

School A (a boys school with a roll of over 1100).

Planning for NCEA – what are we thinking

This school presently offers four courses for their year 11 students and the underlying principle is that of ‘targeting for success’ They have tried to provide courses that enable students to succeed, and students are guided to make appropriate choices. The majority of the boys continue to do English throughout their schooling and English is one of the most popular subject at year 13. The school uses data gained in Year 10 to guide decisions about appropriate choices. These students sit asTTle reading tests twice a year, and they do some common writing tasks assessed with reference to the Literacy Learning Progressions and the National Exemplars. Overall teacher judgement is also considered as part of the mix. Letters are sent to parents explaining the recommended course. A student’s class placement will always be changed in response to parental concerns. Parents are invited to discuss the matter with the HOD. The school has also used historical NCEA data to determine ‘what works’ for their students.

Looking to 2011 the school is keen to keep the ‘target for success’ principle. In planning they have used knowledge of the students [see above] as their starting point and then looked at the standards available. The content of these courses is tentative and could change depending on the abilities and interests of the students. They are also mindful that at this stage we do not know about possible literacy requirements beyond year 11. They are also very conscious of pathways. They have looked back to the learning experiences at years 9 and 10 and forward to the three levels of NCEA to ensure that all boys have a pathway for continuing to study English regardless of their courses. Evidence suggests that they have a number of unmotivated year 12 students at present. The texts change, but the tasks and assessments are similar. Some of their more able boys are losing interest. They are exploring the possibility of offering distinctly different courses at year 12. The school is seeking to provide more variety across the levels in terms of tasks, standards, texts and modes of assessments.

It is probable that next year they will continue to offer 4 different courses for level one. They want the teaching and learning programmes at year 11 to be as comprehensive as possible so that students ‘get a shot’ at everything. All skills will be included in a year 11 programme, but not all skills need to be formally assessed. The school has determined that courses should provide opportunities to gain no more than 18-21 credits.

- A practical English course will be tailored to suit the needs and interests of the students. These students find success very motivating so the course must provide opportunities for students to experience success. Tricky, but possible. Many of these students will be working at level 4 of the curriculum or even lower. They will experience a curriculum that focuses on the two strands, but there will be some variation in the standards assessed. These will be selected from communication skills unit standards, the literacy unit standards and some achievement standards. It will be custom-built to suit the individual students and will have a strong literacy focus. The opportunities to hook into other standards, such as life skills, will be explored
- The English language course [previously based around unit standards] will include both strands and all modes as part of the teaching and learning programme. These students will probably

School A: using Inquiry to plan secondary English programmes

have the opportunity to gain 1.4 [creative writing], 1.5 [formal writing], 1.6 [oral], 1.7 [visual/verbal production], 1.10 [independent reading] and 1.11 [close reading visual/verbal]. There will be a lot of skills work prior to assessment. Summative assessment will be delayed as long as is practicable and sensible. Texts and activities will be carefully selected to engage students, and non fiction and visual texts are likely to be key components of the course. A portfolio approach will be used for writing and summative assessment of the writing standards will not take place until the end of the year. Writing will be 'parked and revisited'. There may be some choices of standards for students.

- The English literature course will also include both strands and students will probably have the opportunity to gain external standards 1.1 [written text], 1.2 [visual or oral text], 1.3 [unfamiliar written text], and internal standards 1.4 [creative writing], 1.5 [formal writing], 1.6 [oral] OR 1.7 [visual/verbal production] The intention is to decrease assessment time and increase teaching and learning so we are able to truly "assess when the students are ready" and able to demonstrate their skills to advantage.
- Students in the extension course will be the only students to be assessed for 1.8 [connections]. Other courses will have texts that are linked but these students are the only ones who will be assessed in this way. This class is able to deal with more depth and breadth in content.