

Auckland Literacy Association Newsletter – Term 4 2016

Dear ALA Members and Friends,

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2016. If you have any queries or comments please let us know. Our contact details are available on www.nzla.org.nz, under the Councils page. We hope you enjoy reading our sponsored teachers' reports from the NZLA conference. Have a good end to the year and a safe and relaxing break over the summer!

President's Pen

The year is closing quickly and I know everyone is very busy but please take the time to read the ALA sponsored teacher reports from the **39th NZLA Conference, 'Navigating Literacies'** held in September in the Bay of Islands. The ALA was able to send five teachers along. You will realise how inspired they all were by the talented speakers and learning offered when you read their reports.

At the opening of the conference NZLA President, Glenice Andrews posthumously presented a **NZLA 'Citation of Merit' to Sharon Pond**, it reads;

'Sharon has been a passionate advocate for literacy. Her services to the Auckland Literacy Association have included presentations at seminars and meetings, organising conferences and representing ALA on various committees. For New Zealand Literacy Association Sharon presented at conferences, convened a national conference and was elected as a member of NZLA executive. Internationally Sharon promoted New Zealand literacy practices through working with teachers and attending conferences and workshops. Her practice has been skilful, enthusiastic and exemplary. Sharon's reading recovery background as teacher and tutor influenced her work as a Resource Teacher of Literacy and guided her commitment to supporting teachers to provide high quality literacy learning for children everywhere.'

Members of ALA executive accepted the citation and will ensure that Sharon's family receives it.

As the year closes I would like to remind you of some of the messages we heard from the distinguished speakers who shared at ALA events during 2016.



- Helen Villers reminded us how powerful and effective picture books and novels are as rich sources to extend language and literacy. As teachers our literacy programmes need to allow our students opportunity to put their digital devices aside so they can become immersed in a text, read aloud with enthusiasm and love of story-telling.
- Dr Barbara Watson encouraged us to talk to our students often about the purpose of writing, to praise their initiative, their successes and to make sure these developing writers see that others value their writing when it is shared.
- Professor Stuart McNaughton and his team informed us of literacy research and insights into teaching inquiry, effective practice that promotes literacy learning in NZ classrooms. There is need to hear more as we work towards achieving greater consistency across the education system.

Our final event this year was the '**Young Authors and Illustrators**' day, at Te Papapa School with Susan Bocker and Dave Gunson. In 2017 we have exciting speakers booked in: Sue Court, Jill Eggleton and Rae Si'ilata and a focus on Oral language later in the year. Please look out for your membership invoice to renew your membership for 2017. Include school or personal address information so you can receive copies of Literacy Forum NZ and up to date email contact information.

Finally, the ALA executive is immensely proud of our Secretary, Heather Bell. This year Heather has been made an **Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit** for services to Education and this week Heather has been elected to the **Reading Hall of Fame**. Heather Bell's name will now sit alongside other notable academics including New Zealand's Stuart McNaughton, Warwick Elley and Tom Nicholson, to name a few. Our heartfelt congratulations to Heather on this acknowledgement of her many years of dedicated service and leadership in literacy.

Kind Regards

Bronwyn Wilkinson
President
Auckland Literacy Association



NZLA Conference Reports

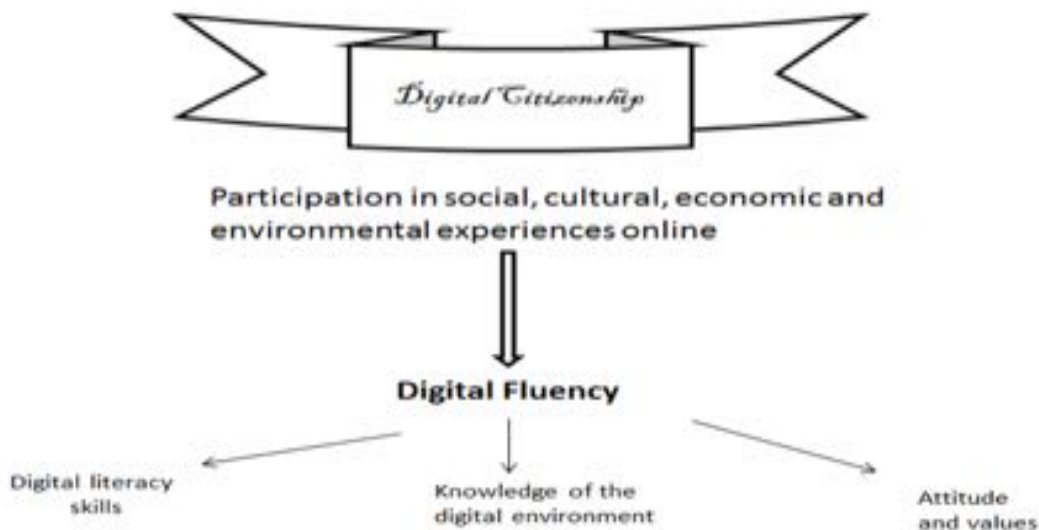
Theresa McCreight

Manurewa Central School

Historically to be literate is to be able to read and write, today being literate takes on another role - that of being digitally literate. Digital technology continues to advance and educators have to continue to refine and develop practices to keep up. The 39th New Zealand Literacy Association Conference strived to bring 'traditional' literacy and digital literacy together to allow us to develop digital citizens.

The new Education Review Office guidelines, which came into effect in February 2016, highlighted the need for schools to "promote digital literacy and citizenship in this new digital age."

Keynote speaker, Karen Melliush Spencer shared her vision of what a digital citizen should look like:



Before a child can develop or extend their digital literacy skills they must have a strong base in the 'traditional' literacy skills of oral language, reading and writing. This is creating a new problem within our schools - "***The Digital Divide.***" It is easy to assume that it means those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not. Instead it highlights ***those who have the literacy skills to use digital technologies and those who do not.***

The key question is: *How do we bridge this divide?*



Tanya Stanisich

Kowhai Intermediate School

'Navigating the Literaseas' in the beautiful Bay of Islands was a great way to start the term break. The winterless North certainly lived up to its name with the most magnificent weather.

We pulled up anchor on the Sunday and set sail on the 39th NZ Literacy Association National Conference. We first traversed the sea of oral language with Sheena Cameron and Louise Dempsey. Every time I hear these two speak I am further inspired. They shared with us practical, engaging and fun ways to increase student interactions in the classroom. My copy of their book is now fully decked out with post-it notes. I can't wait to try out 'doughnut circles', 'listening triads' and 'four square notes'.

By Monday we were under full sail with more keynote addresses and workshops to attend. Karen Melhuish Spencer (Netsafe) gave us plenty to think about when navigating the choppy waters of the internet and the digital age. She noted that the 'digital divide' is no longer about access to hardware and resources, but is now related to literacy and the ability to be successful online. I was reminded again of the many issues that teachers face in this ever-changing arena.

There was no drifting over the next 3 days as I plotted a course to my chosen workshops. Reading over my copious notes, it is obvious that each one was chock-full of useful and inspiring ideas. Topics were varied: Questioning (fun ways to encourage 'wonder'), A wonderful collection of National Library books (plenty of new titles added to my 'to read' list), Spelling (a focus on word study), Personalising Reading and Writing (lots of new ways to use google docs) and Redrafting writing (easy and engaging ideas for encouraging students to redraft).

We also docked our ship at several other keynote addresses over those 3 days, and many of the addresses continue to float about in my brain. I was surprised, challenged, heartened, amazed, I laughed, and I cried. The brain expert Nathan Mikaere Wallis delivered fascinating information about the factors that affect outcomes for learners. The audience were riveted and there were plenty of laugh out loud moments to be had. His ideas about confidence versus intelligence struck a chord with me - how much we believe in ourselves will determine success. I will continue to share this message with my students.

Marcus Akuhata-Brown made us laugh... and cry. In close quarters with each other, he held us in the palm of his hand and we could have listened to him speak all day. He certainly gave us plenty to think about. I will continue to look out for glass lids of low expectation, and remember that this job of teaching should be hard, otherwise it wouldn't be worth it.



This voyage is not over for me personally; I will continue trying out new ideas, testing new theories, telling new stories and sharing new ways of thinking with my colleagues. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the Auckland Literacy Association for the opportunity to attend the conference due to their very generous sponsorship. I would also encourage other teachers to apply for the Marie Clay Literacy Trust Scholarship so that they might also attend future NZ Literacy Association conferences.

Alarna Sutton

Papatoetoe West School

The New Zealand Literacy Association 39th National Conference was held at Waitangi, a stunningly beautiful place which made the event twice as special. It was an incredible honour to follow the steps others have taken before us when we were welcomed onto Waitangi with a powhiri that was followed by performances by the cultural dancers. I was in awe the entire time.

'Sailing the Literaseas' was the theme of the week and it sure felt like an adventure. It was fantastic hearing so many different aspects of literacy from Sheena Cameron, Louise Dempsey, Karen Meluish Spencer, Marcus Akuhata-Brown and many others. I really enjoyed that it wasn't only written literacy that was focused on but digital literacy and literacy of the heart. The entire conference was jam-packed with incredible speakers that I felt challenged me and has made me re-think my practice and approach to teaching literacy.

My main object of attending the literacy conference was that I was able to gain some perspective around oral language and how I would be able to effectively teach it in my classroom. I was highly impressed with the information and suggestions that Sheena Cameron, Louise Dempsey and Charlene Mataio made in their workshops. I have already introduced 'barrier games' which promote the children to talk about their shape creations and instruct their partner to draw what they have made. And you know what? The children love them! I also loved how Charlene talked about talking about the everyday things/objects/events with the children to expand their vocabulary and encourage them to see that their world is full of experiences to talk and write about.

Sharon Holt's workshop on incorporating Te Reo Maori into the classroom was extremely helpful as she guided the workshop through pronunciation and simple phrases and sayings that could help increase the use of Te Reo in the classroom. I loved this workshop because I believe that Te Reo is not used as effectively as it could be in today's classrooms. Especially being at Waitangi, I received a renewed passion for seeing Te



Reo both spoken more and understood more, as it is one of New Zealand's official languages. This means it should be incorporated more everyday. It is also such a rich language that creates a sense of mana for the person speaking it and the people hearing it. I know that speaking Te Reo regularly will be a challenge as I won't get it right all the time, however if my students can see me trying something that is unfamiliar to me, I would hope they would give challenging things a go too.

During the week my literacy practice was not the only aspect of my teaching that was challenged, so was my passion for teaching. I was thankful for Marcus Akuhata-Brown's message about the heart of the children that we teach and that every child has potential. We need to believe in them and encourage them that they have this potential to do greater things that were done before them. As Marcus said we need to "lift the lids off" and "take away the glass" of restriction and stigmas around young people and "give them a different vision of how they can see themselves." As teachers we need to whakaronga - listen to everything around us and pay attention to the holistic (physical, emotional, spiritual) beings that are the children we teach. If we are receptive to everything that a child is, then we can encourage them in a way that will shake them to their core and potentially witness a change and growth that will astound the child's community.

Thank you so much to the team that put together the 39th National Literacy Conference and the amazing activities such as the author's evening in Russell, the Bay of Islands cruise and the caring, wonderful atmosphere that you created over the conference. You deserve the biggest pat on the back for all the hard work that you put into managing an incredible event. Thank you also to the Auckland Literacy Association for the opportunity to attend such an awesome event that will see me grow further and develop as an effective teacher of literacy.

Te mau haamaitairaa ki katoa

Nga mihi

Alarna Sutton (Papatoetoe West School)

Nicola Hildreth

Rosebank School

The New Zealand Literacy Association 39th National Conference far exceeded my expectations. Held in the stunning Bay of Islands, we were privileged to experience a pivotal part of New Zealand's history and culture through the powhiri held at Waitangi. With such a special start to the conference, the following four days only



proceeded to astound me as the quality of keynote and workshop speakers, additional events, and traders' stands provided countless opportunities to learn, ponder and connect.

Karen Melhuish Spencer

Karen began her keynote talk by showing a series of photos that she had found when recently Googling herself. Suggesting that we should all try it from time to time, just to see what pops up, she then led in into a highly relevant keynote talk on our 'offline vs. online self'.

She described a digital citizen as someone who '*confidently engages with, and participates in, online opportunities safely, respectfully and meaningfully.*' With that definition in mind, she went on to speak about how we, as teachers, can support students to become digital citizens. What sort of skills do they need? How do they develop them? Are they 'digitally native' simply because they are born in a time when technology is far more commonplace? Her belief – absolutely not! Children may be able to use the technology, but we need to support them in developing attitudes and values when online that enables them to be safe and make wise decisions.

Karen suggested that '*there is no technology that will help your children learn how to use technology*'. Children won't learn how to use technology effectively by 'using it more'. We need to be deliberate in our strategies as teachers as to how we are facilitating the development of digital citizenship, ensuring that we are '*planning the journey*'. Listening to what our learners need is the most crucial aspect to staying connected, and providing an environment in which they feel safe to express their challenges and needs is powerful in creating learners that are confident and capable.

I would like to thank the Marie Clay Literacy Trust and the Auckland Literacy Association for their sponsorship and support in applying for, and receiving, the Marie Clay Early Career Sponsored Teacher Scholarship to attend the NZLA conference. The opportunity to hear such knowledgeable and well-respected speakers is one that has certainly had a huge impact on my future teaching career.





Kathryn Farr

Chapel Downs School

During our recent September/October non-contact time, I was fortunate enough to receive ALA sponsorship to attend the NZLA Conference **Navigating the Literaseas** hosted by Tai Tokerau Literacy Association and held in the beautiful **Bay of Islands**.

From the official (and very moving) powhiri and performance at Waitangi, an evening with a published NZ author, a cruise around the Bay of Islands, mini workshops at lunch, a large traders area to peruse, inspiring and motivational keynotes and practical workshops - this was one jam packed conference!

We were lucky to have keynote speakers which included (but was certainly not limited to) Nigel Latta, Brian Falkner and Marcus Akuhata Brown. In their different presentations, they told stories, discussed current research, provided a few laughs, and gave some practical ideas. I came away highly motivated and with things to think about for my future practice.

Workshops were planned around four themes - Future Focussed Education, Catering for Diversity, Love of Literature and Foundations for Learning. And what a tough decision it was to select which workshops to attend!



In **Stuart Hale's workshop 21st Century Technology delivers more for literacy than ever before** he discussed the advantage of using iPads to transform our classroom programmes.

*This technology engages and motivates our learners - but we need to ensure we move beyond merely "playing" on an iPad. Technology must be used to transform, not simply assist learning.

*iPads are mobile - education doesn't just happen at a desk, you need to be able to take the technology with you as you learn.

*No limitations. If a device requires a keyboard to use it, you have to be able to read and write. *An iPad allows children to share their voice in a mode of their choosing - written, oral or visual.*

*There are over 2 million apps available in the app store. However, Stuart advocates the use of only 7 apps for unlimited, open ended learning opportunities in literacy:



Pic Collage

Book Creator

Puppet Pals

Strip Design

iMovie

Lifecards

Explain Everything

I have used some of these iPad apps successfully in my classroom programme, but can't wait to get back next term and explore some of the others with my class!

An evening of poetry with Paula Green

In amongst sharing her beautiful poems and guiding us through the quick composition of poems, Paula shared with us her belief that there are four joys of writing:

*sound - poetry sounds good and allows you to make music with words. Reading it aloud makes it come alive

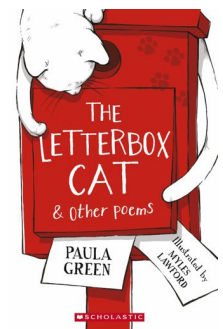
*see - a poem can show the world and takes you places. Stop, look and absorb the world around you in all its detail

*feeling - poems stick with you when they make you feel something. Paula's poems are aimed to make children laugh

*imagination - if you use your imagination when you write, then you can go anywhere, likewise you take the reader to other places

Take aways

- Poetry can be great for both the reluctant and sophisticated writer (and reader)
- The satisfaction of writing a complete poem in 16 words or less
- Collect words about a subject and then 'ban' them from use, encouraging children to find other ways
- Encourage children to tilt their world and change their points of view
- Paula posts a poetry challenge on her blog <https://nzpoetrybox.wordpress.com/author/paulajoygreen/> on the first of every month, complete with tips





Keynote

Marcus Akuhata Brown

Marcus was one of our final keynote speakers at the conference. He spoke about people being conditioned by their environments, and our need as educators to lift or smash the 'glass lids of low expectation' and inspire and encourage our children to high achievement. We should never underestimate our ability to affect change in others. It is the connection between our heads (our knowledge) and our hearts (our beliefs/vision and ability to see potential) that provides us the power to affect change.



Marcus talked us through his life and the people who have believed in him and lifted the 'lids' off his life. His words took us on an emotive journey, and there would have been very few dry eyes left when he met the young teacher who continued her schooling because of a speech he had given at her high school. We can not expect anyone else to change if we are not prepared to change ourselves. Marcus posed the question which I take away to consider - *What 'lids' do we need to remove from ourselves to contribute to change?*

Young Authors and Illustrators Day

With Dave Gunson and Susan Brocker at Te Papapa School 28 October

The Young Authors and Illustrators Day was fabulous, thanks to our two inspiring speakers, Susan Brocker and Dave Gunson.

Students came from all across Auckland and they delighted in the information shared by Susan Brocker and Dave Gunson. This talented pair shared their love, enthusiasm and inspiration for their craft with the students. There was time to think, create and share. The students pondered character development, dialogue and settings as well as perspectives, angles and the use of detailed sketches and cartoons. They have all gone away with inspiration to start their own journey in writing and illustration after instruction on how to be the best cartoonist in their class using the O G technique.

Thank you to Te Papapa School for the use of their facilities, to Susan and Dave for their time and to Scholastic for the donation of 6 spot prizes.



Congratulations to our lucky Scholastic spot prize winners pictured with Dave and Susan!



Looking Ahead...

2017 Events:

Term 1: AGM with Sue Court and NZLA conference recipients

Term 2: Jill Eggleton

Term 3: Dr Rae Si'ilata