

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 4 2012

Welcome to our latest national newsletter and the last one for 2012. Last term we facilitated workshops in several regions across the country and continued to support a range of cluster groupings, as well as undertaking some indepth work in schools. Since our last newsletter Team Solutions has welcomed Mary Libby as an English Facilitator in the Central North Region.

## Programme design and standards alignment: Making connections

One of the 'new' standards that has been enthusiastically adopted at level 1 and 2 is the **making connections** standard. Teachers are now considering how this standard could be incorporated into level 3 programmes.

The common 'connection' to date has been a thematic one, but there are many other possibilities such as:

- narrative viewpoint
- time, place, or society in which the texts were created/set
- specific genre
- style
- structural features

We need to think about how we could encourage students to make connections in different ways, particularly if they have already been assessed against this standard at level 1 or 2.

At level 3 when students make meaning of any text, they are expected to **respond critically**. The connections standard asks them to analyse significant connections across at least four texts. This is different from analyzing individual texts and the process of doing this will need to be scaffolded and modeled.

As a starter:

- Give students a large sheet of paper and get them to write down all the texts that they have read or viewed in the last year.
- Get them to link any that are similar in any way e.g. characters, ideas, setting, structure, language features.
- Decide whether these connections are **significant** by linking them to purpose and audience.

One of the activities on TKI is entitled "Text in Time". The teacher trialling this activity modeled the context of Elizabethan England, and only after students understood the context did they explore their studied Shakespearean play for evidence of the dominant concepts, philosophies. The process of identifying links and responding to significant connections could also be effectively modeled using a couple of shorter texts.

At the time of writing this newsletter the Romney Obama debate is in the news and this debate would provide fertile ground for critical analysis.

## What's new?

### NCEA updates

The latest NCEA Update (issue 6 September 2012) includes an explanation of vocational pathways and information about authentic assessment. The key purpose of this online publication is to ensure consistent and accurate sharing of information.

These NCEA Updates are published online in the last week of each term. You can subscribe to receive an email notification when they are available online.

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/publications/newsletters-and-circulars/ncea-update/issue-6-september-2012/>

### SecQual S2012/020 and S2012/019

These two circulars relate to Level 1 literacy. S21012/019 explains a change that sees students needing Level 1 literacy and numeracy in order to be awarded Level 2 NCEA from 2013 and Level 3 NCEA from 2014. S21012/020 includes the list of standards that can be used to attest to Level 1 literacy. This now includes Level 3 standards for 2013 and beyond. Neither of these circulars relates to University Entrance Literacy. We understand that information about this will be published early this term.

### Moderators' newsletters

The October newsletter focused on the aligned level 3 standards

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/english/moderator-newsletter/october-2012/>

Grids provide useful scaffolds for this standard to enable students to identify connections across the texts and to give them a framework for their critical response.

1. 'Big question' prompts such as "How has the purpose of the text been shown?" can be further broken down into smaller questions such as "Whose viewpoints are we given/not given?" These prompts should be grouped according to the achievement objectives of our curriculum.
2. Once students have identified some patterns they need to consider how they select and respond critically to the connections. A useful grid would enable them to explore:
  - how the texts are connected (similar ideas, language etc)
  - how they connect to the contexts of the creator and the world of the text (social, political etc)
  - how they connect to the wider world and the human condition.

To be successful at level 3 students need to be very aware of purpose and audience and the impact of these two aspects on the selection of ideas, structure and language features. They need to be focusing on the **How** and the **Why**.

Susan Lenski's *Making Connections across Texts* provides interesting insights into intertextuality.

## Priority Learners: What does the latest ERO report mean in the context of English?

In August ERO produced a national report focusing on priority learners in New Zealand Schools. "Priority learners are groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system. These include many Maori and Pacific learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs." (Page 4)

The report focuses on three major issues:

### Shifting the focus to student-centred learning

What struck me in this section was the discussion on page 10 between the teaching actions/decisions and students' engagement and learning. We are fortunate to not be heavily bound by content within English and have the flexibility that a student could show their response or thinking about a text - for example, through speaking, writing or presenting. There are no rules about how many texts have to be studied or even the type of texts they need to be. In fact, all the students in the class do not even need to be focused on the same text at the same time.

### Knowledgeably implementing a responsive and rich curriculum

The subsection on page 13 "A curriculum that is based on students' strengths and interests" also made us think about the opportunities that we have within English. Our new Senior Secondary Teaching and Learning Guides talk about this idea in a number of ways, including a range of learning stories that highlight the process in action in actual senior English classrooms across the country. As we head into that precious time "after the seniors leave" when we have time for planning and reflection, can we spend time reviewing our own classroom practice or that of the department so that the curriculum is not "an artifact prescribing what must be taught." (page 13).

## What Else is New?

### Professional learning

Several of the recent news items on TKI have an English focus. They include Iain McGilchrist talking about [Putting students first in English at John McGlashan College](#) and Hamish Chalmers discussing [Big curriculum concepts in English](#)

The new, learning to learn section within the New Zealand Section on TKI also has a great deal of food for thought. [Learning to learn](#)

### Best Evidence Synthesis (BES)

The home page of the BES materials has been improved and some new materials have been added.

There are some exemplars available and exemplar 5 focuses on the work of Jennifer Glenn, who will be familiar to many of you. This exemplar describes the research that she did around using feedback logs to improve writing. You can also access BES summaries from [here](#).

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/bes>

### Road safety as a context for learning

One of the case studies on the NZ curriculum online website explains how students used road safety as a context for creating persuasive texts.

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-stories/Case-studies/Road-safety>

### NZATE level 2 oral exemplars

Order forms are available at <http://www.nzate.co.nz/>

### NZATE conference 2013

Start planning now for Vintage to Visionary at Karamu High School, Hastings - from the 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013.

This idea is further reinforced in the section on page 14 that talks about **the responsive and inclusive curriculum**. It makes the point that “the curriculum would rarely look the same for any two classes or in any particular year” and I think that in most schools different English classes would study different texts, but are those classes actually offering the same content, just with a different context?

All classes study a feature film; it is just a different feature film in each class perhaps. Or how often do students repeat the same skill year after year? Presenting a speech to the class on a topic they have chosen every year through primary and secondary school.

### **Using assessment information to know about, and plan for, students’ learning**

We have a great deal of data about our students and we need to use that information as well as the information that we have about students’ interests, strengths, and learning needs in order to take a strategic approach to raising the achievement of priority learners.

The full report can be found at:

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Evaluation-at-a-Glance-Priority-Learners-in-New-Zealand-Schools-August-2012>

Cynthia Orr

## **Reflections on reading Improving Education Outcomes for Pacific Learners**

We all know that nationally the NCEA achievement of Pacific students is tracking up, but there is still a gap between Pacific students’ achievement and that of the overall cohort. The researchers responsible for the above ERO report found “little evidence of substantial changes in the way schools address these differences.”

Our Pacific learners are a diverse group. There is no such thing as a homogeneous Pacific cohort and we do need to understand more about each student’s identity, language and culture. “When a school’s curriculum fails to connect learners with their wider lives it can limit their opportunity to engage with and understand the material that they are expected to learn.” What opportunities do we take to use contexts and themes that are relevant for our Pacific students, and would contribute to all “students’ developing sense of identity,...and their understanding of the world.”? (NZC p.18).

There are a number of wonderfully rich texts by Pasifika writers. The New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre has a section devoted exclusively to Pasifika poetry, including video readings.

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/pasifika/index.asp>.

The latest edition of Spasifika highlights the story of a young Pasifika writer, Marisa Maepu.

<http://spasifikmag.com/issue41educationguide/frombookwormtobokwriter/>

There are lots of other opportunities to provide relevant contexts that engage learners from different cultures, including Pasifika. If we are exploring the themes of leadership/heroism or protest for example, do we include the Samoan idea of *finau ma Ia toa lou loto* (stand on your ground) and discuss the Mau chiefs who used non-violent protest in their bid for independence? How do their actions compare with the happenings at Parihaka, and with the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi? Did these people show true courage? The shift to more thematic programmes should offer opportunities for all students to connect to their own worlds.

## **Useful links and resources**

### **English online:**

<http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/>  
A site for all teachers of English

### **Communities on TKI:**

<http://www.tki.org.nz/Communities>

Includes curriculum documents, news, guidance, resources, and stories, assessment information and assessment tools to improve teaching and learning, including [e-asTTle](#). E-asTTle writing has been revised and new rubrics, writing prompts and exemplars are all available on this site.

[NCEA on TKI](#)

This website was updated in April and the home page provides clearer links to resources.

Go to <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/>

### **NZQA English subject page**

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/english/levels/>

Everything you need to know in relation to English and NZQA including standards, clarifications, moderator’s newsletters, benchmark samples internals and sample external exam papers and benchmark samples.

### **NZATE**

<http://www.nzate.co.nz/>

Information about regional associations and resources to support you in the delivery of NCEA.

### **Studyit**

[www.studyit.org.nz](http://www.studyit.org.nz)

Assistance for students and teachers with NCEA

### **Down the Back of the Chair**

[www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.thechair.minedu.govt.nz)

0800 660 662

A place to get copies of Ministry of Education teaching and learning resources.

### **The Teachers Council:**

<http://www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz/rtc/index.stm>

The *Registered Teacher*

*Criteria* describe the criteria for quality teaching in New Zealand and replaced the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions in 2011. All teachers seeking to gain and maintain full registration are required to meet the *Registered Teacher Criteria*.

The readings that students bring to texts are very much dependent on their unique identities, languages and cultures.  
The full report can be found at:

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Improving-Education-Outcomes-for-Pacific-Learners-May-2012>

Trish Holden

## A spotlight on the Senior Secondary Teaching and Learning Guides

The English Senior Secondary Curriculum Guides on TKI are a set of really useful resources for teachers and HODs of senior English. The materials available create a framework for the teaching and learning of English. As recently practising HODs, we find them helpful in creating and sustaining support systems for our departments, our teachers and our practice.

You can find the English section of these guides at this website:  
[www.seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/english](http://www.seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/english)

The Curriculum Guides are broken down into nine sections, as follows:

- Rationale
- Key Concepts
- Pedagogy
- Achievement Objectives
- Connections
- Learning Pathways
- Learning Programme Design
- Snapshots
- Resources

Below are some of the ways we think each section could be used.

If you are creating or updating your senior schemes the [Rationale](#) section is good for (re)orienting the philosophy behind the teaching and learning of English as a subject in schools. The information found in this section could be used in the introductory section of schemes of work and/or department handbook.

There are some amazing interviews with Patricia Grace, Selina Marsh and Alison Wong in the [Key Concepts](#) section. These interviews cover themes of identity and storytelling and could be used with students studying texts by these prominent authors to begin exploring the collaborative and recursive process of writing, author influences, the craft, process and politics of writing. In addition to classroom use this section could be used for PLD with department and in schemes of work/handbook.

For HODs the [Pedagogy](#) section could be really helpful for: planning PLD at the department level; department meetings; supporting individual teachers (especially year 1 and 2 teachers); and as supporting evidence in your department handbook. This section covers every aspect of teaching from making connections to prior learning, teaching as inquiry, student centered learning and assessment practices

When reviewing senior course design from Levels 1-3, check out the [Achievement Objectives](#) section. We find this useful because it takes us back to our curriculum document by examining levels 6-8 and the progressions. It reminds us of the Making Meaning and Creating Meaning strands and provides resources to help us better understand the achievement standards at all three levels.

## Term 4 Workshops

Information about these workshops is also sent out via email.

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October: Senior course design in English 9-3pm  
Kohia Education Centre, Auckland

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November: Senior course design in English 9-3pm  
Whangarei Boys High School, Whangarei

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November: AATEL English jumbo day 9-3pm Auckland Girls Grammar, Auckland

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November: SAATE big day out 9-3pm Ormiston Senior College, Auckland

## Clusters

15 Nov – Timaru (Timaru Girls HS) 9.30 -3.30pm

19 Nov -"Up the Coast" Focused Cluster (Ngata Memorial College, 1 College Road North, Ruatoria) 9-3pm

20 Nov- Gisborne (The Institute of Professional Learning and Development, Corner Bright and Kahutia Streets, Gisborne) 9-3pm

21 Nov- Napier (Eastern Institute of Technology, 501 Gloucester Street, Taradale, Napier) 9-3pm

23 Nov – Nelson (venue tbc) 9.30 - 3.30pm

26 Nov- Hamilton (Hamilton Central Baptist Church Complex, 33 Charlemont Street, Hamilton) 9-3pm

27 Nov- Tauranga (Bethlehem Motor Inn, 176 Moffat Road, Bethlehem, Tauranga) 9-3pm

27 Nov – Christchurch (Burnside Bowling Club) 9-3.30pm

29 Nov- Taupo (Central Plateau REAP, 73 Titiraupenga Street, Taupo) 9-3pm

29 Nov – Dunedin (Otago University College of Education) 9-3pm

If you are involved with literacy initiatives in your school the [Connections](#) section summarises the links between English and other subjects with a focus on the importance of cross-curricular engagement and connecting our subject to the world beyond the classroom.

See the [Learning Pathways](#) section when you and your teachers are explaining to students the importance of English in their learning pathways. There are some useful explanations of English at school and how it is helpful for University Entrance and learning for life. These are great for showing students the connections between studying English and their life outside and beyond school.

In planning senior courses for 2103 and beyond the [Learning Programme Design](#) section is useful as it explores the many aspects that should be taken into account. Here you will find practical considerations and approaches in curriculum design.

Under [Snapshots](#) we found number 8 provided a great context for teaching *The Crucible* with links to the Dawn Raids of the 1960s and 70s.

Snapshot 16 shows how Pasifika poetry can be used to support students into a deeper connection with a Shakespearean text (*Othello*) at Level 3.

We also think snapshot 18 is useful for providing an example of one way in which we could approach some of the challenges of teaching a multi-level class (Levels 2 and 3).

The [Resources](#) section is a very useful one-stop shop for links to many of the essential materials we need in our daily practice. It connects us to all of the following resources: teaching and learning, assessment and professional support, resourcing ideas and professional development.

All of these links could be shared with colleagues at the department level.

Written by Mary Libby and Tania Linley-Richardson  
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## National newsletters

These national newsletters are developed for every learning area by national co-ordinators from The University of Auckland and/or Te Tapuae o Rehua consortium (University of Canterbury, University of Otago and Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu). For more information about Ministry-funded professional development for secondary middle leaders, visit this page on TKI:

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Ministry-curriculum-guides/Secondary-middle-leaders/Professional-learning-and-development>

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