MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

These national newsletters are produced by the Secondary Student Achievement national facilitation team, as part of supplementary PLD support for schools, from the University of Auckland and Te Tapuae o Rehua consortium.
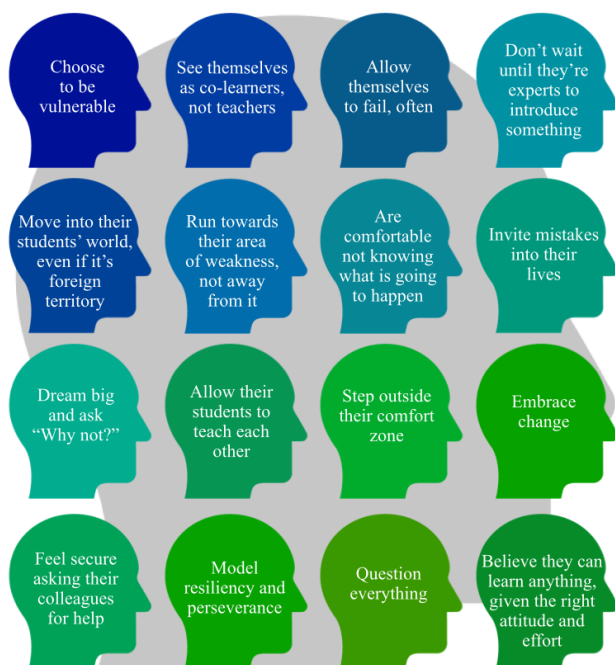
National Newsletter: English

Kia ora tātou. The theme of this newsletter is teaching and learning for the 21st Century. We look at thinking about 21st Century learning – reflections from the Edutech conference; digital tools to support the information literacy standards; and Christchurch and Modern Learning Environments.

The Profile of a Modern Teacher

21st century teachers are not experts in technology— they are experts in habits of mind.

In a rapidly changing educational landscape, modern educators:

- Choose to be vulnerable
- See themselves as co-learners, not teachers
- Allow themselves to fail, often
- Don't wait until they're experts to introduce something
- Move into their students' world, even if it's foreign territory
- Run towards their area of weakness, not away from it
- Are comfortable not knowing what is going to happen
- Invite mistakes into their lives
- Dream big and ask "Why not?"
- Allow their students to teach each other
- Step outside their comfort zone
- Embrace change
- Feel secure asking their colleagues for help
- Model resiliency and perseverance
- Question everything
- Believe they can learn anything, given the right attitude and effort

Created by: Reid Wilson @wayfaringpath   Icon from: thenounproject.com

Edutech Conference 2015

By Jenny MacDonald – Northern Region English Facilitator

This year's Edutech attracted 6,571 delegates attending over 3 days in Brisbane. It provided 8 parallel congresses catering to the interests and needs of K-12 education leaders, business managers, IT directors, library managers, higher education leaders, and workplace learning practitioners.

From keynotes presented at the Education Leaders Congress by Eric Mazur, David Price, Eric Sheninger, Phil Stubbs, and Heidi Jacobs, recurring threads dominated. The first thread was that our 19th Century structures, within which 20th Century styles of teaching predominate, aren't equipping learners for the 21st Century. We can only predict and try to envisage what the remainder of the 21st Century will look like while the 22nd Century is almost beyond our imagination.

So the big questions are: "Is our education system fit for the future?' and 'What do we need to do to prepare our young people for a future that is difficult to fully comprehend?'

Eric Mazur initiated this thread, noting that the lecture is an outdated mode of transfer of knowledge and does not develop 21st Century skills. What we do need to be doing is teaching learners how to ask questions, and to focus on developing authentic problem-solving skills. David Price spoke about what teaching and learning should look like: outward facing, highly collaborative and *done with*, not *done to*, students. Phil Stubbs spoke of the need to cultivate curiosity, develop the skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, character, citizenship, and growth mindsets.

So, how do we go about this? What do we – educators and the education system - need to do or change? The second thread of the conference focused on the tools of change. We already know that learners today create and share knowledge differently from previous generations via modern technologies. As educators, however, when confronted with something new and challenging, we often default to what we know; we tend to use

Useful e-learning links

TKI: Enabling e-Learning
Information, resources, and communities to support teachers and schools in developing their e-learning practice.
http://elearning.tki.org.nz/

The Pond
Pond, the Network for Learning portal, is an online environment aiming to unite New Zealand teachers, school administrators and students with providers of educational content and services.
http://www.n4l.co.nz/pond/

'Going Digital' from NZQA
'Going Digital' is a series of videos showcasing schools adopting technology in their teaching, learning and assessment. There are interviews with leaders, teachers and students about the challenges and opportunities they experienced as technology became a fundamental part of school life.
NZQA videos

Digital assessment
NZQA is visiting schools to start discussions about the way in which technology is changing teaching and learning, and also to discuss the increasing use of technology in assessment. Read more about NZQA's Digital Assessment Transformation (PDF, 793KB)

VLN
Virtual Learning Network (VLN)
He kōtuinga ako ā-ipurangi, is an interactive resource provided by the Ministry of Education for all New Zealand educators.The VLN provides access to the Learning Exchange, Groups and the LCO Handbook.

Modern Teacher Profile graphic on this page created by Reid Wilson.

(Continued from previous page)
last century genres and use last century tools because that is what we're comfortable with. As David Price said in his keynote, "When all you've got is a hammer everything looks like a nail." In other words, if we continue to use the same tools there will be no real change or inadequate change and we will fail to develop the attributes that a 21st Century learner requires.

Surprisingly, for an EduTECH conference, technology was not considered to be the main lever for change. Many speakers reiterated that we don't lead the change in educating for the future with technology; we lead the change through pedagogy. Pedagogy should be the driver with technology acting as the accelerator. Teachers need to make learning visible, irresistible, wonder-full in the sense that it is inspiring and activates the curiosity of the learner. The industrial model of education does little to inspire or activate curiosity, hence the need to move towards models of education that are personalised, problem and inquiry based, and at times self-directed.

The third main thread of the conference was that learners need educators to step up and own their own learning, as we would hope that learners do. Teachers need to step out of their own comfort zones and step away from the blackboard, whiteboard and PowerPoint - consider other methods to engage leaners and activate curiosity in more global, local, interpersonal and intrapersonal ways. In a world that is changing so rapidly, teachers need to beware of habit - reflect, adapt and change practice accordingly.

The bottom line is, we need to rethink how we teach and assess otherwise we will continue to educate the followers of yesterday, not the leaders of tomorrow.

Supporting students to think critically about visual texts

Before students create their own visual texts it is important for them to look at and consider real world examples. We often look at those examples with a view to considering the visual and verbal language techniques used to create the message. Another possibility is to also consider social semiotics.

A key principle in social semiotics, both as a reader and viewer, as well as a writer and designer, is to consider the audience, purpose and resources that have been used in any text. There are questions that they could ask to support their understanding of social semiotics:

- In what social context will this text be used or read?
- Will it be appropriate and clear?
- What impact does the choice of colour, layout and image content have on the viewer?
- Is there a particular viewpoint put forward here?
- Who is included and who or what is excluded?
- Who may be challenged, offended or discriminated against by certain content?

(Adapted from *The Shape of text to Come: How Image and Text work* by Jon Callow, p26.)

A quick activity would be to ask students to think about the two examples of readily available clipart in relation to the questions above.

Students could also apply the questions to their own or peer work to evaluate its effectiveness. See the Senior Teaching and Learning Guide for English for further support and ideas around effective teaching and learning in English: http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/English

Modern learning in Canterbury

By Megan Taylor – English Facilitator, Canterbury

The ground may be shaking a lot less frequently in Christchurch these days, but Canterbury schools are preparing for a shake-up of a different kind. Damaged and under-code classrooms all over the region are being bowled and replaced by 'innovative learning spaces' and 'modern learning environments' (MLEs). While the Ministry of Education admits on its website that it is 'difficult to clearly link the design of spaces with improved outcomes' for students, we do know from the huge body of future-focused education research that open, flexible spaces for teaching and learning offer great opportunities for the kind of 21st Century learning Jenny has already referenced earlier in this newsletter.

The OECD report, *The Nature of Learning*[1.] describes seven principles to guide the development of learning environments for the 21st Century. Teachers embracing principles such as 'learners at the centre', 'the social nature of learning' and 'building horizontal connections' will find the MLE an ideal space for teaching and learning.

Examples of teachers already working in MLEs in secondary schools are somewhat thin on the ground, but some of those who are report that a key advantage of the MLE over a single-cell classroom is the capacity to combine classes and team-teach with a colleague. Teachers working together will find they can offer students more choice of texts, topics and themes. Programmes can be more readily differentiated and one teacher can always be available to work with small groups of students, responding to needs as they arise. Collaborating with a colleague from another learning area can offer students a richer learning programme, helping them understand natural connections between disciplines.

Pedagogies that are effective in the MLE are also likely to be more culturally responsive than traditional 'chalk and talk' approaches[2]. The open, flexible spaces of MLEs tend to support co-operative and collaborative groupings and tuakana-teina relationships. In this way they encourage increased discursive teaching practice and so support better outcomes for Māori students.

While the potential of MLEs is exciting, John Hattie has words of caution in his recent paper 'The Politics of Distraction.'[3] He warns us that traditional teaching approaches need to change in order to make the most of these modern spaces and the space alone will not bring about this change. Teachers will need coaching and support to develop new ways of collaborating and teaching *before* their new buildings open.

For those of us expecting to be working in MLEs in the next few years, now is the time to get prepared. HODs can be thinking about the innovators in their departments who might be ready to trial innovative approaches and pave the way for others. Which teachers and learning areas might be keen to join forces? It's not long before 2016's timetable starts to take shape in your school. What requests might you make of your timetabler now to ensure your department is able to start experimenting?

The rebuilding of Canterbury's schools will significantly change the local educational landscape. Let's embrace the change and make it a positive one for teachers and students alike.

References: See references opposite.

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References for article opposite

1. The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice (OECD)

2. Māui whakarau, kura whakarau Teaching and learning environments to support priority learners.

3. Download *What Doesn't Work: The Politics of Distraction* download, read and share the book for free (PDF) It is part of Pearson's Open Ideas series and is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

Digital tools to support students with the processing stages of the information literacy standards (levels 1 and 2)

Deciding which sources to select and then keeping track of them is part of the learning process, but it can be overwhelming when there is so much available online. As students develop search skills and can **evaluate sources for their usefulness**, it would be nice to be able to keep them together in a kind of digital ringbinder. Here are a couple of tools that learners and teachers can use to do just that…

Livebinder
This allows you to bring a number of different web pages together into one. Each site has a tab and, as the name suggests, these are like subject dividers in a ring binder. It can be easily shared and updated as new sites emerge. This example brings together a number of key sites English HODs need to know about and refer to. You can bookmark this one Livebinder, rather than having to bookmark each site individually. Teachers can use Livebinder to curate sites they want students to refer to as they research using EPIC and other databases. In a junior information literacy unit you could get the students to work together to produce Livebinders of sources they have found. They can share these with you and each other. Livebinders can also be embedded in other sites and online learning environments such as Moodle.

Pearltrees
Once you've added the Pearltree button to your browser toolbar, it's relatively easy to create collections based on certain subjects. Others can join your Pearltree and contribute to it as a team. Here's one I've started with a link to Livebinder. If you have some other great online tools to support information literacy teaching, why not join up and add them?

Prezi
Many of you will be familiar with Prezi as an annoying zooming presentation tool that makes people feel a bit seasick. This doesn't have to be the case though. If students use it well, it can be a powerful way for them to organize their ideas.

By keeping the zooming to a minimum, by using animation and making sure the frames are roughly the same size, students can use the non-linear structure of Prezi to move around a concept in a way that Powerpoint can't. You can add voice-overs on a particular path step, and add background music so students can integrate oral and visual language features effectively. You can set the Prezi to auto play so it can be played a bit like a video. It's also an excellent way for students to collaborate and share.

As with all digital tools, the key is to be clear about what you want the students to learn by using them and about how they can be used to create stand-alone visual texts or support oral presentations effectively. The coolness of the tool is not enough. If you give kids a video camera without explaining shot size and camera movement, they'll do all the stuff the human eye can't do, like pan and zoom. If you tell kids to use Prezi, without some understanding of what they want to communicate and how Prezi can support that, they'll do the same thing going for, 'wow!' when the audience is thinking 'woah!'

More information on digital curation and Livebinder was in the T1, 2014 national newsletter: http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Secondary-middle-leaders/Professional-learning-and-development/E-newsletters/Archived-newsletters-2014

What's new: NZQA

NZQA's English subject page. The latest moderator's newsletter April 2015 contains information changes to online submission of moderation materials, the level 2 and 3 standards *Creating visual texts using verbal/visual language* and the video resource to support the information literacy standards.

Moderation can be submitted to NZQA digitally: preparing digital visual submissions for moderation.

Planning and tracking NCEA progress – a new student App
A free NCEA Student App has been developed to help students track their NCEA credit progress and set goals for further achievement. NCEA students were involved in the design of the App.

This year a Scholarship fee of $30 (GST incl.) per subject will now be charged for entry into New Zealand Scholarship. The $76.70 NCEA assessment fee no longer covers entry to any New Zealand Scholarship subject.

2015 NZQA key dates for schools Note that NCEA and Scholarship examinations will begin on November 6th this year.

Exemplar examination scripts
Now updated for Level 2 and 3 on NZQA's English for Academic Purposes page

2015 Best Practice workshops
NZQA now offers 3 different types of Best practice workshops.

Conference congratulations
Congratulations to the Wellington team for a fantastic conference that 'shifted our thinking'. We are all looking forward to being 'rejuvenated' in Christchurch in 2016.