

# Tamaki College – English Department Planning Model.

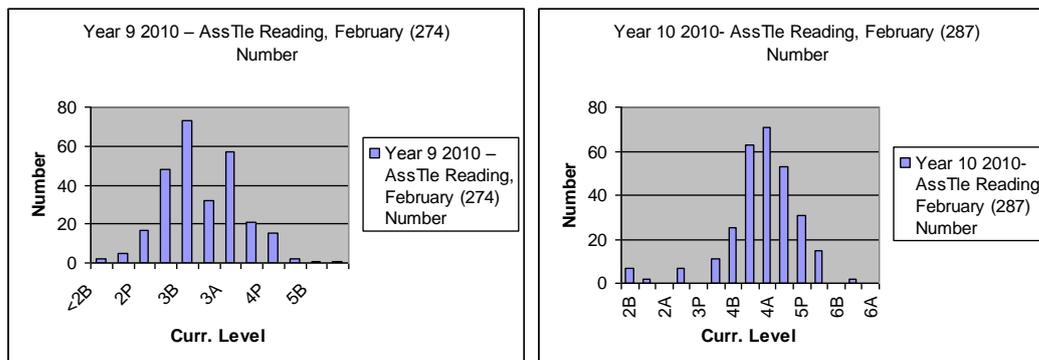
## Knowing the Learner.

Tamaki College is a decile 1a co-educational school in the eastern suburbs of Auckland City. Our college has just over 700 students, 95% being from Maori or Pacific Island background. Our students enter our college below the national means, for reading and writing and it is our responsibility to work with them to catch up three curriculum levels before they finish Year 11 (so they may experience success in NCEA assessments).

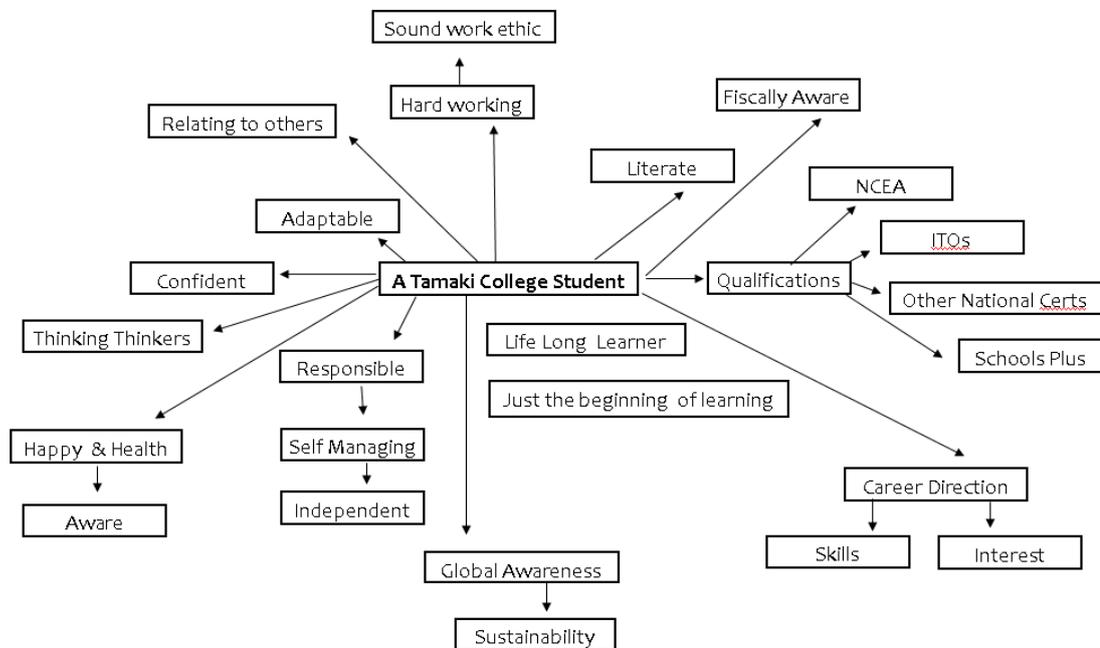
Tamaki College is a place where stories are told of students and their success. We use statistics as one tool in our analysis, but we also remember the stories of those students for whom mere numbers do not reflect their personal successes. Our college has, for the past four years, been writing the **New Tamaki Story**.

We use asTTle testing in years 9 and 10 to measure the students' reading and writing levels at the beginning of the year, to check progress through the year and then to measure progress at the end of the year. This enables us to see at which stage in their curriculum development all our students are, and how they are improving.

Our students have particular needs around developing critical thinking and self management. Discussion - and planning - around how the key competencies and values of the curriculum can be incorporated in our programmes, is an important as it is the development of these skills and values that will provide a longer term solution, and motivation, for our students.



Last year, the college went through a process where we polled students, parents and staff to define the ideal 'Tamaki Graduate', and what qualities they would possess. The results of that discussion have been influential in the development of programmes for 2011.



We evaluated our current practice in relation to this mind map and concluded that we spent 90% of our time on the qualifications area. Thus, in the future, we would fail to deliver the needs of the curriculum and our students if we carried on with current practice.

### Knowing the Curriculum.

At Tamaki College, the English Department has been discussing, investigating and dissecting the New Zealand Curriculum for the past two years. This discussion has been within the department, in professional development outside the college and in staff wide discussions.

Most of the discussion has been about the effective pedagogy and the key competencies and values of the curriculum. This has led to a change in philosophy and approach to planning our junior units (which has naturally led to a change in senior units).

The decision three years ago to base our junior units around theme or genre studies was made after discussion about how our students learn best. In taking advice from Team Solutions (through Aimhi Schools), looking at the Making Language and Learning Work DVD, the study of Ka Hikitia and the Pasifika Learning Progressions, we realised that the “traditional”, assessment first planning we had been doing was not working for our students. It meant a short term success in the immediate assessment (with a lot of pushing, resistance and bullying) but the long term improvement and interest in English as a subject was not being enhanced. The approach tended to put a ceiling on student success beyond Yr 11, particularly in relation to critical thinking and the higher level learning ability to personally engage with texts.

Two years ago this idea was moved into year 11 for which, at the end of year 10, students pick the theme(s) that their studies will follow in Year 11. The themes are of a varied nature and the students are aware of the conscious choice they are making in the interests of their studies. For the first time no students requested changing English classes and there was also a significant drop in behavioural issues in year 11 classes. The theme/genre approach allows our department to spend a longer time in the analysis of text and Making Meaning (reading, viewing and listening) because of the shared ideas and issues, rather than spending time having to background many dislocated texts.

### **School and department goals and priorities.**

One of our school's shared goals is to help our students achieve so our percentages match the national achievement figures.

One of our department's goals is to look at our programmes and see how we can address this most effectively. We identified that to do this effectively, we needed a 5 year programme, from year 9 to year 13, designed to address our students' curriculum issues and their wider learning issues.

Tamaki College is a school that takes great pride in our students' success. We work hard with students, and their families, to see them achieve academically. One of our strengths, though, is that our senior leadership team (SLT) is not focussed totally on numbers and percentages. Our SLT have given us the freedom to analyse what our students need, adjust programmes and then be learners alongside our students. We are constantly learning, with our students' input, what ideas and methodologies work best for them to learn. As a department, it means that we are not in fear of having to justify downward changes in achievement levels.

Our college shares a vision of teaching the whole student as much as possible, in the time we have them with us. Our whole school timetable is in a state of flux, in terms of planning, for 2011, as we grapple with how to best address our students' needs.

### **Learning pathways.**

Four years ago we changed the learning pathways, for our senior students, in the English Department, to better reflect their needs. Prior to this, all students were placed in classes that attempted all achievement standards, with their year level (e.g. Y12 = Level 2, NCEA), every year. This meant some students left with certificates half finished at several levels and also every class was a multi-level NCEA class.

After analysing the achievement of our students these decisions were made:

- Some achievement standards, that had low pass rates and where the skills were replicated elsewhere, were removed.
- In year 12, and year 13, there were timetabled classes at each level of NCEA. For example, in year 13 this year, we have two level 3 NCEA classes, one level 2 NCEA class and one level 1 NCEA class.
- Year 11 and year 12 English classes were blocked on the timetable. And because all classes were taught at the same time, promotion within classes due to achievement did not require a rehashing of the student's timetable.
- The college introduced Academic Co-ordinators at each NCEA level. It is their role to have one on one discussion with every student about their current progress and their future needs.

- Each student is interviewed at the end of the year and their achievement is checked when they make subject choices for the next year. This provides accuracy of class placement in the following year.
- The first week of school, every year, is an enrolment week. Each day, a different year level attends for the day. The student begins the day with a blank timetable and their job is to visit the HODs and TICs of the subjects they wish to take. It means that good learning discussions may occur on the first day of the year about the students' goals for the year.

The following tables chart our students' success over the last four years. Although we, as a college, are quietly pleased with our improved statistics, we realise that this only tells part of the Tamaki Story. We also realise that we have a long way to go until our students' achievement will match national means.

<b>Year 11</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Total Stud's</b>	133	126	156	144
<b>Level 1 Cert?</b>				
No	106 (80%)	97 (77%)	102 (65%)	89 (62%)
Yes	27 (20%)	29 (23%)	54 (35%)	55 (38%)
<b>Level 1 Lit?</b>				
No	81 (61%)	65 (52%)	64 (41%)	63 (44%)
Yes	52 (39%)	61 (48%)	90 (59%)	71 (56%)
<b>Credits total</b>				
0	53 (40%)	30 (24%)	35 (22%)	28 (19%)
1-7	43 (32%)	55 (44%)	31 (20%)	42 (29%)
8-16	35 (26%)	37 (29%)	53 (34%)	35 (24%)
17+	2 (2%)	4 (3%)	37 (24%)	39 (28%)

Year 12	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Total Stud's</b>	91	106	100	132
<b>Level 2 Cert?</b>				
No	74(81%)	85 (80%)	70 (70%)	93 (70%)
Yes	17 (19%)	21 (20%)	30 (30%)	39 (30%)
<b>UE Lit??</b>				
No	65 (71%)	80 (75%)	69 (69%)	90 (68%)
Yes	26 (29%)	26 (25%)	31 (31%)	42 (32%)
<b>Credits total</b>				
0	27 (30%)	63 (59%)	63 (63%)	49 (37%)
1-7	39 (43%)	15 (14%)	12 (12%)	30 (23%)
8-16	25 (27%)	25 (24%)	20 (20%)	39 (29%)
17+	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	14 (11%)

Year 13	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Total Stud's</b>	92	89	94	90
<b>Level 3 Cert?</b>				
No	81 (88%)	81 (91%)	85 (90%)	69 (77%)
Yes	11 (12%)	8 (9%)	9 (10%)	21 (23%)
<b>U/E Lit?</b>				
No	67 (73%)	55 (62%)	57 (61%)	57 (63%)
Yes	15 (27%)	8 (38%)	37 (39%)	33 (37%)

The discussion about our planning for our senior classes has now moved to a model based heavily on student skills, student needs and negotiation with students (regarding the "shape" of their assessments and which assessments are connected to which theme/text). This means that our year starts with time for learning and skills discussion with students. The year will have a combination of compulsory assessment activities and voluntary ones.

The rest of the year is broken into theme “Chunks,” where reading lists and class texts are based on theme and the reading, listening and viewing discussions take place. During that time, conferences between teacher and student establish production plans and check they are on track and facilitate them resourcing those plans.

It means that we no longer deliver a fixed programme that our students have to fit in to, but we may have different students, reading different texts, and attempting different assessments activities, in one class at one time.

This means the teacher is not the “oracle” but becomes a facilitator of learning, a fellow learner alongside the student and an ideas coach. This will challenge our traditional views of what constitutes creative writing, formal writing, media and research.

Below is a suggested model for a year plan.

### **So how will the year look?**

- The first two weeks of the year are devoted to discussions about learning styles, expectations, achievement standard marking matrices (and their vocab.), key competencies, past asTTle results and any other type of learning discussion that will enable the student to have more informed planning discussion.
- The student will also be given a Skills Booklet including some of the more basic but essential skills for their success which include accurate referencing, summarising, paragraphing structures and the values and key competencies. In the booklet there will also be a place for students to reflect on their own level in these skills and plan for improvement.
- With each block of time donated to the study of texts, the class will begin by sharing the study of 3 or 4 texts together. This will enable the discussions about background and positioning of the author to take place. A reading/viewing list will accompany each block of study which the students will use to further their study of the topic/genre/issue depending on their interest. They are able to conference with their teacher to add books to the list.
- During the study block, the teacher and the student will conference about what assessment may suit the direction that their study is taking. It is the students who are in control of what they do and when they choose to do it. The year will be a combination of compulsory assessments (1 writing, 1 media and 1 oral presentation) and other assessments that the students choose to complete (depending on their confidence, skill level and interest). The students have the global picture of how many credits they have, and need, not the classroom teacher. The conferencing will allow those discussions to go ahead.
- In the Self Directed Study Week the student will do the final preparations for their assessment(s). Although, in reality, this preparation will have been going on during the study of the texts, this week enables the students to organise more specific time (and help) towards their assessment.
- The assessment week is the week where the finishing touches are put on writing, speeches delivered, media are finished and reports completed. These weeks are unmovable so that the students realise the importance of deadlines and adhering to them.

## 2011 YEAR PLANNER

Term 1	Week 1 1- 4 Feb	Week 2 7-11 Feb	Week 3 14- 18 Feb	Week 4 21-25 Feb	Week 5 28 Feb -4 Mar	Week 6 7-11 Mar	Week 7 14- 18 Mar	Week 8 21- 25 Mar	Week 9 28 Mar – 1 Apr	Week 10 4 Apr – 8 Apr	Week 11 11 Apr – 15 Apr
	Anniversary Day 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan  Enrolment week	Learning styles and assessment planning	The 'Not-so Great War'	The 'Not-so Great War'	The 'Not-so Great War'	The 'Not-so Great War'	The 'Not-so Great War'	The 'Not-so Great War'	Self directed study week.	Assessment week.	Living apart.
Term 2	Week 1 2 -6 May	Week 2 9 - 13 May	Week 3 16- 20 May	Week 4 23 -27 May	Week 5 30 May – 3 Jun	Week 6 6 - 10 Jun	Week 7 13 – 17 Jun	Week 8 20 -24 Jun	Week 9 27 Jun – 1 Jul	Week 10 4 – 8 Jul	Week 11 11 – 15 Jul
	Living apart.	Living apart.	Living apart.	Living apart.	Living apart.	Self directed study week.	Assessment week.	With friends like these...	With friends like these...	With friends like these...	With friends like these...
Term 3	Week 1 1 – 5 Aug	Week 2 8 – 12 Aug	Week 3 15 – 19 Aug	Week 4 22 - 26 Aug	Week 5 29 Aug – 2 Sep	Week 6 5 – 9 Sep	Week 7 12 – 16 Sep	Week 8 19 - 23 Sep	Week 9 26 - 30 Sep	Week 10 3 – 7 Oct	
	With friends like these...	Self directed study week.	Assessment week.	The future looks fine?	The future looks fine?	The future looks fine?	The future looks fine?	Self directed study week.	Assessment week.	Final exam preparation	
Term 4	Week 1 25 - 28 Oct	Week 2 31 Oct – 4 Nov	Week 3 7 – 11 Nov	Week 4 14 – 18 Nov	Week 5 21 - 25 Nov	Week 6 28 Nov – 2 Dec	Week 7 5 – 9 Dec	Week 8 9 – 11 Dec			

	Labour Day 24 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Final exam preparation</b>	NCEA Exams start 10 Nov								
	<b>Final exam preparation</b>										