOE support.

[Newsletters](#) are archived on TKI. Some previous newsletters included:

2012

- Term 3: a discussion on information literacy; a "how to find" guide for key documents on the NZQA and TKI websites.

2013

- Term 1: Using portfolios to improve writing; literacy in English.
- Term 2: A snapshot of 2012 NCEA achievement in English; thoughts about AS 91479 (Develop an informed understanding of literature and/or language using critical texts).
- Term 3: An inquiry approach to preparation for externals.
- Term 4: Unpacking the Create Visual Texts standards at all levels; Ka Hikitia 2013-2017; reflections on a visit to Samoa.

2014

- Term 1: Digital curation; analysing your NCEA data; supporting reading.
- Term 2: Ka Hikitia and effective teaching for Pasifika learners; analysis of English NCEA national data; preparing students for scholarship; encouraging personal reading.
- Term 3: The English Senior secondary teaching and learning guide; delving deeper into NCEA data.
- Term 4: Reviewing your curriculum; unpacking the external essay based assessments.

Where else can you get support?

- The MOE offers a range of curriculum support through its own website and through TKI. (See sidebar on p.3 of this newsletter.)
- The NZQA English subject specific page links to documents for NCEA
- NZQA now offers three different types of Best Practice workshops.
- Subject associations. Go to <http://www.nzate.co.nz/> for details of resources, this year's [Wellington](#) conference and local associations.

Free national workshops for English middle leaders

This year we will be offering one free national workshop. The focus will be on **engaging students, especially priority learners in English from Years 9 -11. (NCEA Level 1)**. Morning tea is provided.

Northern and Central North workshops

Click on the link to enrol.

[Auckland: 5th May](#)

[Northland \(Whangarei\): 7th May](#)

[Waikato \(Hamilton\): 11th May](#)

[Bay of Plenty \(Rotorua\): 12th May](#)

[Hawkes Bay \(Napier\): 15th May](#)

[Gisborne: 19th May](#)

Central South and Southern workshops

[Click here to enrol](#)

Invercargill: 29th April

Dunedin: 1st May

Christchurch: 4th May

Wellington: 11th May

Palmerston North: 13th May

New Plymouth: 15th May

Enquiries to
essadmin@otago.ac.nz

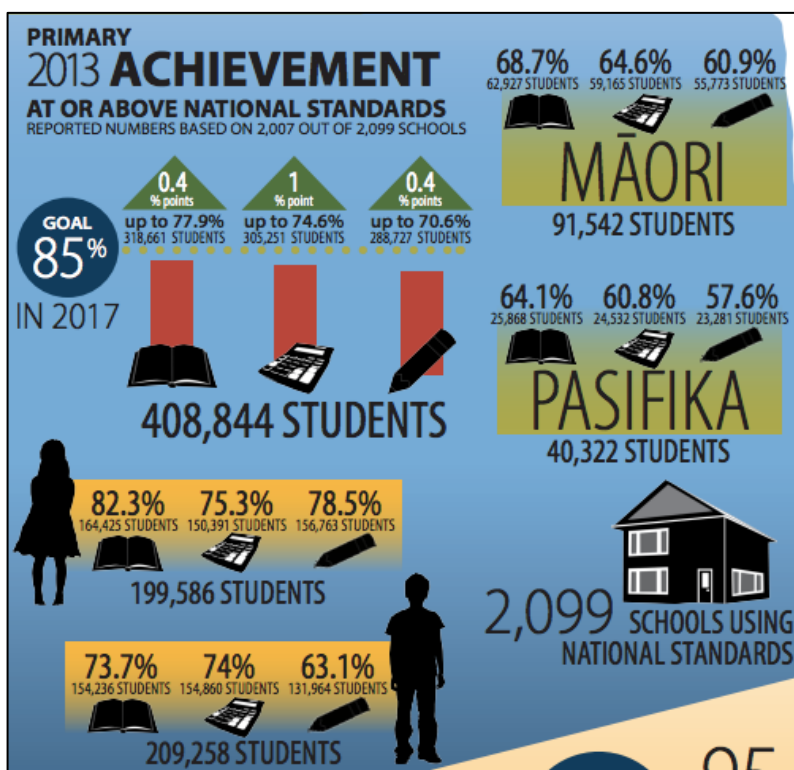
Writing and National Standards

Among the plethora of information available on the [PAI Pipeline](#) is a breakdown of National Standards data for you to consider as your new, fresh-faced Year Nines arrive. One thing that stands out is the fact that Nationwide, learners aged 5-13 are achieving on average lower in writing than maths or reading. Even more striking, although hardly news, is the picture for Māori and Pasifika learners (60.9% and 57.6% at or above respectively). Drilling down, you can see [2013 data by region and by school](#).

Questions to consider in relation to this data are:

- How do you engage Māori and Pasifika in writing that responds to and engages their particular learned experience, prior knowledge and narrative voice?
- What approach do you take to accelerate low achieving writers in the junior school? How do you measure progress?
- What steps are being taken to establish a cross curricular approach to the teaching and assessment of writing?
- How can you develop a shared understanding of effective practices in teaching writing with your contributing schools?
- How rich is the data picture around writing that comes with each new Year Nine as they transition into secondary? How can you collaborate with contributing schools to make it richer?

Addressing these questions could involve collaboration within school and in local clusters; teacher/leader inquiry and could even form the basis of a [Teacher Led Innovation](#) project. Resources such as NZATE's [Effective Practices in Teaching Writing](#) book and DVD can also support the process.



Source: [New Zealand Education Profile, 2012-2013](#)
<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/national-education>

What's new?

NZQA's [English subject page](#)

[Moderator's newsletter October 2014](#) contains information about the Teaching and Learning guides, Conditions of Assessment and Level 1 exemplar updates.

Exemplar examination scripts have been updated for Level 2 and 3 s

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](#) standards and for the Level 1 unfamiliar text standard.

2015 Best Practice workshops NZQA now offers 3 different types of [Best practice workshops](#). The Connecting with context and Best Evidence workshops are not subject specific. Subject specific Making Judgements in English will be offered in the main centres and will be the same as those offered in 2014.

[2015 NZQA key dates for schools](#) note that NCEA and Scholarship examinations will begin on November 6th this year.

National ERO report. ERO's latest report [Achievement 2013-2017: Success for students in 2013 \(November 2014\)](#) presents the findings of ERO's evaluation of the Ministry of Education's initiative, Achievement 2013-2017. There is also a summary of the report. The summary highlights the key findings and includes self-review questions for schools.

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](#).

Identifying and supporting English Language Learners in your class

A new English language learner steps into my classroom ...

English language learners (ELLs) are not a homogeneous group. They may be:

- students from migrant and refugee backgrounds
- NZ-born students from homes where a language other than English is spoken
- students from bilingual education settings e.g. students transitioning from kura to English medium learning environments
- international fee paying students.

Know your learners

Increase your understanding of who your students are, their backgrounds, educational experiences and aspirations. Be aware of their social and emotional needs. Some will be far from family and some will be facing challenging economic circumstances. For example, do you know what language they speak at home? How long they have lived in New Zealand? How literate are they in other languages? What cultural understandings, prior knowledge and experiences do different students bring?

How will you find out about your ELLs?

Enrolment information should be on your SMS. Specialist teachers of ELLs should be able to tell you about their English language learning stages on the Ministry of Education (MoE) *English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP)*. You could do a survey of your class. Make connections by talking with the students and their families.

How will this knowledge affect your planning?

The ELLP document will provide some information to create specific language learning outcomes for individual ELLs in addition to *NZ Curriculum* achievement objectives. ELLs need to access the learning at the curriculum levels of their peers (e.g. engaging in critical thinking) so think about opportunities that will amplify their learning.

What about reading?

Reading in home languages should be encouraged and extensive reading in English is vital for ELLs. Graded readers at the appropriate ELLP stages are useful for fluency and enjoyment. You can find out more about extensive reading and graded readers for ELLs at: <http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/>. Listening to the text while reading aids comprehension and language acquisition. MoE resources, such as the *Selections* and *Choices*, will be in your school and new texts can be ordered through orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz.

Scaffolded approaches to reading more challenging texts, such as guided reading, jigsaw reading and three level guides can be used to support ELLs. See approaches and strategies at: <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies>

'Trans-linguaging' is a new term, which has been adopted to view pedagogy from a bilingual perspective. It refers to the active process of shifting between and across languages that can be encouraged in school. Bilingual and multilingual students perform well academically when their wide language skills are recognised, reinforced, valued and used meaningfully within the classroom learning context. Having the opportunity to share across cultural and linguistic contexts is important.

Juliet Fry, English Language Learners and Home School Partnerships PLD National Coordinator, UC Education Plus

Useful links

Video resources

Information literacy standard Purpose and Audience

English Online

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

ESOL Online

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

Literacy Online

[http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Secondary middle leaders website](http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Secondary%20middle%20leaders%20website)

Information, tools and resources to support secondary middle leaders

The senior secondary teaching and learning guide

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

Supporting Pasifika Learners 2013 Pasifika Education Plan

Planning for ELLs

"English language learners are faced with the challenge of not only learning a new language but learning in it and through it" Pauline Gibbons (2002)

Incorporating these principles in your planning will help ELLs achieve language learning outcomes as they make academic progress:

Know the learner

- Identify the learning outcomes including the language demands of the teaching and learning.
- Maintain and make explicit the same learning outcomes for all the learners.
- Begin with context-embedded tasks which make the abstract concrete.
- Provide multiple opportunities for authentic language use with a focus on learners using academic language.
- Ensure a balance between receptive and productive language use.
- Include opportunities for monitoring and evaluation.

Knowing the learner as a reader

Best practice demands the expectation that all children will become successful readers and writers, that teachers will develop positive attitudes to reading and writing and that teachers will also be readers and writers (MOE 2014). "Reading involves learning the code, making meaning, and thinking critically, and students demonstrate that they are using the three aspects in integrated ways as they respond to the texts they read"(MOE, 2009).

Knowing the learner well will involve using diagnostic information (such as standardized test data, teacher observations, etc), related to the literacy learning progressions, and then designing interventions that will build students' reading skills. Often we see on Englishonline a request for a text to suit a particular group of students, which will engage them in reading, but we also need to consider the demands of particular texts and help students to extend their reading levels.

As teachers we do want our students to be good readers –reading with a purpose, finding the information, and predicting what comes next. How often do we provide a reason for reading, or create contexts in which readers operate in the real world outside the classroom? When we read ourselves we usually have some expectations about what we are going to read, so our students need to have some idea what the text will be about and what to expect from it.

Establishing what beliefs students have or curiosities about newspaper headlines or titles of articles can help to satisfy that desire to know and learn. A reading activity may be to ask a question relevant to the age and interests of the group. Students could then design a questionnaire and discuss in groups so they can share what they know already – this could be in the form of true/ false statements too. Then they can find out what they don't know. Identifying specialist language can also help students to understand the reading; also encouraging students to sound out an unknown word or if a word makes sense based on his or her understanding of it.

Sharing reading experiences can be a pleasant experience – get recommendations from others, and read reviews from friends – and sharing on a blog or Google doc emphasizes the social benefits of reading. Finding what your students are interested in can open up a range of possibilities for reading.

Mal Thompson

Further reading

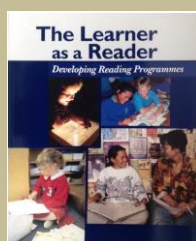
[MOE, 2009. NZC Reading and Writing Standards](#)

[MOE \(1999\). Report of the Literacy Taskforce. Report prepared for the Minister of Education:](#)

This makes interesting reading about the target set for 2005 for all children turning nine to be able to read, write, and do maths for success.

MOE (1996). The Learner as a Reader. Published by Learning Media Ltd, Wellington, NZ.

A fairly comprehensive textbook on learning to read. It takes a holistic approach, combining both the teaching of sounds and the importance of reading in context.



Read more about engaging students in reading in the Secondary Literacy Newsletter available on [TKI](#)

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If you are receiving this newsletter in error please let us know. 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.

