LET'S WRITE A UNIT

Based on a quality text and tailored to your students' needs.

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This PETAA Paper includes digital Resources 🔗.

To access these resources you need to log on to access the member-only digital version for all the associated resources, embedded video and downloads, including the sample unit of work, at **bit.ly/PP215** or using the QR code.

Introduction

Teachers are great at sharing, evidenced by the plethora of literature-based units authored by teachers and freely available for download on the internet. Sharing and collaboration are core strengths of the teaching profession, yet these units should be viewed as a double-edged swords. When teachers use someone else's unit, written to target the needs of a particular group of students, we argue they are not addressing the specific learning needs and interests of their own students.

Reasons provided by teachers as to why they don't create their own units, tailored to their students, usually revolve around a lack of time and/ or knowledge regarding the appropriate steps to follow – that is, how to write a quality English unit.

1. CREATING A UNIT FOR YOUR OWN STUDENTS' NEEDS

Our aim is to outline a trustworthy, collaborative process on how to craft a unit that is not onerous or time-consuming and draws on educational theory, formative assessment and student learning needs. By centring a unit of work in English on high interest quality texts, and students' identified learning needs, teachers are potentially creating literature-based units that target learning locally, engage students in rich learning tasks and can, when appropriate, authentically link to other key learning areas across the curriculum.

Through this process of writing your own literature-based English units that address the learning needs of your students, you establish the best chance of learning success.

Our original unit, that was trialled in schools, is available to you as **Resource 1:** 🔗 **Sample Unit Murray & Beveridge (2018)**. We encourage you to amend the unit to address the particular needs and interests of your students. When you create your version of this unit, please save it in your school name, so it is clear that you have made changes to the original.

The unit is an integrated English unit, which also addresses science and technology curriculum content. This unit, 'The Rhythm of Life' targets Year 5 and 6 students. The core text of the unit is *Mechanica: a beginner's field guide*, by Lance Balchin (2016). We called the unit 'The Rhythm of Life' because it tells the story of how humankind ebbs and flows in the face of adversity — in this text, catastrophic environmental events. Balchin provides a glimpse of a possible future, but certainly not a preferred one, for humankind. The audience for this text is older children or young adults and its purpose is to raise awareness of our shared responsibilities in caring for our world.
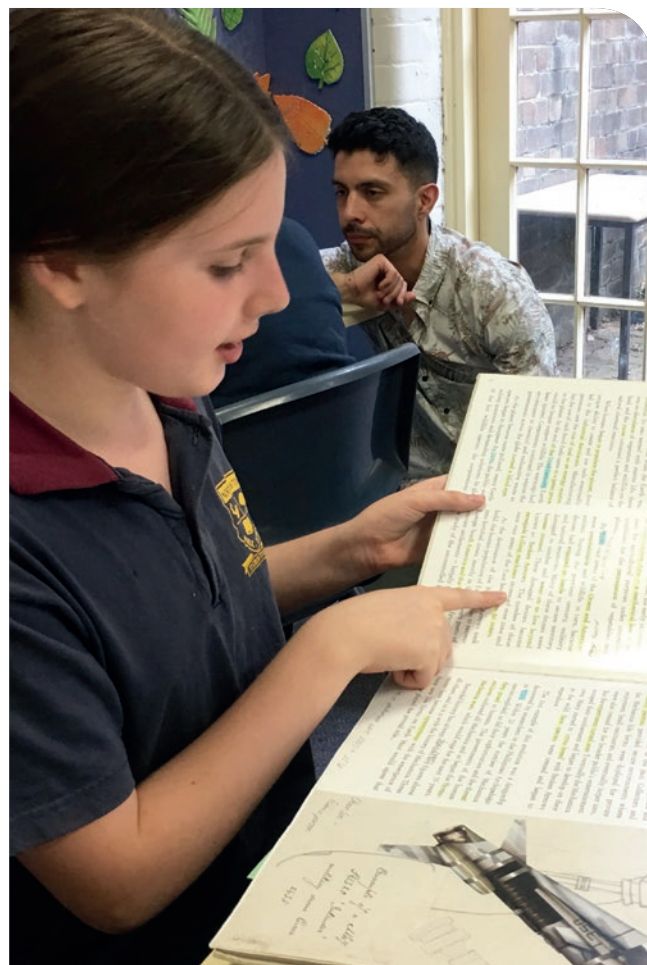

Figure 1: *Mechanica* **The core text of unit.**

Before we share the process for designing a quality unit of work, we would like to provide some context for this process and share our thinking around two high-priority considerations when creating English units: concepts and quality texts.

Context

In 2014 and 2015, Michael Murray delivered PETAA courses to support the implementation of NSW syllabus incorporating the new Australian Curriculum: English (AC:E). A feature of the professional learning was sharing a process for developing a quality unit of work. He drew on the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2005), as well as his previous experience in syllabus implementation in his capacity as Chief Education Officer, English and Literacy, with the NSW Department of Education (2006-2013). This work was very much influenced by two outstanding practitioners in NSW secondary English, Karen Yager and Prue Greene. We, the authors, forged our professional partnership at a Newcastle workshop of one of those courses.

In their important and influential text, *Understanding by design*, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) outline a three-step process in developing a quality unit of work (pp .17-18):

1. Identify desired results: What deep understanding will students gain through this learning?

2. Determine acceptable evidence: What assessment will demonstrate that students have gained this understanding?

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction: What teaching and learning will support students in gaining this understanding?

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) described this process as "backward design" (pp.18-20), often called "backward mapping", because it involves starting with the end result you want to achieve, then designing a sequence for arriving there. Such a process ensures that the curriculum design is focused on "big ideas" (pp 65-70), the concepts that really matter in a subject, from the beginning.

The unit writing process we advocate also aligns with the dimensions of the Quality Teaching model (NSW DET, 2003a), particularly the intellectual quality and significance dimensions, and ideas of authentic pedagogy, moving from traditional teacher-centred approaches towards more progressive, student-centred, constructivist classrooms, in which students are actively constructing meaning rather than simply absorbing and reproducing knowledge (Newmann & Associates, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 2005).

Why focus on concepts?

Teachers often feel so pressured for their students to perform well in NAPLAN that subject English is, erroneously, often conceived as a set of literacy skills. The problem of such a reductive mindset is that literacy is not a subject, but rather a general capability developed across all subjects in the curriculum, not just English. That is not to say, of course, that all subjects have an equal focus on literacy. Obviously English requires more explicit teaching of literacy and provides opportunities to learn a greater breadth of literacy skills than other subjects. While developing literacy skills is an important aspect of English, there is a lot more to the study of the subject than literacy. After all, literacy is just one of the three broad strands of English in the AC:E, and indeed the other two strands, language and literature, give the subject more of its unique character than literacy.

All subjects have their key ideas, or concepts, that represent particular ways of thinking valued in the discipline – and English is no exception. In the overview of each subject in the Australian Curriculum there is a section called 'Key ideas' that describes the concepts of the subject as envisaged by the writers of that curriculum. The 'Key ideas' section of the AC:E presents a particular view of English concepts, which it does not name but describes in the most general terms.

The English Teachers Association and the Department of Education in NSW have collaboratively developed a framework, called English textual concepts and learning processes (2017), that fills this void by boldly identifying and naming the key ideas of English. This version of English concepts gains authority by making links between these concepts and the content of the NSW English K-10 syllabus. Because this syllabus includes all the content of AC:E, the English textual concepts framework has significance for teachers of English, primary and secondary, across Australia. It's available to all online at: **http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.ed.u.au**.

This framework identifies and defines 15 English concepts:

- argument
- authority
- character
- code and convention
- connotation, imagery and symbol
- context
- genre
- intertextuality
- literary value
- narrative
- perspective
- point of view
- representation
- style
- theme

While the accuracy, completeness and nomenclature of the list are (and should be) debatable, this framework nevertheless provides a valuable starting point for teachers wanting to implement AC:E using a concept-based approach. A key feature of *English textual concepts and learning processes* (2017) is the way in which it documents and describes what these concepts might look like from the simplest iteration in Kindergarten to sophisticated manifestations in Year 12. Basically, a "good" English concept is one that sits at the heart of the English curriculum and that can be revisited several times in increasingly complex ways, at different points in a student's learning trajectory.

It is important for the purpose of this paper to caution that some Primary teachers build English units around topics, such as rainforests, gold or festivals. In fact, these topics are often derived from other subjects, such as science, history or geography. So when you try to identify the English in these units, what you often find are the literacy skills that sit behind these other subjects. English has its own discrete content that extends beyond literacy skills, concepts that demand deep knowledge and understanding to ensure students engage with the rigours of the discipline.

Evidence-based support for the focus on concepts

We have known for some time about the importance of ensuring the intellectual quality of students' learning. Well over half a century ago, Bloom's taxonomy (1956), reminded teachers of the value of emphasising higher-order thinking, such as evaluation, synthesis, analysis and application, while a more recent interpretation of this taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001, pp.67-68) changes these nouns into verbs and puts 'creating' at the very top of the scale. Concepts invite and encourage such higher-order thinking.

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) argue for a process that helps teachers to plan for learning experiences that promote deep understanding of concepts. In a more recent article, they affirm the importance of high order concepts, insisting that education 'consists of more than a pile of facts or a laundry list of skills' (Wiggins & McTighe, 2008, p.37).

The focus on concepts is supported by the Quality Teaching (QT) model, introduced to NSW schools in 2003 and widely adopted in NSW and the ACT. Developed by James Ladwig and Jennifer Gore (NSW DoE, 2003a), this model is underpinned by a rigorous research base (NSW DoE, 2003b). The QT model emphasises the positive impact of quality teaching on student learning achieved by focusing on three key dimensions, the first being intellectual quality. According to the model, two important elements of intellectual quality are:

- Deep knowledge: *'Knowledge is deep when it concerns the central concerns or concepts of a topic, subject or KLA (key learning area).'* (p.12)

- Deep understanding: *'Deep understanding is evident when students demonstrate their grasp of central ideas and concepts.'* (p.14)

In clarifying the priorities for teachers' programming, a discussion paper of the QTM states:

'... the first thing teachers will need to do is select and organise the essential knowledge, understandings, skills and values from the syllabus around central concepts or ideas. Once lessons are focused on these concepts or ideas, the main task of teachers in those lessons is one of developing the students' deep understanding of the selected knowledge, skills and values and of the connections among them.'

(NSW DET, 2003a, p.10)

While the model was initially used to evaluate assessment tasks and teaching practice, it has gained wide acceptance as a tool to guide developing quality units of work.

Why choose quality texts?

A quality, balanced English program should include a range of texts, spanning written, spoken and multimodal texts (PETAA, 2016). Choosing the most appropriate text to address curriculum requirements, as well as students' identified learning needs and interests, requires great care and consideration.

Students are exposed to texts with a range of complexity throughout their school years (ACARA, 2018b p.2). Text complexity is an important consideration when choosing quality texts. Teachers need to consider the demands of the text, student interests and whether the text addresses syllabus outcomes and identified learning needs. Additionally, teachers need to decide how they will differentiate tasks to ensure success for all students, and the instructional arrangements that will best facilitate this.

Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2016) provide three guiding considerations for teachers when choosing texts:

- Ensure selected texts address learning intentions
- Ensure texts align with proposed tasks
- Consider student learning needs and how teachers can scaffold student learning to ensure success.

Using texts in your classroom beyond your students' ability levels requires careful scaffolding. Scaffolding may include pre-teaching and/or explanation of technical vocabulary and points of difficulty. Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2016) describe "the Goldilocks Principal" when selecting quality texts for classroom instruction: not so easy that they do not challenge students, and not so difficult that students cannot access meaning with scaffolded support.

Quality literary texts are defined by Ewing, Callow and Rushton as texts that:

- engage children and adults alike
- relate, but are not limited, to the children's interests and experiences
- are rich in language use and image (rather than overly contrived with limited vocabulary or ancillary images)
- merit multiple readings and trigger lot of 'why' and/or 'I wonder' discussion questions
- are multi-layered (there are a range of interpretations possible rather than only one-dimension)
- evoke a range of different communities, worlds, cultures and ways of being
- are aesthetically designed.

Ewing, Callow and Rushton (2016, p.103)

These guidelines support teachers in selecting a wide range of authentic literature and quality texts which are vital elements of any English program. Teachers are well-advised to select texts that have been recently published on which to base their English units, as many children's texts do not remain in print for long, making purchase of class sets difficult. To avoid disappointment, check availability of a particular text prior to writing a unit of work.

The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes quality literature for children and young adults. The CBCA coordinates the CBCA annual Book of the Year Awards, celebrating quality children's literature. At the end of February they announce their long list, called the Notables, their Short List in March, and the winners at the commencement of Book Week in August. These lists can assist teachers in text selection. Their website is a useful resource for teachers **https://cbca.org.au/**.

We chose Lance Balchin's CBCA Honour Picture Book 2017, *Mechanica*, for our unit of work because it is challenging, yet accessible to the target audience, Years 5 and 6 students, and addresses identified learning needs (in this school, writing and spelling). For the study of English, the text offers a rich source of ideas, beautifully represented through language and illustrations. *Mechanica* explores the key English concepts of genre, code and convention, narrative, point of view and intertextuality in thoughtful and playful ways. The potential for linking to science and technology is also immediately apparent. And yes, the book is available!

2. A PROCESS FOR DESIGNING A QUALITY ENGLISH UNIT OF WORK

In his professional development courses, Michael offered teachers a 7-step unit writing process, incorporating the steps outlined by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), to support the implementation of the English curriculum. This process is not specific to NSW and is relevant to teachers across Australia, both primary and secondary teachers. **Figure 2** provides a summary of the 7-step process and further explanation follows:
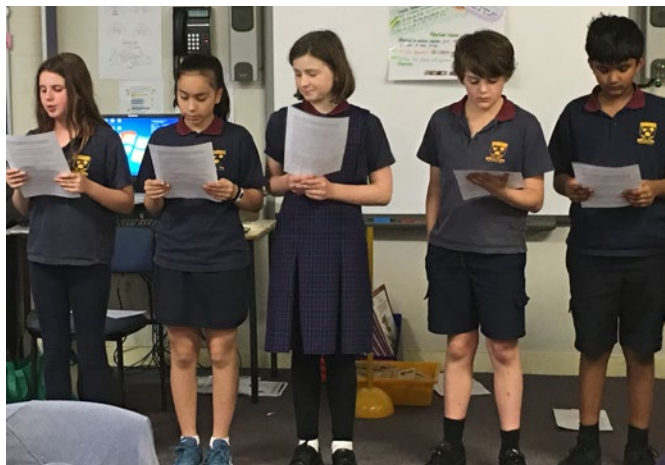
Step 1
Identify the needs of students, mindful of evidence of previous learning.

Step 2
Develop a scope and sequence for English learning that identifies the key English concept and text for the unit.

Step 3
Identify the curriculum content that relates to the key concept.

Step 4
Identify opportunities for assessment (both formative and summative), including an assessment task with curriculum-based criteria.

Step 5
Backward map from the assessment task to develop a teaching/learning sequence.

Step 6
Integrate other important learning activities into the unit.

Step 7
Evaluate the unit at critical stages in its development to ensure quality.

Figure 2: Outline of a unit writing process (adapted from Wiggins and McTighe, 2005)

Step 1: Identify the learning needs of students, mindful of evidence of previous learning

A unit of work should be tailored to address the learning needs of the target student group, identified through assessment. NAPLAN is one source of information for identifying these needs, but it is not the only one. At best, NAPLAN provides a snapshot of students' literacy (and numeracy) skills at certain points in their schooling, but it does not cover the range of skills that students need at school or life in general. Nor is NAPLAN an English assessment – it assesses aspects of literacy that are pertinent to all subjects. Teachers should look beyond NAPLAN to their own ongoing assessment of students' performance in English in determining the next step along their learning journey. Indeed, 'where to next' will inevitably vary for different groups and individuals in the classroom.

Designing a unit of work at an appropriate level can be challenging for teachers. While there is a place for consolidation of previous learning, the unit should also help students to progress to the next stage, beyond what they have already achieved. This approach is supported by the sociocultural theory of learning, advanced by Vygotsky in the 1970s, helpfully explicated by Verenikina (2008), including the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a notion used to describe the gap between where students are at in their learning and where they need to be to ensure ongoing progress. A quality unit of work supports students to set challenging goals and provides them with interactive learning opportunities that enable them to achieve those goals. "High challenge, high support" is an effective approach to maximise learning outcomes for all students (Hammond, 2006).

A useful starting point in identifying students' learning needs is the pretest. Before implementing the pretest writing task in our sample unit, "The Rhythm of Life", Lorraine introduced the National Literacy Learning Progressions (NLLP), (ACARA, 2018a) in Year 5, 6 classrooms. The NLLP support teachers and students in identifying evidence-based aspects of literacy development. Students selected a small, manageable number of progression indicators from the Writing element of the NLLP, including indicators from Creating texts (pp 38-42), Grammar (p 48) and Spelling (pp 54, 55), to develop rubrics that were used in self, peer and teacher assessment of student pretest writing tasks (**Resource 2:** 🔗 **video Student pre-task writing activities)**.

Formative assessment tasks are embedded throughout the unit to inform teaching and provide student feedback on progress.

Tasks throughout the unit were self, peer and teacher assessed using the rubrics that students created, drawing on the NLLP. Such an approach ensured that the teaching of writing throughout the unit was focused on taking students to the next level in their learning.
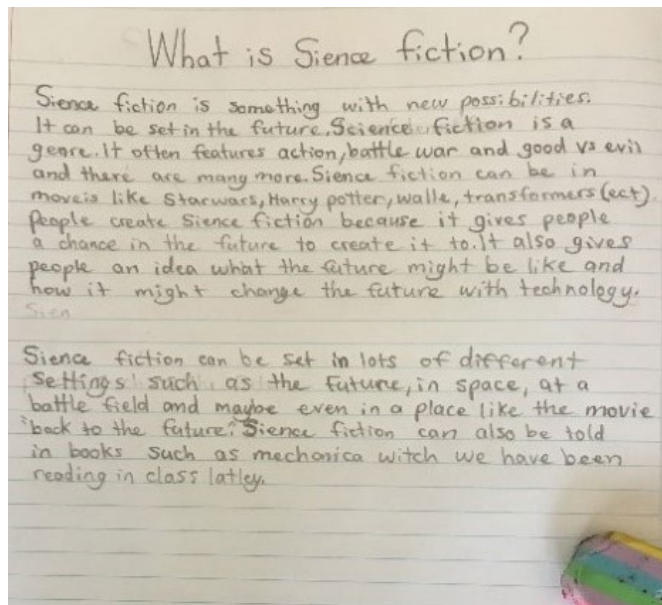

Figure 3: Formative assessment student work sample

Step 2: Develop a scope and sequence for English learning that identifies the key English concept and text for the unit

Before beginning a new English unit, it is important to consider the big picture for English learning at the school. How will this new unit cohere with other units planned or already in place? Obviously, you don't want to double up or leave any glaring gaps in the syllabus content that you need to address in your teaching. Developing a scope and sequence outlining the units of work in a particular year or stage is a necessary part of the planning process in your school. The scope and sequence should outline the order of the units taught within a school year, and the curriculum content that each unit addresses. The development of a scope and sequence in subject English is a planning operation that requires the input and cooperation of all teachers in the school. Key components of any scope and sequence include titles of units and their implementation sequence, duration, syllabus outcomes, key concept (s) and examples of quality literature planned for each unit (NESA, 2017c).

After conducting two courses supporting the implementation of the English curriculum in primary schools for PETAA, Michael was besieged by schools wanting support in developing a K-6 English scope and sequence. The pro forma that was used in many of these schools in developing their own scope and sequence: **Resource 3:** 🔗 **Scope and sequence pro forma.**

In the scope and sequence, it is useful to identify the English concept(s) that will be central to students' learning in the unit that you are developing. You might include a number of interrelated concepts, but it is always helpful to have one main concept as a focus for student learning and your teaching. The main concept identified in *"The Rhythm of Life"* unit is genre, although other textual concepts such as narrative, code and convention, intertextuality and point of view are also addressed.

A concept is not a theme or topic, but rather a key idea that will develop deep knowledge and understanding of the subject, in this case English.

A means of ensuring a focus on the key concept is to pose 'essential questions' (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). These are big, open-ended questions that provide 'doorways to understanding' of concepts. Typically, there might be one to three essential questions that students will explore throughout the unit, including the main assessment task. In *"The Rhythm of Life"* unit, the essential question is: How can composers, including students, use genre in flexible ways to help achieve their purposes?

A literary text will often determine the focus concept being considered for the design of your unit – that is nearly always the case in our experience. Our unit, *"The Rhythm of Life"*, emerged from the quality text, *Mechanica*, which addressed the learning needs of students in our trial school, before the concepts were identified. The question of whether to start with a concept and then find the text, or start with quality literature and then work with a concept evident in the text, is a classic chicken-or-egg situation. Either way, you would not want to go too far down the track of planning a unit without making prudent decisions about both concept and text.

Once the concept and text are chosen, teachers can plan a unit of work with confidence. In our experience, mind-mapping around the central concept and text is a helpful way to further develop the unit. Mind-mapping promotes creative, collaborative thinking without locking participants into a linear process. In our own planning for *"The Rhythm of Life"* unit, the mind-map was a visual plan of the unit prior to writing, that we could share, change and build upon together — see **Figure 4.**

Resource 4: 🔗 **is a mind-map pro forma that could help to guide collaborative planning of units in the early stages.**
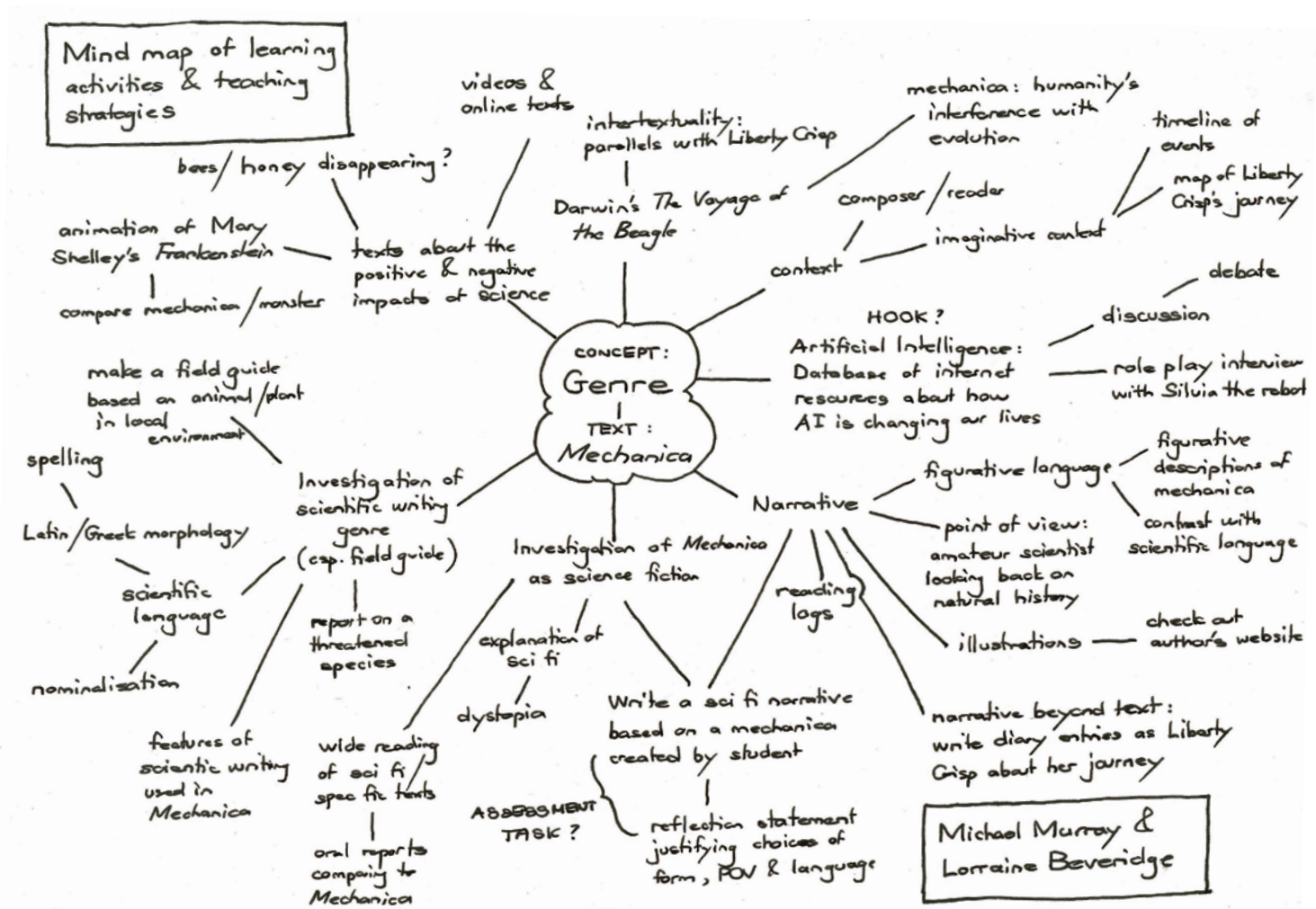

Figure 4 Mind-map for *Mechanica* (unit)

When Lorraine participated in Michael's course in Newcastle in 2015, she engaged in an activity in which small groups of teachers selected a quality text for their students and completed this mind-map collaboratively, following an initial reading and deep and lively discussion about the text. This was fun, noisy, and teachers left the course with a skeletal English unit that they would tailor to address the learning needs of their students back at their schools. Through this activity, the participants had all learned a unit-writing strategy that was engaging and time-efficient (it took about an hour), evidence of the power of collaborative practice.

Lorraine has encouraged many teachers to use the mind-mapping approach to collaboratively generate units of work. The teachers involved are happy to share their completed units of work with you. However, again we ask you that if you download any of the units, please save them in your school name, prior to making any changes that address the learning needs of your students. Participating teachers share the units that they crafted for their local context in the spirit of collaboration and do not claim that they are exemplary. The units are examples of practising teachers learning with and from each other and we thank them for their willingness to share. **(Resource 5:** 🔗 **Collaboratus of teaching units)** http://bit.ly/2GdRkSY Another example of a completed mind-map, based on a different text, can be seen below **(Figure 5).**
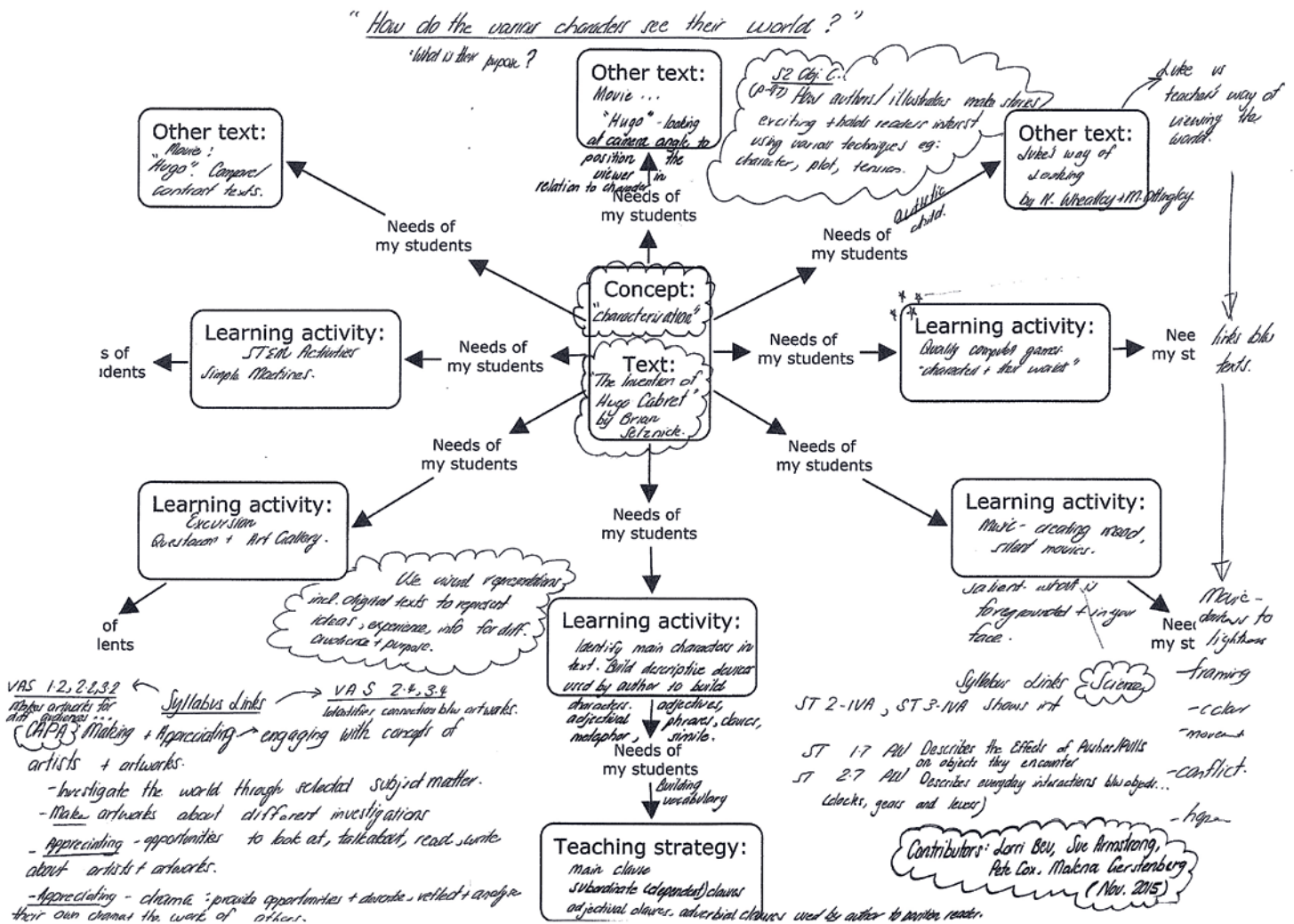

Figure 5. Sample mind-map

Step 3: Identify the curriculum content that relates to the key concept

As teachers we all know that teaching the curriculum is mandatory. Why then not start with the curriculum in planning a unit of work? The problem is, as mentioned, that the Australian Curriculum: English does not make the key concepts of the subject explicit. However, we have argued that concepts are implicit in this curriculum, a fact demonstrated by the joint work of the Department of Education and the English Teachers Association in NSW in mapping concepts to the content of the NSW English K-10 Syllabus, which of course includes all the content of the Australian Curriculum: English. Having said that, we believe it is important that teachers go back to the curriculum themselves so that they can be confident that what they are planning for their students accords with curriculum requirements.

At this point it will be helpful to choose a template that can be used for writing the unit. We are informed by colleagues in other states that digital programming tools are available across education systems. For example the New South Wales Educational Standards Authority (NESA) online templates support teachers in writing their own units of work through an on-line tool called Program Builder, available **https://pb.bos.nsw.edu.au/**. The really useful feature of these templates is that they allow teachers to readily download, and include in their units, the curriculum content being addressed. We used one of these templates for our unit, "The Rhythm of Life". Alternatively, teachers might use, or adapt, the Word template provided by the authors **(Resource 6: 🔗 Unit pro forma)**

Step 4: Identify opportunities for assessment (both formative and summative), including an assessment task with curriculum-based criteria

This step aligns with the second step in Wiggins and McTighe's three-step process of curriculum design (2005). After deciding on your unit focus, based on identified learning needs, concepts and curriculum content, it makes sense to plan how you will assess student progress throughout the unit.

Assessment is, of course, important for both students and teachers to monitor and improve their learning and teaching. It is worth getting it right early in planning. When assessment is planned after the procedural details of the unit, there is a danger that it will be an add-on rather than integrated into the teaching and learning.

Any unit will include a variety of assessment, both informal and formal. It is important that assessment is ongoing so that teachers can fine-tune their instruction to meet the emerging learning needs of students. However, there is value in having one main task, usually near the end of the unit, that assesses how effectively students have engaged with the key concept. The best way for students to demonstrate their learning in English is to perform in some way, to compose a text — written, spoken, visual or multimodal — that reflects their deep understanding of the concept and demonstrates their capacity to address particular learning outcomes.

Given the importance of assessment in the teaching and learning cycle, it follows that teachers should develop criteria to assess student performance. The criteria should clearly link to the curriculum content being addressed. Students need to understand these criteria before they complete the task — there should be no mystery about how they are going to be assessed. Better still, engage students in the process of developing the criteria for assessment — an excellent example of 'assessment as learning' — as we did when we trialled our unit in a school. Such an approach provides students with deep insight into their learning and encourages them to accept greater responsibility as learners, especially when triangulated with teacher, peer and self-assessment.

In the unit that we developed, students engaged in a range of assessment activities. The main assessment task, which can be found near the end of the unit, requires students to write a science fiction narrative based on a 'mechanica' they create themselves, as well as a reflection statement justifying their decisions as composers. While there are other requirements and suggestions in this assessment task, all linked to other learning in the unit, the task is clearly focused on the main concept of genre embraced in the unit.

Step 5: Backward map from the assessment task to develop a teaching/learning sequence

This step reflects the third step in the process advocated by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). Once the main assessment task is in place, you can backward map to develop a teaching and learning sequence with greater confidence. Such an approach also ensures that students are not engaged in 'busy work', time-filling activities like completing endless worksheets, but rather purposeful learning.

In our unit, the assessment task requires students to use the genre of science fiction writing, so of course learning about genre through the main text, *Mechanica*, is strongly represented in the teaching/learning sequence. However, the task also requires students to use a particular form (such as the field report used in *Mechanica*) and adopt a particular point of view (such as the scientist/technical expert point of view adopted in *Mechanica*), and encourages them to use intertextuality, figurative language and visual representation, all of which figure in the content of the unit. Furthermore, skills used in the assessment task, such as processing of writing and reflecting on learning, are also developed through the course of the unit. **(Resource 7: 🔗 Student summative assessment task)**

Step 6: Integrate other important learning activities into the unit

While backward mapping from the main assessment task provides the backbone of the teaching/learning sequence, it will probably not account for all of the learning. Other learning activities, often driven by school or jurisdictional priorities, or indeed the curriculum itself, may also need to be included in the unit of work.

Of course, where possible, such learning should be linked to the concept and/or text at the heart of the unit. For example, the school where we trialled our unit had a priority to improve spelling, so we exploited the fact that *Mechanica* used real and invented scientific language, often with Greek and Latin roots, to teach how understanding etymology provides a useful strategy for students to spell effectively. While this learning was not essential to the main task, it was nevertheless important in terms of the unit addressing both school targets and identified student learning needs. **Figure 6** shows an example of students' visual representations, linked to spelling activities in the unit, as much of the vocabulary in the *Mechanica* text is deeply embedded in morphology and etymology — see **Table 1** (Anderson, Whiting, Bowers & Venable, 2019).

In the *"Rhythm of Life"* unit, we linked our English unit to Science and Technology outcomes as the text, although fictional, addressed issues related to knowledge and understanding of the natural world, built environment and working technologically and scientifically. An inquiry learning approach, based on the Science and Technology curriculum, is evident in the unit.

If the additional learning cannot be readily integrated with the main concept and text, then of course you need to be flexible enough to accommodate it anyway. But do not allow it to become so much of a distraction that it causes both you and your students to lose track of the core focus.

Figure 6: Student examples of visual representations based on *Mechanica*

WORD	ORIGIN		PREFIX	MORPHEME	SUFFIX
Technology	Greek	techno = art/craft		techno	-logy = denoting a subject of study or interest
Enclaves	Latin Old French	clavis = key enclaver = enclose	en = into	clave	
Uninhabitable	Latin	habitāre = to dwell	un = not	inhabit	-able = capable of being
Synonymous	Late Latin	synonymum		synonym	-ous = characterised by
	Greek	synonymon = word having the same sense as another			
Taxonomy	Greek	taxis = arrangement nomia = distribution		tax	-onomy = a system of rules or laws, or body of knowledge of a particular subject
Devastating	Latin	devastare = to lay waste	de = thoroughly	vastate	-ing
Revolutionary	Latin	revolvere = roll back		revolve	-tion = the action or process of -ary = of or relating to
Contrition	Latin	contrit = ground down		contrite	-ion = the action or process of
Variants	French	variant = varying		vary	-s = plural
Prototypes	Greek	prōtos = first	proto	type	
Bastion	Italian	bastire = build			-ion = the action or process of
Evolved	Latin	e- (variant of ex-) = out of volvere = to roll		evolve	-ed = past tense

Table 1 Morphological chunking authentic task integration

Step 7: Evaluate the unit at critical stages in its development to ensure quality

Unit writing is a collaborative activity. All teachers should have the opportunity to contribute to this significant, creative and rewarding work. It is important that the unit is evaluated by the whole team and that feedback is used to make further improvements. Such collaborative practice ensures that the team develops a sense of shared ownership of the unit.

The Tuning Protocol is a useful process to help teams collaboratively evaluate draft units. Michael developed this model for his work with schools **(Resource 8 🔗)**.

Michael also developed a simple-to-use checklist (**Resource 9** 🔗 Evaluating a Unit of work) to assist teachers to determine what constitutes a quality unit of work, an approach grounded in research (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005; 2015; NSW DoE, 2003a; Newmann & Associates, 2006). This reflective tool is useful for teachers when crafting their units and amending other teachers' units for use in their own classrooms.

There can be no better way of evaluating a unit of work than to actually teach it and receive feedback from students and teachers with whom you work. Students, in particular, will be endearingly (brutally) honest in their feedback, as is evidenced in **Figure 7**.

The ongoing evaluation of units ensures that they remain fresh for teachers and relevant to students' needs, clearly a win-win situation.
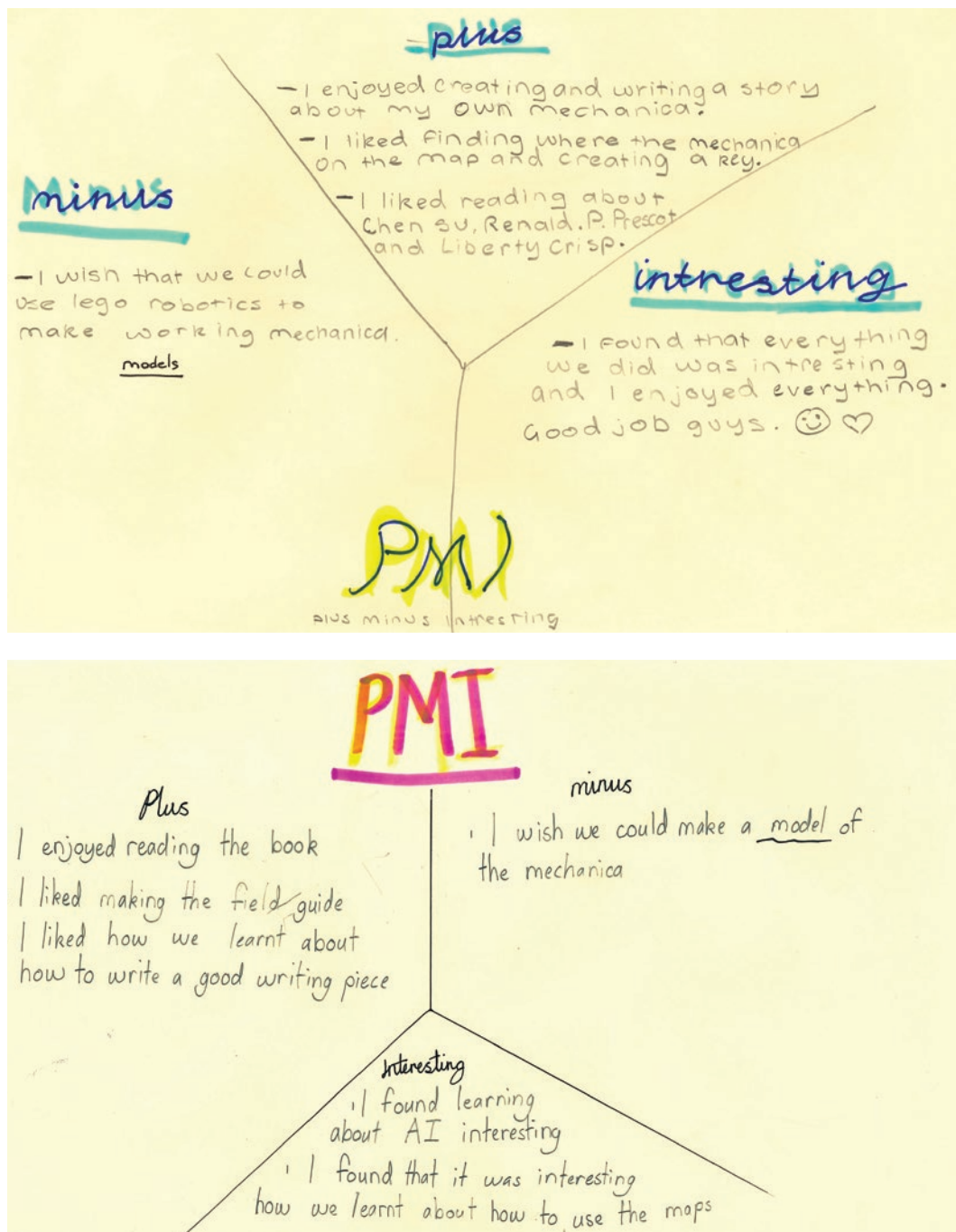

Figure 7: Student evaluative feedback on unit

Of course, the evaluation will contribute to any adjustments or redevelopment of the unit, or perhaps in the development of new units, so the seven-step process is cyclical. Indeed, the cycle needs to be ongoing to accommodate the changing needs of students, the contributions of new staff members, the publication of exciting new texts and other dynamic circumstances. Units of work should never be set in concrete and flexibility is essential to address student needs and interests!
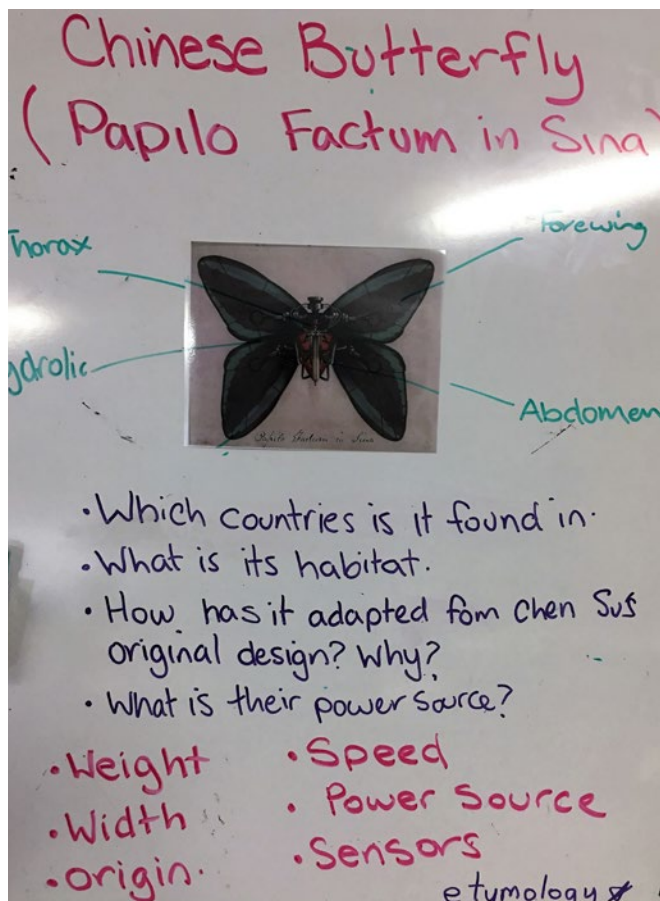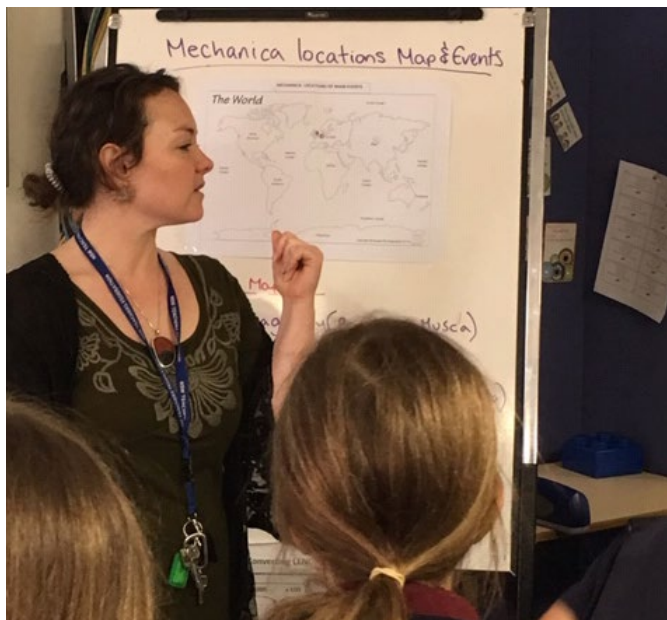

Figure 8: Need for flexibility to address emerging needs and interests of students

SUMMARY

Many teachers have shared with us that they don't have the time (or confidence) to write units that are tailored to their particular students' learning needs and interests, and prefer to download generic units. In this paper we have outlined a viable alternative to using units designed for other teachers' students. We have offered a proven process, by which to craft literature-based units that address the learning needs of students whom you teach, that is not onerous, and when followed collaboratively with peers, can potentially be a rich and valuable professional learning experience for all. By crafting units of work that address your students' identified learning needs and interests, you are setting them up for high engagement and the best chance of success in subject English.

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Disclaimer: the views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of their employers.

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