

### Keynote Session 1

#### Literacy Challenges in the Transition from KS2 to KS3

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#### Abstract

As students move from KS2 to KS3, the literacy demands they encounter become increasingly complex. One of the more delightful challenges relates to students' responses to literary texts in the transition from primary to secondary school. This presentation will explore how students can be supported in their appreciation of literary texts as they engage with more sophisticated poetry, stories and drama activities. In particular, we will look at how we can make visible the language choices that authors make in creating quality literary texts and how students can be led to an informed enjoyment of literary worlds.



#### About the speaker

Beverly began her teaching career as an English/History teacher. After a year or so, she headed off to Italy to do research for a Masters degree in Italian literature, returning to Australia a couple of years later to teach Italian and English in secondary schools and Technical and Further Education. Her political activism began with organizing rallies in support of the fledgling movement to recognise community languages in schools and becoming the first consultant on community languages at the New South Wales Department of Education while undertaking a degree in multicultural education at the University of New England.

On moving to Wollongong, she took up a position at a local primary school as a community language and ESL teacher. During that period, she completed a Master of Education and was fortunate enough to have Michael Halliday and Jim Martin among her lecturers who inspired in her an appreciation of the powerful role of language in education, particularly for those students whose background had not prepared them for the



specialised registers of schooling. On becoming a lecturer at the University of Wollongong, she wrote *Exploring How Texts Work*, which drew heavily on the notion of genres in the curriculum. With that publication, she began a research career of working with teachers in schools, coming to an understanding of the learning challenges facing students and how a knowledge about language from a functional perspective might support them in achieving educational success.

As Beverly worked with teachers, she observed the need for a resource explaining in accessible terms the various functions that language performs in our academic and social lives, resulting in another publication: *A Grammar Companion for Primary Teachers*. Her doctoral thesis tracked the development of academic writing across the years of schooling, leading to an Australian Research Council project that culminated in the publication of *School Discourse: Learning to write across the years of schooling*.

Over the years, Beverly has had the privilege of contributing to state, national and international curriculum and syllabus development. She has a long history of professional connections with Hong Kong, which include a couple of years at the University of Hong Kong working with Prof. Amy Tsui on the TeleNex project. She is also the external examiner at HKU for the BEd (LangEd) programme. She has also been working with the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong on a proposal to support the teaching of Science through English.