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 Mau ki te Ako project partners (University of Canterbury, University of Otago and Ngāi Tahu).

National Newsletter: Literacy

Information and resources for middle leaders in secondary schools | Term 4 2015

Greetings to you all, Kia ora, Kia orana, Faka'alofa lahi atu, Mālō e lelei, Talofa lava, Talofa ni.

In this edition – preparation for external assessments, note-making, Pasifika learners, and sentence level writing in Science.

Denise, Irene and Mal.

Preparation for external assessments

As we enter the study and examination part of the year you may like to remind students about the study and exam section of Studyit where they will find support for the revision process and preparation for external assessments.
http://www.studyit.org.nz/

Preparation for externals may include:

- Reviewing and practising the types of responses that are required in an external assessment, using questions from past years. Allow students the opportunity to share and discuss with others how they would respond to a question

- Critiquing exemplars

- Brainstorm/mindmap/writing an outline for a response

- Re-telling information in different ways

- Summarising key ideas

- Interviewing in pairs about particular topics

- Practising exam techniques – question selection, time management

A general approach to responding to a question:

1. Read the question **carefully**.
2. Highlight or underline the **content words**. What is the topic?
3. Highlight or underline the **verbs** e.g. 'identify', 'describe', 'compare and contrast', 'evaluate'. What are you being asked to do with the topic? What is this question really asking me to do?
4. Allow yourself **time to think**.
5. Plan your answer.
6. Respond to the question, regularly referring back to the question to stay on track.

Useful links and resources

Studyit
for NCEA students

http://www.studyit.org.nz/

Your one stop site for achieving in NCEA maths, science, and English. Find what you need to know, contact subject teachers, and get encouragement from other students.

NZQA subject pages
http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/

NZQA external assessment Information
http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/

NZQA external assessment information for students
http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/ncea-exams-and-portfolios/external/external-examination-information-for-students/

Effective note-making to assist revision

Note-making can be an effective means by which we make sense of information and develop our personal understanding of key concepts and ideas.

When we are effective **note-makers**, we are **processing** information. In contrast, **note-taking** just involves writing down or r**ecording** information.

So… what is the purpose? Making notes can be helpful during study and revision for the following reasons:

- Helps students to concentrate on the revision material
- Assists with remembering important information
- Helps students to process information
- Helps to create clarity
- Keeps the brain active through reading, listening, viewing, paraphrasing
- Is a way of preparing materials in order to discuss with others
- Helps in making links between ideas
- Helps students to see the 'bigger picture' or overview of a topic
- Creates a 'personal resource' for a student for revision
- Helps to build confidence in knowledge of a topic/concept

Note-making is effective when it is meaningful for the individual, and your students may have preferences for how they make their own notes for revision.

Consider the material that the students are working with, and discuss **what works for them** in terms of note-making for revision purposes.

For example, when students are reviewing and summarizing, consider the most useful way to organize the material.   Would it be a:

- List
- Diagram
- Table
- Bullet points
- Timeline
- Cause and effect chart
- Mind map
- Quotations and relevance chart
- Substance and properties chart
- Overview
- etc.

National Co-ordination Team: Literacy

Denise Hitchcock
Education Support Services
University of Otago College of Education
M: 021 912 947
denise.hitchcock@otago.ac.nz

Irene Andersen
Team Solutions
University of Auckland
irene.andersen@auckland.ac.nz
M: 027 588 0442

Mal Thompson
Education Support Services
University of Otago College of Education
M: 021 1901 400
mal.thompson@otago.ac.nz

Regional Literacy Facilitators

Auckland, Northland, Central North

Irene Andersen
Team Solutions
University of Auckland
irene.andersen@auckland.ac.nz

Carina Brits
Team Solutions
University of Auckland
c.brits@auckland.ac.nz

Siliva Gaugatao
Team Solutions
University of Auckland
s.gaugatao@auckland.ac.nz

Central South, South Island

Denise Hitchcock
Education Support Services
University of Otago College of Education
denise.hitchcock@otago.ac.nz

Mal Thompson
Education Support Services
University of Otago College of Education
mal.thompson@otago.ac.nz

Ross Palmer
UC Education *Plus*
University of Canterbury
ross.palmer@canterbury.ac.nz
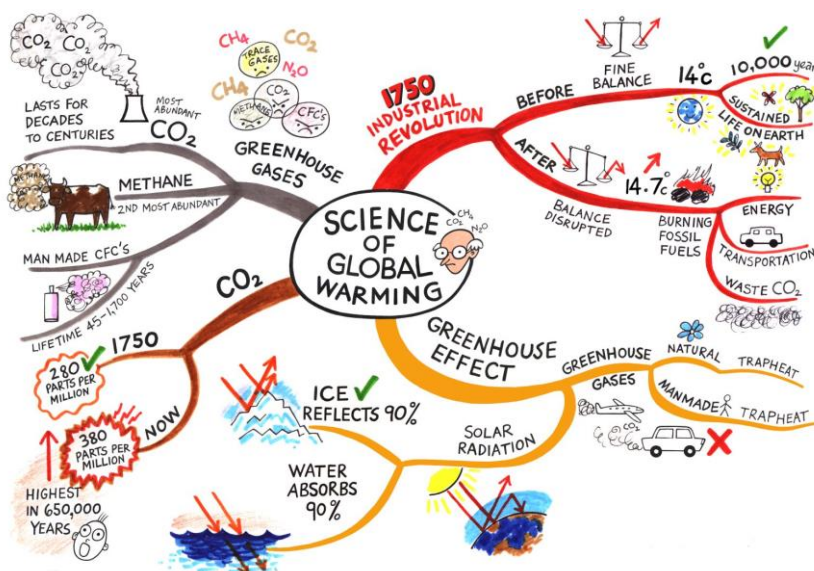
Pasifika learners

Pasifika Success as Pasifika in Aotearoa New Zealand is a research project that was carried out by ACE Aotearoa (Adult and Community Education). The project focused on how Pasifika people understand literacy and success as Pasifika.   Whilst the study focused on participants beyond secondary school, it does contain many relevant findings that help to inform secondary literacy for Pasifika learners.

This brief overview cannot do justice to the entire report and the findings, however if you follow the link above you will find the full report. You may want to use the report, or parts of it, as a catalyst for further discussion in your school.

The project focused on seeking and articulating a collective conceptualisation of 'literacy' and 'success', and the link between the two, from the perspective of Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study consisted of a comprehensive literature review, focus group consultations, wider discussions, surveys and information gathered through social media.

Participants articulated a clear desire to re-claim, and re-assign value and honour to the texts and literacy practices of their Pacific heritage cultures, and to do so in ways that are meaningful to their new context in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Participants defined 'success' as Pasifika as encompassing identity, language, culture, values, personal qualities, families, workplace, service, a multi-cultural NZ, community and civic life.

Placing 'success' and 'literacy' together, participants defined 'being literate' as:

- Translating and moving with ease between languages and cultural worlds
- Preserving Pasifika cultural and linguistic heritages
- Participating in lifelong education
- Speaking on behalf of, communicating with, and advocating for their Pacific people
- Participating actively in community
- Serving others
- Actively building multiculturalism

For Pasifika, this study suggests that the kind of literacy that will bring success as Pasifika in Aotearoa New Zealand includes more than just reading and writing in English. Literacy has a broader, more culturally inclusive definition that is relevant and meaningful for individuals and the society in which they live.

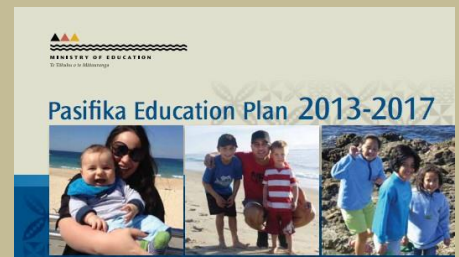## Useful links and resources: Pasifika focus

TKI Pasifika Education Community
http://pasifika.tki.org.nz/
Links to quality resources, research and other materials for teachers and school leaders.

Pasifika Education Plan
http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/overall-strategies-and-policies/pasifika-education-plan-2013-2017/

Pasifika Learners: secondary literacy
http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Secondary-Literacy

National Library
http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/supporting-learners/supporting-pasifika-learners

Education Counts publications
https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pasifika

ERO report (2012)
http://ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Improving-Education-Outcomes-for-Pacific-Learners-May-2012

Improving sentence level writing in Science

Science teachers often want to know how they can teach their students to use "science language" in writing. In one school the facilitator worked with the literacy leader to devise a programme to help students develop their sentence writing skills in science. This involved simplifying construction and deconstruction of information dense sentences. It is important to note that these sentences were *contextualised.* This strategy should be done in the context of the learning content, and the reading and writing used in the particular lesson or unit of work.

This approach improves students' ability to write more information dense sentences accurately, as well as improve their ability to unpack information dense scientific texts when reading.

If you haven't used this approach before, the teacher should first model the process and then let students deconstruct sentences until they can do it confidently. Here is how:

Find two information dense sentences in a reading text you will be using in the lesson. e.g.

> "Although cattle feed on tough plant material, such as grass, which contains mostly cellulose, they do not produce the enzymes needed to digest cellulose."

> "Once the food is completely liquefied, it goes into the stomach where enzymes are added, digestion is completed and absorption begins."

Model the deconstruction of one of the sentences, breaking the sentence down to multiple simple sentences with a single idea each.

Ask students (initially in pairs or small groups) to do the same. A competition element could be added by seeing who can write the most single ideas (simple sentences).

Once students confidently deconstruct dense sentences, they can start practicing to embed more information in their sentences. You provide the simple sentences (one idea per sentence), and ask the students to make a single sentence with all the information embedded. Initially you provide a scaffold, such as a sentence starter or a subordinate conjunction (after/while/as soon as/unless/whenever etc.). When students can do this confidently, you let them construct an information dense sentence without the scaffold.

In one school, this approach is not only being used in Science, but also in Health and PE and Social Science with positive outcomes. This then has the added value that students could start transferring knowledge across learning areas, whilst also becoming aware that each discipline has a unique way of conveying ideas in writing.

NZQA's Best Practice workshops

23 October: Auckland
26 November: Wellington

NZQA tells us that these will focus on making assessment decisions for **Level 1 Literacy standards** 26622, 26624, and 26625. Through the workshops, participants will work with all new samples of student evidence. For more information about the workshops please go to the Assessment & Moderation Best Practice Workshops page.

Research publication

From NZCER:

Literacy Research that Matters: A review of the school sector and ECE literacy projects

By Sue McDowell

This is the second report in the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) Project Plus series.

It looks at the 18 literacy-related projects in the early childhood and schools sector funded by the TLRI between 2003 and 2014.

It considers what the community of researchers see as important in literacy teaching and learning, the problems to be tackled, the approaches taken and the new knowledge that has been built.

The intention is to celebrate what has been done well in the field of literacy research, to identify areas that might have been overlooked or underserved and to consider what should come next.

http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/literacy-research-matters-review-school-sector-and-ece-literacy-projects