

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 1 2014

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2014. This newsletter contains:

- 2014 support (including dates and venues for workshops).
- Digital curation: effective and manageable ways to share the web.
- Analysing your NCEA data.
- Support reading: contextualize, scaffold, differentiate learning.

The Ministry of Education funded Secondary Student Achievement contract professional learning and development has been extended for a year, so we are looking forward to continuing to work with English middle leaders across the country to:

- Increase student achievement, particularly for priority learners;
- Address the needs of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Strengthen effective teaching practice through inquiry;
- Develop sustainable PLCs within and across schools.

What support do we provide?

- A national workshop focusing on identifying and developing the skills needed to be successful in English from Years 9 -12. (NCEA Level 2). See sidebar for details of dates and venues.
- A newsletter at the start of each term. This is sent to all schools in hard copy. This is also emailed to HOD's and is published online through TKI and on English Online.
- Some support for regional clusters and subject associations.
- Indepth work in schools that have been granted MOE support.

All newsletters are archived on TKI and can be accessed through this link:

[Newsletters](#)

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.

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 subject specific page links to documents for NCEA
- NZQA's Best Practice Workshops.
- Subject associations. Go to the NZATE website <http://www.nzate.co.nz/> for details of resources, annual 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 identifying and developing the skills needed to be successful in English from Years 9 -12. (NCEA Level 2). Morning tea is provided.

Northern and Central North workshops

Please click on the link to enrol.

Hawkes Bay: Friday 14 March

[Napier](#)

Waikato: Thursday 20 March

[Hamilton](#)

Northland: Monday 24 March

[Whangarei](#)

Bay of Plenty: Friday 28 March

[Rotorua](#)

Gisborne: Monday 31 March

[Gisborne](#)

Auckland: Friday 4 April

[Kohia](#)

Central South and Southern workshops

Christchurch: Monday 24 March

Invercargill: Monday 31 March

Dunedin: Wednesday 2 April

Wellington: Friday 11 April

Palmerston North: Tuesday 13 May

New Plymouth: Thursday 15 May

Details and enrolment forms will be posted to schools. Enrolment forms online at: edplus@canterbury.ac.nz

Digital curation - effective and manageable ways to share the web

So, you have spent all of your summer holidays trawling the web for useful websites, resources, blogs and YouTube clips to help support you and your students for their study of *Othello*. At this stage the plan is to study the play in preparation for the written text external and for students to also use this as their primary text for critical literacy research. If you are anything like me, you might have bookmarked the pages, copied and pasted relevant 'bits' onto word documents or perhaps made a bibliography by copying the URL for each thing that you have found.

This year you could try using one of many digital curation tools to store all the resources in one place electronically. This doesn't require you to use Moodle or to create a wiki; instead you could try digital tools to share the information with your students. They are so user-friendly that I created a livebinder for my own studies in less than a minute and had mastered it 5 minutes later!



Livebinder is a digital version of a ringbinder, that works in exactly the same way as the large grey ringbinders we all have on our bookshelves. When you find a web resource that you want to include, you simply add the URL, and the resource (e.g. webpage) becomes live in the binder. I saved some PDF documents and was delighted to discover that the documents open on the page I had identified as particularly useful, rather than at the beginning of the document.

Users must be 13 years of age to create an account. However, teachers can create an account and share Livebinders for students of any age. You can also create a class account with a global login and password, students then use the same login to access the Livebinder and create tabs on various topics.

There are a number of other similar tools that help you to store and group useful things that you have found online. These include:



Many of you may be familiar with Pinterest for your own personal use but have you considered creating (or having the students create) a Pinterest board connected to a text or topic?

Most of these sites also allow users to share their work so it is quite possible that you might find examples shared by other teachers or students on *Othello*.

Cynthia

What's new?

NZQA's English subject page

Check for latest [Moderator newsletters](#)

Look out for changes to clarifications and annotated exemplars from term 2.

2014 assessment specifications for external standards

These are online under *resources for externally assessed standards*.

2014 Best Practice workshops

These are run by NZQA. Two different types will be offered by NZQA this year:

Connecting with Contexts - modifying existing assessment resources to better meet the needs of your students (across learning areas).

Making judgements in English - Level 2 writing, and creating Level 2 and 3 visual texts.

Changes to university entrance

Information can be found in the NZQA Assessment Matters circular [NZQA Assessment matters UE requirements](#) A2013/024.

Vocational Pathways award

This award provides a new way to achieve NCEA Level 2. Each pathway has recognised assessment standards that have been recommended by industries across the sector. Visit: [Youth Guarantee](#)

Resources, quality assured by NZQA, have been developed for use with students working towards this award. There are several additional resources available for internal Level 1 and Level 2 standards. Visit: [resources for internally assessed standards](#)

ERO News

ERO has released a report entitled [Making Connections for Pacific Learners Success-November-2013](#).

It discusses secondary schools where Pacific learners are achieving at or above the national norms for all students. It includes details of initiatives and good practice and how these work together to get great results.



Plan now for the NZATE conference

Myth and Magic

John Paul College, Rotorua
July 9 -11.

Analysing your NCEA data

One of the tasks facing HODs/TICs at the start of the year is the analysis of NCEA results. All schools require their middle leaders to do this and most have a set template that they require people to follow. Is the analysis of this data sufficiently fine grained to be useful to your department?

Entry numbers across standards

There is a wide variation in the entry numbers across standards at all levels. Unfamiliar texts is the external standard with the smallest number of entries at all levels. At Level 2, for example, there are approximately 10,000 fewer students entered for this, compared with the other two externals. The success rates for the unfamiliar texts standards are improving, particularly at Level 3.

Some of your external results were not as good as expected. What do you do?

Gather other useful information:

- Further disaggregation of data e.g, Māori boys, ELLs (English Language Learners), students expected to gain excellence, students expected to not achieve.
- Talk to students, especially those whose results were unexpected. Perhaps they only spent 20 minutes on that standard, perhaps they used a strategy that you taught them and found it really helpful.
- Get copies of students' papers to find out what they actually did. Are there some patterns? An in-depth analysis of these samples has two benefits: it will help to shape the teaching programmes for these students in 2014 and it provides some data for teachers to reflect on the success of their teaching.

Looking across all standards, what's the big picture?

- What appear to be the strengths and weaknesses of your learning area across all levels?
- Are there patterns emerging over time? Across levels, across standards? (We have now had three years of results for the aligned standards at Level 1 and two at Level 2.)
- Were some teachers more successful with some standards than others? More successful with certain groups of students?

Revisiting the rationale, why do you do what you do?

As part of your departmental review it could be timely to consider:

- Why you offer certain standards, but not others.
- Are these decisions based on teacher knowledge, confidence (or lack of), rather than student strengths, needs and interests?
- Why do you offer certain standards to only some classes?
- Are you teaching the skills inherent in the standards that you don't offer?
- Are the modes that you use for assessment a barrier to some students' success?
- Where do the standards lead?

Teaching as Inquiry

Considering these questions helps us to discover 'what is important and therefore worth spending time on' to begin an inquiry cycle.

Effective teaching as Inquiry is student centred.

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](#)

The senior secondary teaching and learning guide

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

Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 -2017

Te Kotahitanga on TKI

Listen to year 13 students reflecting on their learning.

<http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/Videos/Interviews/Student-voices>

Supporting Pasifika Learners 2013 Pasifika Education Plan

Secondary Education Portal

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

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

Education Counts data

The 'Know Your Region' section has demographic, education and financial data available by regional council and territorial authority and [infographics](#) outlines the educational outcomes (from early childhood to senior secondary) for each locality.

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

The Teachers Council

All teachers seeking to gain and maintain full registration are required to meet the Registered Teacher Criteria.

Support reading: contextualize, scaffold, and differentiate learning

Short of eating and breathing, 'reading' and 'writing' are the most instinctual things we do as humans. From the moment we leave the womb we are 'reading' and 'writing' our environment to assess and communicate our needs. We must be supported in deeply contextualised ways with appropriate scaffolding and differentiation to become increasingly discerning and critical.

PISA 2012 assessed approximately 510,000 students between 15 years and 3 months and 16 years and 2 months of age. These students represented approximately 28 million students in the schools of 65 participating countries. In reading, New Zealand students ranked 13th - equal with Australia¹.

Noted in the report *PISA 2012 Results in Focus: What 15-year-olds know and they can do with what they know*² is the suggestion to include marginalised students in mainstream schools and classrooms. The idea of inclusion resonates loudly within the tensions experienced by many English teachers supporting the reading of priority learners. Inclusion, a process of creating access and occasions for all learners to engage together in a rigorous course of study, is only the first step in closing the achievement gap and providing students with the opportunity for achieving educational success. Further, it is essential that we allow students to grapple with inquiries and address problems that are deeply rooted in their past, present, and future identities and communities. The more challenging and complex the problem or line of inquiry the better, because if confusion and dissidence are not experienced prior to the emergence of understanding, then resilience is not built, nor is an understanding that time and patience are required in the learning process.

The challenge of 'teaching' extended texts to students who are reading below the curriculum level that is expected of them is one example of this tension. Many English departments choose to create 'non-external classes' that may abandon extended texts in favour of 'shorter', 'easier' texts that will ostensibly build the reading skills of their students. By truncating the reading experience these students are being denied the journey of the aesthetic experience of engaging with characters, settings, problems and tensions over an extended period of time. An alternative to this approach is to include these students with other students and enable figured worlds³ that are highly contextualised and relevant to all involved (students, teachers, families, and communities).

As educators we should be entirely concerned about working towards more equitable learning opportunities for all with a particular focus on priority students. In part this demands that students are provided with the best resources and optimal learning environments to realise their aspirations. The success of this could be reflected globally by a critical analysis of qualitative data (NCEA and PISA results) or more pertinently, locally, by the agentic dispossession that individual students develop as they experience learning in their schools and classrooms. We must strive to support students to achieve NCEA with Excellence by contextualizing, scaffolding, and differentiating their learning. When the spirit, ambition, inquisitiveness, and independence of the students are embodied in their learning experiences then the measure of their academic achievement goes far beyond quantitative data.

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Regional Facilitators

Northern region

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Central North region

Yvette Krohn-Isherwood

Team Solutions would like to welcome Yvette, who has recently been appointed English facilitator for the Central North region this year. Yvette's contact details will be sent to all schools in the region soon.

Central South region

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If you are receiving this newsletter in error please let us know. If you are aware of anyone who 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.

¹ The mean reading score for New Zealand students was 512

² The report has a strong emphasis on Mathematics as reading was only a 'minor area of assessment'

³ According to Holland et al. (1998) figured worlds are cultural phenomena to which people are recruited or to which they enter. The figured worlds develop through the work of their participants, and function as contexts of meaning within which social encounters have significance and people's positions matter. The activities relevant to these worlds take meaning from them and are situated in their particular times and places. Figured worlds are socially organised and reproduced such that the people in them are sorted and learn to relate to each other in different ways; people are distributed by relating them to landscapes of action; thus the activities of the figured worlds are populated by familiar social types and are host to individual sense of self.