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National Newsletter: Secondary Literacy

Information and resources for Leaders of Literacy in secondary schools | Term 3 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 outline links with Vocational Pathways, provide examples of using evidence effectively and developing writing across learning areas. We also include links and resources to useful reports and websites. All the best for term three.

Denise, Irene, and Mal

Literacy: At the heart of foundational education and student success

Current directions in secondary literacy in New Zealand promote the integration of literacy across all learning areas. Literacy is also integral to the Vocational Pathways where students need to develop skills and knowledge in areas that employers look for in applicants for positions. Students learn through 'real world' experiences in a vocational pathway of their choice, offering relevant courses and contexts for students to develop the foundational skills needed.

New Zealand employers rank literacy skills as being vital, and yet about 43% of people have difficulty with the literacy demands of their job. As we know, Literacy requirements are compulsory for our national qualifications– NCEA Level 1 and 2.

Recently secondary resources were launched by the NZ Transport Agency to help students meet NZQA requirements. The resource is about road users and their safety, as well as the idea that we all need to work together for a road system that keeps people safe. Contextualised learning programmes like this can help students to learn by providing them with relevant learning experiences.

The addition of the sixth pathway in Creative Industries also provides students with more options when pursuing their future pathways. You may want to read further in the latest report, Vocational Pathways Update 2014, which outlines the success of the VP to date, and shows that the number of students achieving awards has doubled from 2012-13. Students' literacy achievements have increased with these opportunities too.

Ongoing work is continuing in the development of resources that link the Vocational Pathways to programmes in schools.

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Secondary Resources - NZTA



[NZTA Secondary school resources: Literacy and Numeracy Overview](#)



[Vocational Pathways 2014: Successes, Challenges and Next Steps](#)

The use of evidence to inform teaching and learning

Using information from School-based exams to determine students' needs and accelerate student achievement.

A Story of one department.....

The mid-year school-based exams highlighted one particular Level 1 Achievement Standard where a number of students had not achieved. The Learning Area HoD, subject teachers and Literacy Leader developed a breakdown of the specific knowledge and skills that students needed in order to achieve that standard – including the specific literacy requirements.

How did they determine the breakdown of skills and knowledge? As well as the supporting documents related to the standard, the HoD and teachers used the NZQA Assessment Reports that show what is required to meet the standard, and also highlight the errors that students make when they get a Not Achieved result.

For each student who had been awarded Not Achieved in the school exam, the teachers identified where their students' specific needs were, and how they were going to address them between now and end of year external assessment. Some teachers did not believe that the students' results could/would shift. Indeed they did. Overall there was a significant shift in achievement. Whilst there were a number of factors affecting the final outcome for students, the teachers attributed a significant part of the shift to the particular focus they had placed on differentiation after their analysis of the results, and their focus on accelerating achievement for these students.

How could you use the mid-year assessment results more effectively to determine students' specific literacy and learning needs?

Focus on digital literacies

How can e-learning support our learners?

Electronic references such as online dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias are plentiful: definitions, translations, and explanations are just a click away.

However, once we have identified relevant dictionaries and other online tools to use in our teaching and learning programmes, we need to teach students how to use them effectively, and then support students to use them to develop their reading, writing and vocabulary skills.

Look for tools with *text to speech* to read the word, read the definitions, and support word study. If classrooms do not have computers with access to the Internet, then handheld dictionaries with many of the same features could be a good alternative and encourage students also to get their own and use them. Having students sign up for a word of the day e-mail or text message to receive on their own cell or smart phones, also supports vocabulary development.

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WELCOME:

Introducing two new literacy facilitators in Central North

We are pleased to welcome two new literacy facilitators who will work in the Central North area in Terms 3 and 4. Carina Brits joins the team from Auckland Girls' Grammar and Jenny MacDonald comes from Mahurangi College.

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Te Ao Marama 2014

[Te Ao Marama](#) 2014 is a snapshot of Māori well-being and development, produced by Statistics NZ. This report has data of interest to secondary teachers. For example, the percentage of Māori school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above has risen steadily since 2009, but the percentage of Māori participation rates in tertiary education has declined from 2005-2012. The percentage of Māori who speak some Te Reo has improved from 2001 to 2013 and this improvement is most marked in Māori aged 15-44.

A school uses a common acronym to improve the teaching of writing

This intervention took place in a Decile 1 urban school, with 80% of students identifying as Pasifika. Teachers wanted to determine whether using a common acronym for paragraph writing would improve student achievement in the writing components of NCEA across a range of learning areas. The school chose the acronym SEE (statement, explanation, example). There was some variation among learning areas as to what "E" represented.

Middle leaders participated in PLD related to the writing focus. They learned a range of approaches from facilitators and one another to support student paragraph writing such as scaffolded templates, think aloud strategies and how to give feedback and feed forward about writing. The middle leaders then introduced these approaches to their learning areas through department meetings.

Health and physical education teachers identified a group of Year 11 students from existing asTTle data and invested time in developing a stronger understanding of their writing needs through surveys and the analysis of work samples. Teachers then determined the writing approaches they would target with each student, in the light of the information they had collected. Interim NCEA results for the targeted standard indicate that student pass rates have improved from 57% in 2013 to 70% in 2014.

The science department had a goal to improve students' writing skills in a report writing standard, through using the acronym SEE. Science teachers discussed the acronym and modified it slightly to help students write conclusions. The HOD Science conducted observations of all science teachers while they were instructing students in the use of SEE. Teachers reported that with repetition, students became more aware of the structure needed to write conclusions. Additionally, because SEE was a whole school strategy, students found it easier to use in science and they could make connections with the use of the acronym in other learning areas. Student achievement improved in the standard. More students achieved the standard and gained merits than in 2013. The science department intends to continue to use the SEE acronym for other appropriate standards.

Success for All

ERO National Report 2010 Students with High Needs

ERO evaluated how well schools included students with high needs. ERO's evaluation showed that approximately half of the schools in the study demonstrated inclusive practice, while 30 percent had 'pockets of inclusive practice' and 20 percent had few inclusive practices. Schools that had an ethical, committed, innovative, informed and coordinated approach to including students with high needs provide the examples of good practice for others to follow.

Useful Links and Resources

[ESOL Online](#)

A site for teachers to respond to the needs of their English language learners.

[Secondary Literacy Online](#)

Helping secondary teachers gain an understanding of the literacy demands within subject areas and required by the curriculum; and supporting teachers to develop teaching and learning programmes based on the literacy needs of their learners.



[Literacy in the Learning Areas](#)

Follow the links to each learning area, and then click on the headings in each part of the Inquiry Cycle for further resources.

[Annotated Student Exemplars](#)

These five exemplars of student work have been annotated to show how teachers might identify features of literacy and language from student writing, and provide feedback within each subject area. (History, Biology, Mathematics and Statistics, Physical Education, Technology)

NZLA conference *Surfing the Literacy Wave*

Tauranga, 28 September – 1 October 2014 www.nzla.org.nz

