



Example 11: History, Level 8 - Research on a historical event

FROM THE ONLINE RESOURCE *INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM*

This example demonstrates how a teacher used adaptations within a history task so that all students in the class could participate and achieve. The task requires students to research an historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders. Some of the students in the class required additional support; the teacher chose strategies that ensured they meaningfully participated and learned alongside their peers. All of the students were working towards a Level 3 NCEA achievement standard, although one student was planning to use the credits towards a Level 2 NCEA pass.

Task

The class was researching Chinese gold mining in Central Otago. All of the students were working towards Achievement Standard 91434: Research an historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders, using primary and secondary sources (NCEA Level 3, 5 credits, internal assessment). This achievement standard, together with the one that follows (AS 91435: Analyse an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders), forms a major focus of year 13 history teaching, learning, and assessment. Together, the standards require students to communicate key historical ideas, with supporting evidence.



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New Zealand Curriculum achievement objectives

- Understand that the causes, consequences, and explanations of historical events that are of significance to New Zealanders are complex and how and why they are contested (level 8).
- Understand how trends over time reflect social, economic, and political forces (level 8).

Opportunities to use and develop key competencies:

Students were *self-managing* as they investigated a range of sources to collect meaningful information about their chosen research questions. They *related to others* as they worked with the teacher and their peers to check their research questions were purposeful and well-constructed before seeking materials to answer them. Students *used language, symbols, and texts* as they investigated a range of material and were *thinking* as they synthesised this material and assessed its relevance to their key questions.

Class description

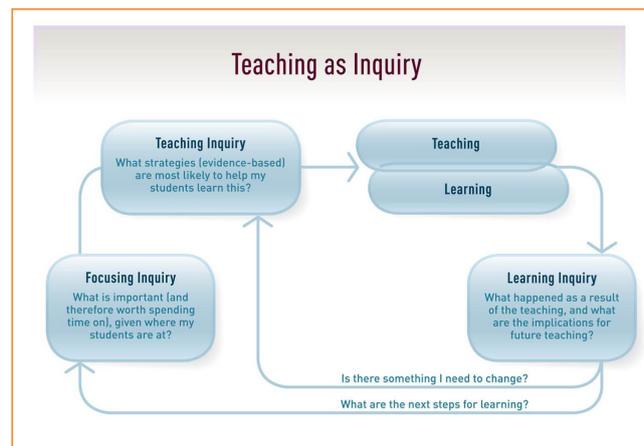
Mrs Cleaver teaches a class of 20 year 13 history students.

Most of the class have achieved NCEA Level 2 history (for which Mrs Cleaver taught them last year). Most of the students in the class are working at level 8 of the curriculum. Some students require additional support to actively participate at that level.

- **Nikoro** is visually impaired. He uses a cane to move safely around the school and has a range of technological supports in place to help him access text. He receives additional support through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). A Resource Teacher of Vision (RTV) visits the school weekly to support Nikoro and his teachers. A teacher's aide is available to provide support in class, but Nikoro usually chooses to be independent. He passed Level 2 history with excellence last year and is planning to go to university next year. Nikoro can read braille; classroom material can be converted to braille if it is provided to the RTV in advance of when it is required.
- **Kyla** has spina bifida. She has limited power in her hips and legs and uses a walker to support her mobility. Her walker has a built-in seat that allows her to rest when needed, as she tires easily. Kyla also has epilepsy. Recently her medication has not been effective in managing her epilepsy and is being reviewed. She uses an iPad at school and receives additional support through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). Kyla has had some long absences from school and has not yet passed Level 2 NCEA. This year she is finding it more difficult to keep up with her peers. She particularly enjoys history and has chosen to stay with her peers and attend year 13 classes. She plans for any credits gained this year to be put towards a Level 2 NCEA pass.

Teaching as inquiry

Mrs Cleaver employs a range of evidenced-based strategies (both adaptations and differentiations) to support all the students in her class to access key ideas in history. She teaches in a way that emphasises co-constructed learning, in which peer support is valued in helping students to access curriculum content. Throughout teaching and learning, she also thinks about the environment and the physical needs of her students. She is aware of how to best use the enabling technology that benefits Nikoro.



Mrs Cleaver began the unit by bringing in a recognised national expert on the history of gold mining in Central Otago to speak to the class. She then brainstormed with the students a range of areas that they could research within the topic. Having chosen an area of interest, the students wrote some key questions to focus their research. After they each discussed their questions with the teacher, they focused on individual research.

The students visited a university archival library and were shown how to access a range of resources. Their range of primary and secondary sources was to include newspaper articles, parliamentary records, personal accounts, tables and graphs, and carefully chosen websites. Students assessed the quality and usefulness of the material and systematically presented resources in a way that demonstrated clear connections to the focus questions.

The example covers a number of lessons as the students gathered, collated, and categorised their information and then presented it for assessment. The students were clear about the requirements for this standard, as Mrs Cleaver had provided examples of past students' work and encouraged the students to use these when critiquing their own work. They understood that detail, breadth, depth, and critical analysis were required to achieve merit or excellence.

Focusing inquiry

What was important (and therefore worth spending time on), given where Mrs Cleaver's students were at?

Having taught most of the class year 12 history, Mrs Cleaver was aware of the students' learning pathways in terms of the credits they had already achieved and units of work they had already completed. All the students had elected to work on the Level 3 achievement standard. Mrs Cleaver thought about what her students would need to do as a class so that they could all be successful. She recognised that knowing her students is an essential part of being able to provide a quality teaching and learning environment. From previous assessments, both formal and informal, Mrs Cleaver had a strong sense of each student's strengths and areas for improvement in history as a social science discipline. Although she knew them well, she made times to meet with Kyla and Nikoro so that they could talk about the particular support they would need to complete this unit of work.

Teaching inquiry

What teaching strategies (evidence-based) helped Mrs Cleaver's students learn?

Adapting the environment

- Mrs Cleaver had noticed that Kyla focused more when she was sitting at the front of the class. However, it isn't considered 'cool' to sit at the front, so she usually lets her students sit wherever they like. For this class, however, she instituted a seating plan so that she could put Kyla at the front in a seat that gave her room to fold up her walker and put it against the wall.
- Mrs Cleaver had taught Nikoro for three years. She organised with the deputy principal to move senior history to a downstairs classroom better suited to him and others. She let Nikoro sit where the light conditions were most suitable and used the smart board to access video material for him. Miss Wikaira (the RTV) organised the curtains they needed and helped work out the screen resolution that provided Nikoro with the best visual access.
- The move to a downstairs classroom also benefited Kyla. Mrs Cleaver ensured the classroom had at least one chair on castors so Kyla could move in and out from the desk independently.

Learning inquiry

What happened as a result of the teaching, and what were the implications for future teaching?

Kyla: The seating plan is a good idea. I get to sit at the front without looking like a suck-up. Mrs Cleaver can see when I'm getting behind and can help me out.

Mrs Cleaver: I think the seating makes it easier for Kyla, and certainly easier for me to keep an eye on her without being too obvious about it.

Nikoro: It's good not having to go upstairs to history because the stairwells are usually chaotic, and it's a stress I don't really need. The seating plan works because the seat where I am is at the best angle to avoid reflection on the smart board. Miss Wikaira helps with that stuff so that I can just get on with schoolwork.

Kyla: One of the cool things that happened last year was the school managed to get hold of a few extra chairs that work for me. I can't move the classroom chairs. In some classes I used to sit on my walker seat, but that really hurt my back.

The teacher adapted the classroom situation and seating support to suit her students' varying needs and abilities.

Teaching inquiry <i>What teaching strategies (evidence-based) helped Mrs Cleaver's students learn?</i>	Learning inquiry <i>What happened as a result of the teaching, and what were the implications for future teaching?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the class visited the university archival library, Mrs Cleaver rang the librarian in advance to let them know their group had a student with mobility issues and another with low vision. 	<p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>Our Head of Learning Support is great – she talked with Kyla and her mum and IEP team at the start of the year and found out that Kyla wants to be more independent. This information was passed onto all of Kyla's subject teachers with ideas about how we can help Kyla in our classes. This prompted me to think about how I support Kyla in situations like the library visit. The advanced planning worked well. When we got there, the librarians had already got out a whole heap of relevant stuff for Kyla. It was a really worthwhile trip.</i></p>
<p>Supporting students to access the task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large part of this unit involved students researching and locating information sources independently. Mrs Cleaver ran two classes in the school library, in part to help Kyla get some sources for her questions. A number of other students also sought help, while others worked independently. Mrs Cleaver spent one lesson creating a grid in a Google Doc on the smart board to show the students how to record their sources, the key information from them, and how this linked to their research questions. She decided to use Kyla's research questions as a practice example for the class. At the end of the lesson, she shared the document with the class. This meant Kyla had a structure well under way and the other students had a template and example to guide their own research. Mrs Cleaver emailed as much lesson content as possible to Nikoro in advance. Nikoro had his own computer and a range of software to help him access and manage text, including a screen reader that converted written text to spoken language. Using the screen reader made the process of researching slower for Nikoro than for other students. The RTV suggested that Mrs Cleaver or Ms Daish, the teacher's aide, could do an initial search and narrow down a list of websites that would be useful for the topic. 	<p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>Running extra sessions in the library worked well. Next time I teach this standard, I'm going to make sure that I am available to students in the last ten minutes of each period to have a quick look over what they have done to date. It would make it easy for them to have ongoing feedback. It would also signal to me who might need a bit more support or who could do with some extra challenge.</i></p> <p>Kyla: <i>I was so glad Mrs Cleaver picked my work as an example. It helped me to know what I was doing.</i></p> <p>Miss Wikaira (RTV): <i>There's heaps of amazing technology out there to help Nikoro to access the curriculum and get all his written work done. For me, it's about knowing expectations so that I can ensure Nikoro has the tools he needs to show his capabilities and work towards his potential.</i></p> <p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>Initially when Miss Wikaira suggested helping Nikoro with the internet search I wasn't keen as I know Nikoro is so independent and able. But I watched him on the internet one day and noticed just how much longer it took him to go through a search using the screen reader to weed out the less useful hits. We're not doing the work for Nikoro – we're just speeding up the process so he is not disadvantaged time-wise.</i></p>

Read more about how [contributions from whānau](#) can help you build a rich knowledge of the learner.

With your colleagues, discuss: How can you ensure that the learning environment works for **all** students?

The teacher modelled research techniques with the students and used technology to assist students with particular needs.

Read about [networks of support](#) and how you and your students can be supported by the school community and specialists from outside the school.

With your colleagues, discuss: How can you address barriers so that **all** your students can access the teaching and learning?

Teaching inquiry <i>What teaching strategies (evidence-based) helped Mrs Cleaver's students learn?</i>	Learning inquiry <i>What happened as a result of the teaching, and what were the implications for future teaching?</i>
<p>Using peer support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the class, Mrs Cleaver had co-constructed a list of criteria for what constitutes a useful resource and had drawn up some key questions to use in checking. For the last 10 minutes of each lesson, she organised students to work with buddies to check the relevance of each other's most recently collated sources. Mrs Cleaver monitored the conversations with buddies to check that these were relevant and helpful. Given it was year 13, as much as possible she left students to problem-solve and creatively support one another. Mrs Cleaver made sure that Nikoro's buddies were open to both providing and receiving support. Mrs Cleaver had classmates help Kyla with her project. She felt that when they worked together and talked about their research sources, it helped all of them clarify their ideas. Even though it was an individual research task, working together strengthened each student's approach to their own work. 	<p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>Kyla has a few good friends in class who understand her well. I watched them providing really skilful support and helping her manage her sources. They asked gentle questions and helped with writing a bibliography.</i></p> <p>Ms Daish (teacher's aide): <i>I'm sometimes aware that Kyla is a little lost, but I know she values her independence. It's nice for me to see students helping each other. I quite often intentionally work with a couple of students, not just one-to-one.</i></p> <p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>It's useful to structure the teaching in a way that encourages the students to talk to each other about their work and to perhaps share the resources they have gathered. Some of the students found some particularly useful material through accessing old microfiche, and it was lovely that they could share it with each other.</i></p> <p>Mrs Cleaver: <i>Nikoro is particularly friendly with a couple of classmates and they've worked out how best to support each other. It's not just about someone helping Nikoro – it's about establishing protocols so they can support each other. I'm always conscious of the extra effort Nikoro puts in and the fact that lots of things take him longer than his peers, so I often allow him and his buddy to start checking a little earlier.</i></p> <p>Makere (classmate): <i>I always work with Nikoro as a buddy because he knows so much more about gold mining history than I do. He's got a fantastic memory, so he is really good at critiquing articles. He listens and relates stuff to the questions without having to go back and check what the questions say – I never remember.</i></p> <p>Kyla: <i>I really love working with friends on projects and assignments. It's so much more fun than working on your own or with a teacher's aide. But Ms Daish can help us if we need it, so that's really cool.</i></p>
<p>Assessing to recognise learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students each collated a range of sources that were categorised, referenced, and annotated in relation to their key research questions. They could choose to present their work in a hard copy clear file or in an electronic notebook (which they shared with Mrs Cleaver). 	

The teacher organised buddy support for checking work towards the end of each lesson.

With your colleagues,  discuss: How can peer interactions provide opportunities for **all** students in your class to contribute to the task?

The teacher supported students to participate in a range of assessments to demonstrate their learning.

Teaching inquiry

What teaching strategies (evidence-based) helped Mrs Cleaver's students learn?

- Mrs Cleaver supported Kyla to hand in the same research project as everyone else. She had noticed that Kyla found it difficult to stay organised, so talked with her about electronic options for storing and arranging her sources. Mrs Cleaver showed Kyla how to use Evernote to organise her sources, and asked if she wanted to try it.
- Nikoro participated in the same assessments as everyone else, which included a final 30-minute written response to questions on Chinese gold mining. Mrs Cleaver emailed the questions to Nikoro, and he accessed them using the screen reader. He had software for typing answers, so he needed a quiet space for the assessment because he talked to his computer. He also required extra time to create his written response.

Learning inquiry

What happened as a result of the teaching, and what were the implications for future teaching?

Kyla: Sometimes I'm disorganised and forget stuff I need, but sometimes I forget to bring things to class on purpose to get out of doing the work. Mrs Cleaver asked if I wanted to use an electronic notebook that she can access. I thought this was a pretty good idea actually because it's hard managing all the sources, and the reading and filing, and writing content about the questions. And now it means I can't pretend to forget stuff for history anymore! If Mrs Cleaver hadn't helped me set up the electronic notebook, there's no way I'd pass.

Mrs Cleaver: Kyla shared her Evernote notebook with me so I could see week by week that she was adding more resources.

Nikoro: I have someone with me in assessments just watching and making sure the technology works fine. I have great systems for data management, so it would actually be really easy for me to cheat in tests - maybe that's why there's someone with me! As long as the technology is working, I can do the same assessment as everyone else. I'm determined to get excellence in this - no reason why I shouldn't. I had to work quite hard when I started high school to get people to see me as capable and not just the 'blind student'.

The teacher organised buddy support for checking work towards the end of each lesson.

With your colleagues, discuss: How do you ensure meaningful assessment to celebrate learning for **all** your students?



Next steps

Now that you have explored this example, work with colleagues to:

- consider the challenges and opportunities in relation to inclusion for *your* students
- decide on the next steps in your social sciences teaching to ensure *all* your students are participating, learning, and achieving
- plan for a future meeting to review the impact of your next steps and what *now* needs to happen.



Recommended resources

Key information for the [teaching of history in Years 11-13](#) can be found on the site for New Zealand Curriculum Senior Secondary Guides.

[History subject resources](#) can be found on the NZQA website.

[Resources for teachers](#) of students with visual impairments can be found on the New Zealand Blind Foundation's website.

