Text

The focus of this edition of Idiom is on 'Text'.

Texts are at the heart of everything we do as English educators. With our students, we read, explore, debate and analyse a wide variety of different texts. We hear, read and use the word 'text' all the time in our course programs and curriculum documents. But what does 'text' mean to each of us? And, more importantly, what does it mean for our students? Text can mean very different things in different educational settings and classroom contexts. How we understand and approach the teaching of text may vary according to the year level, the ethnic and gender mix of students in our classroom, the wider school community and its values, and whether we are teaching an English, EAL, Literature or English Language course.

Recent discussions in the media about text selection in schools also underscore the importance of text in English education. The strong opinions expressed in the wider community highlighted some of the social attitudes and expectations regarding the texts young people should read and engage with, especially in the school setting. While some always look to the classics as texts worthy of studying, the reality is that the contemporary definition of text has broadened, and our students are engaging with a range of diverse texts such as graphic novels, text messages, and video games, reflecting the digital and globalised world we live in. What journey do we take our students on from Year 7 to Year 12 with our text choices? What voices and experiences are represented? How is the diversity of our world and our student cohort reflected in these choices? And which voices are silenced?

In this edition of Idiom, let's explore the issue of texts in our English classrooms! Let's celebrate the wealth of texts, both historical and contemporary, that we have the opportunity to teach our Year 7-12 students. Let's share our insights on the texts we love to read and teach, and the various strategies we have experimented with and successfully use in teaching text at Years 7-10 and VCE level.

Jan May, Contributing Editor

Call for contributions

We invite you to submit an article for this edition of Idiom.

Some ideas to consider are listed below. We welcome your suggestions.

- Favourite texts to teach and why
- Texts to encourage the reluctant reader
- Texts to challenge the engaged reader
- Indigenous texts
- Australian texts
- Minority voices
- Diverse voices
- Text selection – the process and the challenges
- Texts in diverse contexts
- The value of using texts in other subjects
- The reading brain in the digital age

- Dangerous or disruptive texts
- 'Tried and tested' texts
- Poetry
- Multi-modal texts
- Digital texts
- Responding to texts
- Developing a reading culture
- Strategies to help engage readers
- What can we learn from primary teachers?
- VCE texts – EAL, English, English Language, Literature
- Young Adult fiction

Please email your submissions by Wednesday 19 June 2019 to idiom@vate.org.au.

Writing for Idiom

We welcome submissions in a variety of forms, including research papers, classroom activities, lesson plans, assessment tasks, reports, reflective pieces. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss either the format of your submission.

Idiom is an online journal so digital elements may be included, including links to websites and PowerPoint presentations. The suggested length is 1000-1500 words but shorter and longer pieces are always welcome.

Please direct all queries to Josephine Smith, Managing Editor of Idiom: idiom@vate.org.au.