



Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE
INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM



Acknowledgments

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- the Inclusive Education Capability Building (IECB) project team
- the IECB Sector Advisory Group
- critical friends to the IECB project.



This icon brings together the symbols we associate with the New Zealand Curriculum and inclusive education:

- The **nautilus** is a symbol of growth, of intellectual and spiritual development that builds on what has gone before.
- The tip of the **feather** represents our maunga (mountains), our heritage and foundation, challenging us to ascend and strive for success; the three koru represent three fountains of Ka Hikitia – the learner, whānau, and professionals.

Integrating these two symbols signals that in New Zealand we have one education system for all.

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About This Resource

Ko te ākonga te pūtake o te ako. | The learner is at the centre of learning.

Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum is part of the professional development resource *Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum*, which is for teachers and leaders in New Zealand English-medium school settings. The resource has been developed to build professional knowledge and create a shared understanding of inclusive practice within the New Zealand Curriculum. It is anticipated that providers of PLD will draw on the resource as they work in and with schools to develop effective and inclusive teaching and learning programmes.

Background

The Government's vision of a fully inclusive education system has at its heart the goal of confident students, confident parents and whānau, and confident school teachers and leaders. *Success for All: Every School, Every Child* outlines the Ministry of Education's commitment to achieving this goal. Inclusive education is about the participation and achievement of all learners. Inclusive schools believe in all students becoming capable, connected life-long learners and work towards this within *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

To strengthen and support schools' inclusive practice, the Ministry has been creating learning materials to support schools and their communities as they develop inclusive practice within the school curriculum. These include the *Inclusive Education: Guides for Schools* website, the *Teachers and Teachers' Aides Working Together* modules, *Inclusive Practice in Secondary Schools: Ideas for School Leaders*, and this resource.

These materials endorse an inclusive approach in which:

- the classroom teacher is responsible for the learning of **all** students in their class
- all students can participate, engage, achieve, and belong in the classroom or learning environment
- teachers' practice systematically builds on what we know works
- professional learning and development is provided by PLD facilitators, school leaders, specialist teachers, and Ministry of Education staff.

Objectives

Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum will help teachers to address the following key question:

How do I plan and teach so that every student in my class:

- participates meaningfully with their peers
- engages in appropriate opportunities for learning
- achieves within the New Zealand Curriculum
- has their identity valued and respected?

As a result of using *Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum*, school leaders and teachers will:

- recognise how their beliefs and actions can enhance students' access to the curriculum
- identify ways to include all students, supporting them to engage and work with their peers
- investigate planning and teaching strategies for including all students within the curriculum, while taking into account individual strengths and challenges
- reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies, as evidenced by students' progress and achievement.

Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum is designed to help schools to fully include students with special education needs.¹ Many of the examples in this resource focus on students who require a range of supports to access learning. If their learning needs are not well supported, students with additional needs may become vulnerable to separation from their peers or to being excluded from learning.

Using the resource

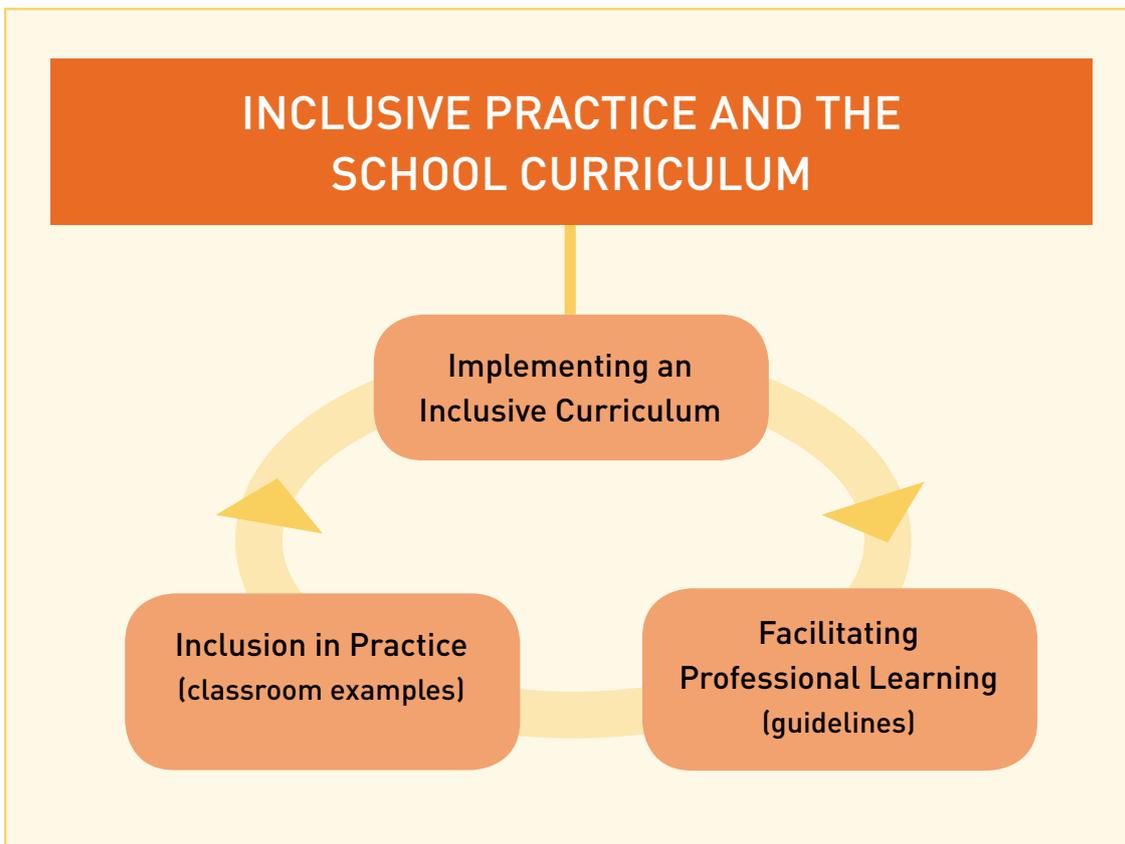
The audiences for *Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum* are primary and secondary teachers and leaders in English-medium school settings. For some schools, the messages in the resource will reflect practices and policies that are valued and enacted on a daily basis. For others, it may signal a need for change towards policies and actions that include all students.

Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum has three main components:

- *Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum* (this resource)
- *Inclusion in Practice* – examples from New Zealand classrooms of inclusive teaching and learning across different learning areas
- *Facilitating Professional Learning* – guidelines for those supporting schools to use the materials.

(See diagram on next page.)

¹ Note that in Ministry of Education resources, students with special education needs are also referred to as 'students with additional needs', 'students with additional support needs', 'students with disabilities', and 'students with diverse needs'.



Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum is not prescriptive – it is intended to be used flexibly, allowing educators to respond to the unique learning priorities of their school. Most sections include learning activities that support educators to interact with the ideas in the text and to apply them in their own contexts. These activities are suggestions: participants and PLD providers will select from them or create other options based on their knowledge of a school’s practices and needs. The examples from the classroom are accompanied by suggestions for how to use them, and the guidelines for facilitating professional learning provide further guidance and ideas for working with the resource.

Throughout the resource there are links to the classroom examples and to further reading and related resources, including video clips and interviews. If you are working with hard copy, you will need to access the online version in order to activate many of these links.

Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum can be used alongside other Ministry inclusive education resources, such as the *Inclusive Education* and *Through Different Eyes* websites, and with school-wide self-review websites such as the *Inclusive Practices Tools*, the *Wellbeing at School* tools, or the *Rua* self-review tools.

This component of the resource, *Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum*, includes:

- a discussion on inclusion and the New Zealand Curriculum
- a framework for an inclusive school curriculum
- sections that unpack the different parts of the framework
- a glossary of terms, and references.



The NZ Curriculum - A Curriculum for All Students

*Hutia te rito o te harakeke,
Kei whea te kōmako e kō?
Kī mai ki ahau,
He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Māku e kī atu,
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!*

*If the heart of harakeke is pulled out,
Where will the bellbird sing?
If I was asked,
What is the most important thing in the world?
I would be compelled to reply,
It is people, it is people, it is people!*

“ *The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education. It takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved.* ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 4

The New Zealand Curriculum is a statement of official policy for teaching and learning in English-medium New Zealand schools. It aligns with the expectations of *Te Whāriki* and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework to support our young people to grow as confident, connected, and actively involved lifelong learners. A parallel document, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, serves the same function for Māori-medium schools and classrooms.

The New Zealand Curriculum is for all students. It does not discriminate; rather it requires that all students' identities, languages, cultures, abilities, and talents are recognised. In any class, diverse learners will be learning at, above, or below the expectations for their year level. The classroom curriculum must therefore be responsive to the learning needs of all of these students.

Effective teachers reflect on and plan how to address all their students' learning needs. They use inquiry, professional learning communities, and PLD; they draw on what is known about effective pedagogy; and they use school systems and processes, which can support them to confidently and capably teach all their students.



A flexible framework

“ The New Zealand Curriculum, together with the Qualifications Framework, gives schools the flexibility to design and deliver programmes that will engage all students and offer them appropriate learning pathways. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 41

The New Zealand Curriculum supports schools to ensure that teaching and learning are effective and engaging for all. When teaching, learning, and assessment recognise and respond to the unique differences of individuals, all students can learn.

The New Zealand Curriculum is not prescriptive. Its learning areas provide a flexible foundation for exploring, evaluating, integrating, and enhancing knowledge. Its key competencies, which capture learning capabilities and dispositions, strengthen the learning areas by supporting students to value curiosity, thinking, self-management, perseverance, collaboration, and caring for others.

The flexibility of the New Zealand Curriculum supports schools in meeting their responsibility to develop their own curriculum in response to the needs of all their learners and their community. The goals of students and whānau⁸ are valued in the process. This means that each school's curriculum can reflect the needs of all the people in its community while still working within national policy guidelines. When schools work in this way, their practices become inclusive of all students.



As a group, discuss how your school-based curriculum reflects the inclusion principle on page 9 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*:

The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students' identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed.

Planning, teaching, and learning within the New Zealand Curriculum

Planning, teaching, and learning in an inclusive way enables all students to access the learning areas, values, key competencies, and principles of the New Zealand Curriculum. It is important to recognise that **level 1 is the starting point for all students** in the New Zealand Curriculum; there is no 'below' or 'pre' level 1. Therefore, alternative curricula are not required for particular groups of students.

Inclusive schools position every student as an active, capable learner. The following table identifies some of the shifts in practice that this requires.

⁸ Note that throughout *Inclusive Practice and the School Curriculum*, 'whānau' is used in place of the full expression 'parents, families, and whānau'.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Separate curricula for different student groups	All English-medium students working within the New Zealand Curriculum
Planning for some students	Planning for all students, drawing on whānau knowledge and, when required, specialist support
Academic achievement as the only measure of successful learning	Valuing diverse learning outcomes through rich assessment
Teaching and learning in isolation	Collaborative teaching and learning
Teacher-directed learning	Learning partnerships between teacher and students
Learning in one setting only	Recognising learning, progress, and achievement across settings
Students required to adapt to the school curriculum	The school curriculum able to be adapted to meet individual learning needs
Teaching that does not reflect the diversity of the school community (i.e., one size fits all)	Differentiation and adaptation of the classroom curriculum and school environment being embedded in the school culture

Some teachers may find inclusive planning, teaching, and learning a challenging and complex process. However, many teachers and leaders are already finding ways to plan and implement the curriculum for all their students, drawing on specialist support when necessary. They work together to seek solutions to suit their students, classes, and school. For example, in March 2015 ERO reported that:

“ Most schools had good systems and practices to support students with special education needs ... Teachers and SENCOs carefully identified and responded to students’ needs. Schools involved students with special education needs alongside their peers and placed them with staff who matched their needs and strengths. Effective practices included responding to individual needs with specific support, differentiating the curriculum, modifying activities and providing guidance for teacher’s aides. Schools involved parents, teachers, specialist teachers and specialists in developing individual education plans (IEPs) with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound ... goals. They regularly reviewed progress towards these goals. ”

ERO, 2015, page 4



In pairs, select 2-3 rows of the above table. Discuss each row using an example of inclusive practice that you are familiar with.

Achieving a rich and balanced classroom curriculum

The New Zealand Curriculum depicts typical progress in relation to eight levels. However, it acknowledges that students progress at different rates in different learning areas, depending on their individual strengths and learning needs.

Some students will learn and progress within one curriculum level for an extended period of time – sometimes the majority of their schooling. Others may not be working at the same level as most of their peers but over time progress through several curriculum levels. An individual student may be working at different curriculum levels across different learning areas. Regardless of the level, all learning must be valued and all progress and achievement recognised.

For students with special education needs, it is often helpful to follow an integrated approach to curriculum design.

“ While the learning areas are presented as distinct, this should not limit the ways in which schools structure the learning experiences offered to students. All learning should make use of the natural connections that exist between learning areas and that link learning areas to the values and key competencies. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 16

The key competencies underpin everything that happens in teaching and learning, but they “are not separate or stand-alone. They are the key to learning in every learning area.” (*The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 12*) For students with additional support needs, especially those working within level 1 of the curriculum, there can be a danger that schools plan for their learning only in relation to the key competencies. The key competencies should not be taught or assessed in isolation but should be an integral part of curriculum design within the learning areas.

“ Key competencies are fundamental drivers of change. If key competencies are seen as a recipe, they can be seen as ends in themselves, as ends to other ends - this creates limits to, and of, understanding. Think about really integrating the key competencies in the learning areas - what does this mean for practice? How do we enact the key competencies to support change? ”

Educational researcher, project interview, 2013

As a group, discuss how the following shift in practice is evidenced in your school.

[Inclusive pedagogy] represents a shift in thinking about teaching and learning from that which works for most learners along with something ‘different’ or additional’ for those who experience difficulties, to an approach to teaching and learning that involves the creation of a rich learning environment characterised by lessons and learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available to everyone so that all are able to participate in classroom life.

Florian and Linklater, 2010, page 370

i

Further information on the principle of Inclusion in the New Zealand Curriculum is available on TKI. <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Principles/Inclusion/About>





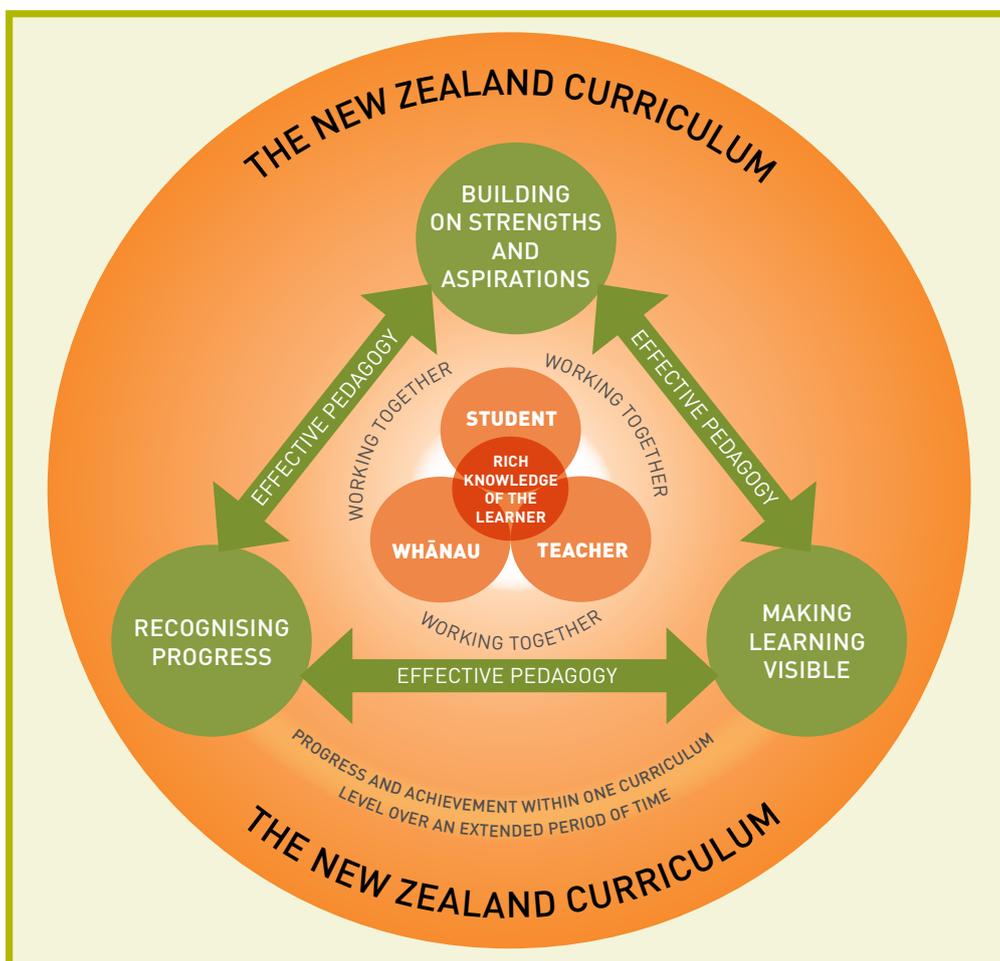
Framework for an Inclusive School Curriculum

*Nāu i whatu te kākahu,
He tāniko tāku.*

*You have woven the cloak,
I will fashion the border.*

Figure 1 shows the framework that underpins this resource. The framework embodies the key elements of an inclusive school curriculum that together ensure progress and achievement for all students. As well as showing how these elements connect and interact, the diagram provides a structure for this resource, with the key elements forming the major section headings.

Figure 1: Framework for an inclusive curriculum



The framework shows the teacher, student, and whānau at the centre of the inclusive curriculum, working together (and with others³) to gather rich knowledge of the student. This knowledge, the New Zealand Curriculum, and effective pedagogy provide the essential foundations on which inclusive practice is built, supporting the teacher to build on **all** students' strengths and aspirations, to make their learning visible, and to recognise their progress. A particular focus is illustrating progress and achievement for students working within level 1 of the curriculum for an extended period of time.

³ Figure 3 in the section Working Together shows the full network of support for students with special education needs.



Building a Rich Knowledge of the Learner

*Ka whānau mai te pēpi,
Ka takaia ki te harakeke.
Ka noho te harakeke hei kākahu,
hei rongoa,
Hei mea tākaro,
Hei oranga mōna a mate noa ia.*

*When a child is born,
He is wrapped in the muka cloth made
of flax.
The flax provides clothing, medicine,
Toys for play and leisure,
And the means for living and survival.*

“ *Effective pedagogy begins with knowing the student well.* ”

Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers, 2009, page 22

Working towards an inclusive curriculum begins with building a rich knowledge of learners. Effective teachers ask:

- Where does each of my students come from? What do I know about their identity, language, and culture? What can I learn from their whānau?
- What do they already know? How do they make sense of their world?
- What can they already do? What do they love to do?
- How can I understand and respond to their strengths, passions, and interests?

Knowing all students

All students are active, capable learners with unique potential. However, students demonstrate competence in a range of ways and progress at different rates. A key role of the teacher is to really get to know their students, so that they can help them to recognise their competencies, demonstrate their strengths, and work towards their aspirations.

To build awareness of your current practice, you can ask:

- How do I encourage each student to participate in learning? How do I acknowledge their strengths and support the development of them?
- Do I use a growing knowledge of my students to make connections to their prior learning and enhance the relevance of new learning?
- Have I identified strategies that are most likely to support my students to learn?
- How does my teaching impact on my students?

Addressing such questions will help you to think of each student as a competent and capable learner. It will encourage you to get to know students with an 'inside' rather than an 'outside' view.

“ We often stop at the outside of the child, focusing on how they appear, rather than looking through to the inside. For Pasifika students, looking inside is key to understanding important cultural values and principles, so that these can be used as a part of the foundation for learning. ”

Pasifika education facilitator, project interview, 2013

Knowing our learners requires us as teachers to build relationships with them and to understand what we bring to these relationships – we need to know *ourselves* well in order to be able to really come to know our *learners*. Sometimes, our own beliefs and perspectives about disability and diversity may determine how we see, know, and teach students. Our assumptions can either support inclusive practices or be barriers to students participating and learning.

If students come with 'labels' or diagnosed disabilities, we should not assume they are less capable of learning than their peers. When we act on such assumptions, we may inadvertently deprive them of the chance to engage in the same activities and opportunities as other students. As we build knowledge of their strengths and aspirations, we are more likely to provide opportunities for them to realise their potential as active learners. The challenges they face should not be ignored, but nor should they limit them from learning within the New Zealand Curriculum with their peers.



In [Example 9](#), a year 5-6 teacher builds on what she knows about her students to plan a science unit and creates space for students to bring their interests and talents to the fore – in the process, she learns more about her students and they learn from each other.

Encouraging student voice

“ Often the student has the best ideas of how we might work with them, if we take time to reflect on what they might be trying to communicate. ”

Outreach teacher, project interview, 2013

The best way to understand a student's preferred way of learning is to ask them (Causton-Theoharis, 2009) and to include them in planning and assessment processes. This will mean working alongside them to understand what they want to learn and how to make learning accessible for them.

All students can communicate. Some students use their physicality (gestures, signs, eye movements) to do so, while others use augmentative technologies. Alternative communication modes such as visual representations (e.g., Picture Exchange Communication) or voice activation devices enable students to develop and maintain relationships, to gain and give information, to express feelings, and to control their environment.

Classroom teachers play an important role in facilitating the development of language and communication. Encouraging all students to express their needs and concerns can be supported through strategies that identify effective ways of communicating for students. The teacher needs to consider how to support students so they feel comfortable and able to discuss their learning confidently, with both the teacher and their classmates. Underpinning this is the teacher's knowledge of the students' cultural backgrounds and the approaches to communication that the students are comfortable with. Successful communication outcomes allow students to achieve in their learning and in their relationships with classmates, the school, and the wider community.

Research by Dr Jude MacArthur (2009) showed that students with additional needs are eager to enter into conversations that will help teachers understand their views and their strengths and aspirations.

“ *Students ask to be part of the group of all children and young people at school, and they want their teachers to:*

- *get to know them*
- *give them opportunities to talk about what school is like for them*
- *listen to their views*
- *take their views into consideration when they are planning and teaching so they can learn*
- *support them to make school a better place for them*
- *allow them to be part of the whole peer group and to be fully involved.*

For these things to happen, teachers need time:

- *to talk with their students and their families and whānau*
- *to share ideas and experiences with other teachers*
- *to consult with colleagues who can inform them about the effects of students' impairments on their learning*
- *to develop respectful and equal relationships in their school.*

”

MacArthur (2009), page 42



In [Example 5](#), a teacher collects student voice via text and images on a class blog. On reviewing the blog entry, he notices shifts in students' learning and thinking in mathematics.

For authentic student voice, there needs to be a high level of trust within the classroom. This means establishing an environment and processes that feel safe and comfortable for the student. In the following example, the teacher works with a student so that he feels able to contribute to the direction of his learning.

Adam is a year 10 student. He wants to be involved in decision making about his learning. He is able to think about and discuss his learning with some key people in his life, such as his parents, the specialist teacher, and his sister. However he is overwhelmed and anxious about attending a planning meeting with other people.

Adam works with his teacher to develop a PowerPoint to show examples of his current learning. He includes two new goals he wants to work towards. He decides that he will try to stay for five minutes to present the PowerPoint to his support team but to leave when he feels he needs to. In this way, he is involved in the process of decision making and thinking about next goals, and team members have the benefit of Adam's insights in a way that causes him the least stress. Decisions made after Adam leaves are discussed with him before his IEP is written up.

When students like Adam see that their thoughts and opinions on learning are valued, they are more likely to let you into their world and share their hopes and aspirations. However, hearing and understanding student voice is not enough in itself - it must be acted upon. Only in this way will there be real student agency - where students feel that their voice has led to meaningful action and will see the results of their decisions and choices. Students will hold back if they perceive that what they are saying is not going to make a difference. In the example below, the teacher tries to ensure that her students' thoughts and ideas on learning are regularly incorporated into the classroom programme.

Gina is a year 7 student who loves to read. She is able to use symbols to make sense of most work and can read some sight words, especially the names of people she likes. Each day the teacher stops the class ten minutes before school ends and asks students to think about their day as a learner. She asks the students to think about one thing that can change to help them in their learning for the next day. Students share this information together, using either a goal diary or a visual chart. Gina uses an adapted goal diary that has visual charts. She is able to discuss this with her teacher or with her peers.

As a group, view the video clip [How Teachers Can Help Me Learn](#) and discuss:

- What teaching strategies help to make Katrina's school experiences positive ones?
- What does this clip make you think about? How might you respond to it in your practice?

You may wish to then also:

- undertake the activity [What Students Say](#), to help you understand your students' perspectives
- explore the guide [Down syndrome and learning](#) on the Inclusive Education site.

Learner profiles

Learner profiles give students opportunities for self-advocacy, enabling them to express who they are and their strengths, aspirations, and passions. Learner profiles help students to address assumptions and to share what helps them learn and the challenges they face when learning. Profiles inform teachers about their students, and they help school teams to understand students' perspectives and to build relationships with them, especially at times of transition.

Learner profiles can be developed in a range of formats – for example, as a document with photos, a video clip, a blog, or a PowerPoint. Students can create them by themselves or in collaboration with whānau and teachers. Although profiles can be a strong support for students with special education needs, note that some students may prefer to *talk* about themselves and what works for them in the learning environment.



In pairs or small groups, read the [TKI information sheet](#) for teachers, students, and whānau on learner profiles and reflect on how you might develop learner profiles with students in your class.



For further information and examples of learner profiles, explore the guide [Developing an Inclusive Classroom Culture](#) on the Inclusive Education site.



Contributions from whānau

Parents and whānau are an integral part of the school community and want their children welcomed for all that they bring to this community. They are their children's 'first teachers'. Building relationships with whānau and recognising the wealth of information that they have about their children will help your school to get to know students and give an insight into their strengths and aspirations. Planned conversations (e.g., IEP meetings or hui), informal chats, emails, and phone calls all contribute to this knowledge-building process.



In [Example 1](#), a year 2 student's achievements at home and school are shared between settings to build a rich picture of the learner and inform next steps.

Family knowledge can also help you and a student's support team to understand the student's way of communicating and to verify that your interpretations of their communication are accurate.

Students with diverse needs and their whānau should have access to the same range of conversations with you as other students. Shared information between home and school helps build pride in a student's achievements.

“ The parents' point of view is important. They know their children and their capabilities well. If there are no opportunities for this [knowledge] to be incorporated into the design of programmes, this valuable information, and the inclusion of parent voice, is not valued. Often its only when an IEP is set up that parents are asked to contribute. ”

Pasifika education facilitator, project interview, 2013



In [Example 11](#), suggestions from a year 13 student's parents are shared by the learning support coordinator with subject teachers to help their planning and teaching.



As a group, discuss the questions alongside the two dimensions below from the [Educultural Wheel](#). Add to the questions from your own teaching experience.

Dimension	Teacher questions
Manaakitanga Ethic of caring	In what ways do I express care and hospitality towards my students and their whānau? How do my interactions enable whānau aspirations to be reflected in the curriculum? How do I share good news with whānau?
Pūmanawatanga Morale, tone, pulse	How happy are the students in my classroom? How does the classroom culture promote respect between all and enable whānau to contribute to students' learning? How does the classroom culture uplift the mana of students and their whānau?

Who else can help you know the learner?

As well as your own observations, and contributions from whānau, valuable insights into learners' needs and aspirations will come from regular communication with members of wider teams supporting individuals or groups of students. These teams may draw their members from school, home, specialist services, and the community.

Regular communication with members of such teams plays an important role in building knowledge of the student. To do this effectively and respectfully, you need to agree on ways of communicating with team members that respect the commitments of each person, including whānau members.

Planned meetings, informal conversations, emails, and phone calls are all opportunities to share knowledge of students so their strengths, passions, and interests are made increasingly more visible. These interactions are also opportunities to identify and discuss challenges that students face in their communities and to work together to respond to these.

Building a knowledge of the learner is important when developing learning pathways for students from year 10. Collaborative planning between the Careers Department, the student, whānau, specialist teachers, deans, and subject teachers helps to determine a learning pathway that meets the needs, interests, and aspirations of the student. This may mean a shift in attitude within senior leadership teams to think creatively and flexibly about timetabling, subject choices, and learning pathways outside of the immediate school environment.



In [Example 8](#), subject teachers for a year 9 class collaboratively plan a unit of work and keep in touch to share updates on students' progress.

The following table suggests shifts in practice that will contribute to building a rich knowledge of the learner.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Attempting to get to know the student from one or two meetings	Developing relationships and growing a rich knowledge of the student over time
Relying on limited information to make decisions about student capability	Drawing on a broad knowledge base - from previous teachers, the student, their whānau, and team members providing support
Adults deciding what can and needs to be done to support learning	Adults listening to and supporting the learner to be an active participant in decisions about their learning Finding out what a learner can do and wants to do, and using this to support learning
Defining a student's needs and learning opportunities by their impairment	Recognising and accessing support so the learner can work within the curriculum
Having all the answers from day one	Identifying one aspect of learning and working on that to build knowledge and achieve progress over time
Teachers working on their own	Teachers working as a part of a collaborative team and sharing information

As a group, use the table above and the following questions to reflect on your practice and how it could change to better support **all** learners.

1. How well do we know and work with our students in respectful and positive ways? Are there some students who miss out?
2. How do our beliefs about disability and diversity support or limit our relationships with our students?
3. How do we gain information about what our students can and want to do? Who do we consult in their network of support? How do we use this information?
4. How do we support our students and their whānau to ensure they feel safe, connected, and valued in the school community?





Working Together

*Mehemea ka moemoeā ahau, ko ahau anake.
Mehemea ka moemoeā a tātou, ka taea e tātou.*

*If I dream, I dream alone.
If we all dream together, we will succeed.*

Te Kirihaehae Te Puea Herangi, 1883-1952

Teachers do not need to know how to do everything. However, they **do** need to know *who* can help them and *how* to work with others to support student learning. As leaders of learning, teachers collaborate and grow with others to ensure all their students are successful learners. It is **how** people work together that matters. When the focus is on effective ways of planning and communicating, building relationships, and listening to one another, those involved can build a successful school community and effective teams.

Working as a community

Working together is about building a school community and a culture where people are welcome and feel able to be involved.

“ People talk about ‘school’ and ‘community’ as if school is outside of or separate from the community. I think we should talk about ‘the school community’ - where families feel they can come and go; where families are involved and know about the learning; when whānau can feed into the curriculum. When these things happen, and all groups are participating more fully, then they are working together as a community. The school needs to be good at breaking down that invisible wall. ”

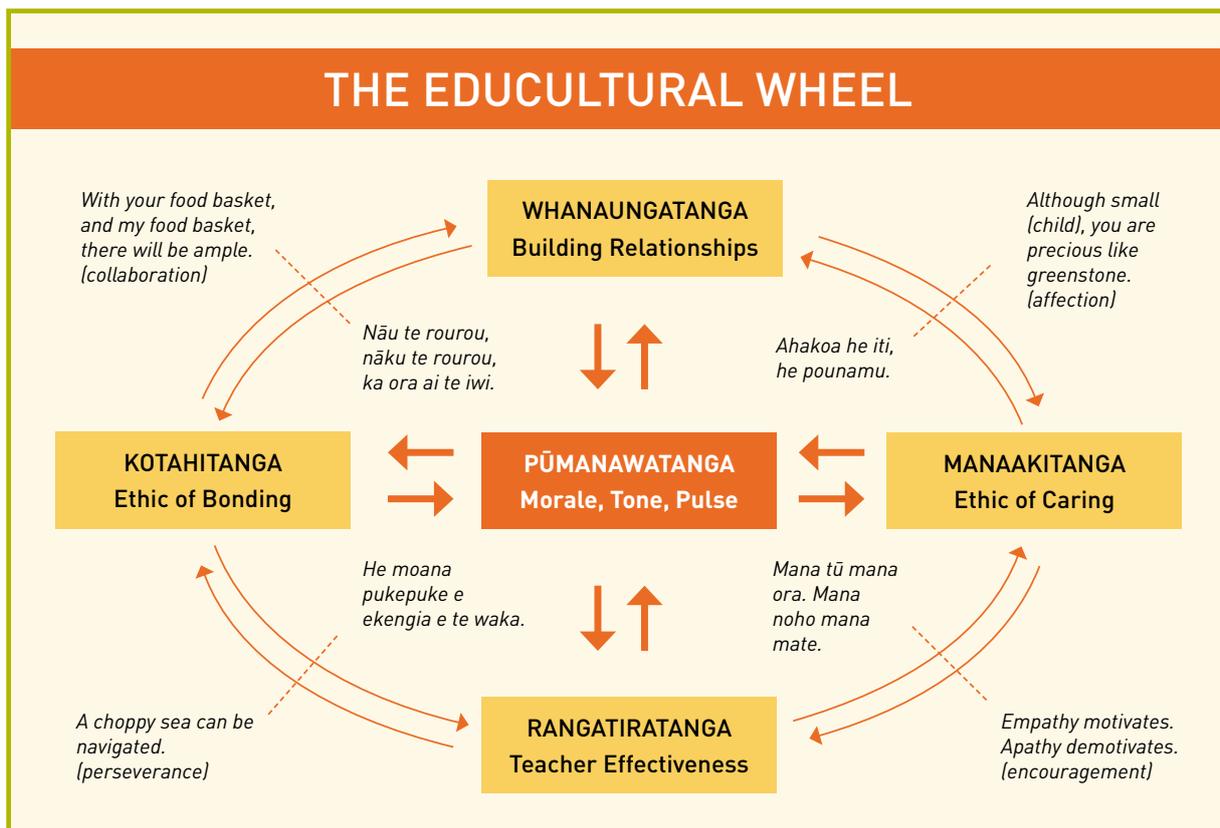
Academic, project interview, 2013

The school culture

The culture of the school is the climate in which people work together. For a positive and supportive school climate, team members and the wider community need to work together in inclusive, collaborative, and culturally responsive ways. Macfarlane’s (2004) Educultural Wheel provides a useful framework to conceptualise this approach.

The wheel is a visual representation (see Figure 2), showing the interactions between four dimensions (unpacked below) and how these ultimately contribute to inclusive practice, effective pedagogy, and pūmanawatanga (overall tone, pulse, and morale).

Figure 2: The Educultural Wheel¹⁰



Adapted from Macfarlane (2004)

Whanaungatanga refers to the building of relationships and to bringing people together, uniting the school and the local community into a ‘school community’. It is ultimately about building relationships, facilitating engagement, making connections, fulfilling obligations, and sharing responsibilities. It includes valuing others by making time and creating the spaces for engagement. It is about responding to students’ backgrounds and histories by truly listening to students and their whānau, reflecting Ballard’s (2013) view that effective inclusion depends on challenging established ideas about “how the world is to be seen and understood, about who is to be attended to and who ignored” (2013, page 1).

“Whanaungatanga provides the relationship to contextualise what is in the heart of the matter, and then get to hear what is really in people’s hearts, rather than just what they think you want them to say. Until this happens you are having a totally different conversation, which is not likely to work for Māori.”

Academic, project interview, 2013

¹⁰ The Educultural Wheel is usually applied in relation to the classroom. This section applies it more broadly to the school.

Manaakitanga refers to showing hospitality and developing an ethic of care for others. It refers to a nurturing school culture that values caring and respect and provides the foundation for success for all students. The same ethic of care and respect applies to teachers and whānau. Building trust through caring and supportive relationships plays a key role in establishing inclusive practice in which everyone feels a sense of belonging and knows that their knowledge and opinions are respected and valued. Everyday actions – for example, greetings and farewells, staying in touch, noticing and celebrating the good things, and showing hospitality, affection, kindness, and encouragement – affirm manaakitanga as an integral part of the culture of a school.

Kotahitanga refers to achieving unity by coming together to collaborate and bond as a united group (whānau). For learners to succeed and reach their potential, the school, whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider community must work together regularly (Ministry of Education, 2008). Students who have special education needs provide whānau, teachers, students, and others with many opportunities for bonding, uniting, and working together collaboratively.

Rangatiratanga refers to key aspects of teacher effectiveness. It is about leadership, accountability, authenticity, advocacy, determination, and integrity. It connects the passion and enthusiasm of teachers with others in a team. When people work together in collaboration, facing particular challenges and supporting and responding to one another, strong advocacy and leadership are essential. The effectiveness of the whole team in including all students in the school curriculum is enhanced when rangatiratanga is in place. School leaders also play a key role in supporting and ensuring teacher effectiveness.

“ It has to come from the top: walk a mile in their shoes, manage the expectations of teachers, make good use of specialists, deal with the (challenging) views of parents and the Board of Trustees. If you have the difficult conversations, you can focus on the benefits; you can focus on success. ”

Primary school principal, project interview, 2013

Pūmanawatanga refers to the overall tone, pulse, and morale of the school. The four dimensions above come together and interconnect to promote pūmanawatanga, by embracing the mana of each person, drawing on individual and collective strengths, seizing opportunities to enable potential, honouring uniqueness, and celebrating success for all students.

The Educultural Wheel is able to support you, and the teams you are part of, to think about how you might enact the above dimensions. It gives rise to valuable questions that guide the development of inclusive practice.

In pairs or small groups, reflect on examples from your teaching experience in relation to the four whakataukī below from the Educultural Wheel. Share stories illustrating beliefs and actions that link to the values each whakataukī expresses.

Affection

Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu. Although small (child), you are precious like greenstone.

Encouragement

Mana tū mana ora. Mana noho mana mate. Empathy motivates. Apathy demotivates.

Collaboration

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi. With your food basket, and my food basket, there will be ample.

Perseverance

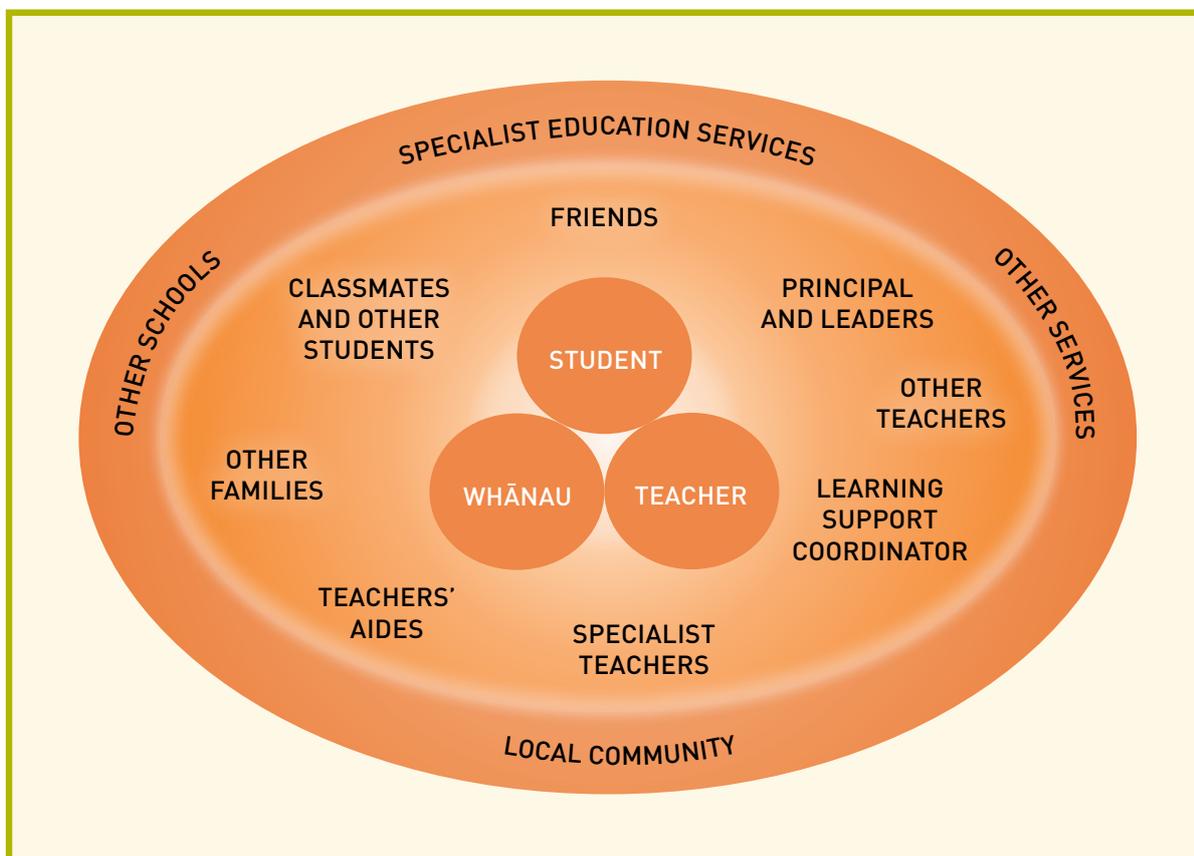
He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka. A choppy sea can be navigated.



Networks of support

Every student is a member of the school community, known and supported by friends and peers, staff, whānau, and members of the local community. For students with special education needs, there may be additional people and agencies that form part of their network of support. Figure 3 shows the people and agencies that work together within this network.

Figure 3: The network of support for students with special education needs



Every school, teacher, class, and student is unique. However, as Figure 3 shows, at the centre of the network of support the relationships between the student, their whānau, and their teacher provide a key foundation for teaching and learning. Knowledge from these relationships assists you to meet the learning needs of each student in your class and helps you understand who else you may need to involve in supporting them. Support can look different, depending on particular learning needs and the context.

Figure 3 shows how the student (and teacher and whānau) are supported by the school community, particularly those involved in the day-to-day teaching and learning within the school. This includes the principal and other leaders, classmates and other students, teachers' aides, other teachers, the learning support coordinator or SENCO, other families, and specialist teachers (see the table below).

A wider group, outside the immediate school environment, may include people from the local community such as kaumatua and from other schools, such as The Regional Health School or Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu: The Correspondence School. It may also include staff from Ministry of Education specialist education services and other services, examples of which are given in the table below. The information these people provide can support planning and the use of assistive technology and help everyone to understand a student's strengths and learning needs. If during planning a school has decided that an IEP is required to meet a student's support needs, the plan will outline the services supporting the student. It will also provide clarity and agreement about the different responsibilities of support team members within and from outside the school.

Broad term	Examples of roles that the term includes
Specialist teachers⁵	School-based 0.1 or 0.2 ORS-funded teachers Teachers from Outreach Teacher Services RTV (Resource Teachers: Vision) RTD (Resource Teachers: Deaf) RTLB (Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour) RTLit (Resource Teachers: Literacy) Teachers from residential schools Teachers from regional health schools
Specialist education services	Ministry of Education, Special Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisors on deaf children • Kaitakawaenga • Occupational therapists • Physiotherapists • Psychologists • Special education advisors • Speech language therapists
Other services	Child, Youth and Family Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service ACC



In [Example 2](#), a year 5 student and his teacher are supported by staff from within the school (a specialist teacher and teacher's aide) and by specialists from the local Ministry of Education office.

When services from outside the school are involved, it is important that school staff and agencies understand how to work together collaboratively, and that student presence, participation, and achievement remain the core focus of the collaborative team.

Schools need to show leadership around meeting the needs of all students. This means being aware of who from the above groups is best suited to help them in their planning and teaching. They should make themselves aware of the purpose of each role and how they can access the support they need to provide an inclusive curriculum.

⁵ The first four examples of specialist teacher roles are provided through a school's 0.1 or 0.2 staffing component for a student supported through ORS funding.



In [Example 11](#), a student and his year 13 history teacher are supported by staff from within the school (the learning support coordinator and a teacher's aide) and by a visiting specialist.



A wide range of services and resources is available to support teachers to teach all students. For education services provided by the Ministry of Education, see [Special Education: Services and Support](#).

For an overview of other organisations available to support schools, see [Special Education: Where Else Can I Get Information?](#)

For information on available services and their processes, see [Students with Special Education Needs](#) and locate the Educator Information Sheets.

Working in a team

As a teacher or leader, you may be a member of several teams providing additional support for students. Sometimes you will be working with others to support a particular student with high needs – for example, you may meet periodically with a teacher's aide, a specialist teacher, the student's whānau, and someone from special education services to plan for a student verified for the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). Sometimes, a team will be focused on one or more students with moderate needs – for example, you may be working with the learning support coordinator and literacy leader in your school to incorporate appropriate differentiations for a group of students in your class struggling with reading and writing.



In [Example 5](#), a teacher works in a range of teams to support groups and individual students in his class; he works with a mathematics support teacher (MST), is an IEP team member, collaborates with a visiting specialist, and liaises with the ESOL teacher.

Effective teams develop mutually agreed understandings and ways of working. Members keep the focus on student learning, positive relationships, and developing ways of communicating that work for all those involved. At times this may mean providing specific support for some members – for example, interpreters, support people, or translations of materials. Effective teams are aware that successful collaboration and problem solving require respect and trust and that they are challenging to achieve but can lead to significant change.

“ Collaborative problem solving and decision making focused on teaching and learning for students with disabilities have the potential to create fundamental change in the ways that teachers teach and students learn. ”

Clark, 2000, page 66

All teams will experience disagreements, conflicts, and challenges. These can be overcome when a team works together to focus on the student's well-being, to respect each other's views, and to establish open communication.

“If there is a golden rule of inclusion, it is problem solving. When we think about all the factors in the child's life, we know there is unlikely to be a single solution to a given problem. We need to have the confidence and humility to reach out and say, “OK, let's open this up and approach it as a team.” If we don't, and there is a lack of respect between team members, things can go wrong and there will be gaps.”

Academic, project interview, 2013

i

IEP Online presents strategies for building and maintaining successful ways of working together. For information on problem solving, conflict resolution, and maintaining strong team relationships, see [How to Succeed: Working Together](#) and [Working Together: Tools](#).

Roles and responsibilities

Discussing and agreeing on the roles and responsibilities of members is an important first step in creating an effective team. Each team is different: role definitions don't need to be set rigidly, but there are some important considerations to be noted in working towards an inclusive classroom curriculum:

- The role of the classroom teacher involves responsibility for the learning of every student in the class. The teacher's aide is an integral part of the classroom team; the teacher must ensure that they are not left without direction and support.
- While whānau will be involved, they are not expected to take direct responsibility for their child's education. The school's expectations of them should be fair and realistic, respecting their work and family commitments.
- For students who receive additional support, the ways in which the classroom teacher and specialist teacher(s) work together need to be negotiated and clarified. The learning support coordinator will often help in this process. The purpose of this additional teacher resource is to support the student and their team. If support roles are not clearly defined, responsibility can fall between the teachers, leaving teachers' aides to oversee learning without clear guidance.
- The role of educational specialists should be discussed and agreed. Specialists such as speech language therapists and educational psychologists work collaboratively to assist the school-based team to support the student. They can respond to questions and challenges raised by the school, and work to support presence, participation, and achievement.
- It is helpful to have some overlapping responsibilities, so that when one person is not available someone else can step in. When schools have plans in place for situations such as staff illness or staff on leave, support for students is managed more effectively.

The examples below show how a specialist teacher works flexibly as a team member to ensure the needs of all students are met.

“In one school, the teacher does all the planning and I work with groups of students in the class, not always the verified student. The teacher takes responsibility for the teaching, and I support him by teaching the other students and making resources.

In another school, the teacher's aide, the teacher, and I meet for 30 minutes every two weeks to discuss the direction for the following two weeks. If the teacher's aide has any questions, we can discuss these at this point. We can also discuss what might be stressful for the student and plan how we can change the programme if necessary. This is working well.

In another school, the teacher is great at planning. Everything is written in a timetable in a book so the teacher's aide knows what support the teacher requires. Again, this approach works really well.”

Specialist teacher, project interview, 2013

The role of the learning support coordinator or special education needs coordinator

The learning support coordinator (LSC) or special education needs coordinator (SENCO) is appointed by the school. They work with teachers and leaders to identify, agree on, and organise supports for students with special education needs so that they have equal access to learning opportunities. They work with students, whānau, and teachers to develop learner profiles that include student voice and that support choice and self determination in IEPs and transition plans.

The LSC or SENCO coordinates relevant information and monitors progress with teachers to review if students' needs are being met. They also coordinate and monitor teacher's aide support and may provide professional development opportunities.

In secondary schools, the LSC is usually a point of contact for both parents and outside agencies such as specialist services and transition support providers. They liaise with subject teachers to discuss lesson content and how material is going to be taught and to suggest possible adaptations, resources, and strategies.

Shared planning

An important aspect of working together is shared planning. Shared planning is collaborative and draws on the knowledge of students and those who know them best.

Effective schools and teachers use and refer to many forms of planning. They consider what they plan to teach for the year and term and the learning activities, school contexts, and events they want their students to participate in.

- Faculty and syndicate planning involves a number of teachers determining key focus areas or learning themes for groups of students. This often includes reflecting on the overall strengths and needs of each group. It also includes considering the needs of particular students to ensure that they are able to benefit from and participate in planned activities and events.



In [Example 10](#), teachers from a year 3-6 syndicate work with the learning support coordinator to plan a syndicate-wide social science unit in which all students participate and learn alongside their peers.

- A teacher and learning support coordinator may decide to form a support team for a student with diverse needs, which will lead to shared planning. The teacher and other members of the team (as required) will consider and plan for adaptations and differentiations to the classroom programme for the student.



In [Example 3](#), an English teacher and the learning support coordinator share planning documents electronically as they support a group of students with additional learning needs.

All planning identifies clear, meaningful goals that build on current strengths and knowledge, reflect next learning steps, and show what success will look like. Progress towards these goals is regularly reviewed. The team will decide what format a plan will take (e.g., a collaborative action plan, an IEP, an individual health plan, or a transition plan). Most plans identify adaptations and differentiations in the classroom programme and any supports that are needed, for both the student and the team.

There are many sources of information for planning – for example, reports, assessment records, and learner profiles. An important source for initial, high-level planning is the Additional Support Register, sometimes called a Special Needs Register. Each New Zealand school should have its own register to identify students requiring extra support and adaptations or differentiations in the classroom curriculum as they work alongside their peers. Ministry guidance to boards of trustees in 2013 noted that:

“ A register needs to be developed with care. It's not about labelling and separating out students, but about ensuring that those who need additional support are identified and supported in a planned and coordinated way. ”

Charters and Analysis of Variance: Guidance for Supporting Students with Special Education Needs, 2013, page 3

When time is at a premium it must be used well. One way to do this is through careful, ongoing planning using a variety of approaches and different plans for different purposes. The following two examples are key aspects of planning for students with additional needs.

Planning using an IEP

The IEP process also provides opportunities to bring people together to plan future learning. The process should allow for content to be differentiated and the environment to be adapted to include the student in classroom tasks and activities. IEP planning will draw on information from a range of people, including the student and their whānau.

Note that not all students with additional needs have or need an IEP. For those students who do, IEP meetings are important times to plan ahead – and to recognise the results of previous planning, by celebrating progress and success for the student and the team.



“ (The IEP meeting) is a process that begins with celebrating and recognition. We share heartwarming stories about the student’s progress and achievements, and remind ourselves that they are just like any other child; uniquely special and gifted in their own right. We also look at ourselves and celebrate how hard we work and how far we have come in our ability to manage situations that challenge us. Unless this is recognised and said out loud, I don’t think any plan or IEP will serve much beyond the paper it’s written on. IEPs are full of opportunities. We all respect and value the process and the contributions of everyone involved, most of all the students. ”

SENCO, project interview, 2013



In [Example 7](#), a teacher of a year 5–6 class works with a specialist teacher and team members from the local Ministry of Education office to embed priority learning goals from a student’s IEP in the classroom programme.



As a group, look at *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* to explore how the IEP process is used in your school. For example, you could look at your school practices in relation to the ‘An IEP is ... / An IEP is not ...’ table on page 6; or you could read and discuss pages 8–10 to consider your school’s collaboration with whānau and the local community.



[Further information](#) and [guidelines](#) on individual education plans are available on TKI and on the Inclusive Education site.

A [video describing how one school approached an IEP](#) and an [example of how a year 9 student takes responsibility for setting his own goals and participating in IEP meetings](#) are also available on TKI.

Planning for education outside the classroom

Future planning is critical for events such as school trips, camps, sports events, and other forms of education outside the classroom. It is important to ensure that planning starts well in advance for such events, so that team members can work together to involve all students.

One example of shared planning for a school camp is shown below (Ford, 2009). The decision for Max to go to camp was made by teachers and whānau. Forward planning was essential because the camp had to be booked one year in advance. Finding ways for Max to access the camp site and the activities was a challenge for the team.

“ We got our timetable organised and I went through and broke every single activity right down - from getting Max onto the boat, getting him into the car, determining when he had to be assisted with eating or getting in the shower. We considered every single activity that Max would have to take part in and what he needed in terms of resources and people. This was just awesome, as it ensured Max didn’t miss out on anything. (Teacher)

[Max’s father] carried Max onto the stony area where the students were lighting fires. Max was placed into his wheelchair seat on the ground and Mary his TA sat behind him. The activity was structured so that each student had a task to complete. This allowed Max to achieve his small part of the fire lighting task. (Field notes) ”

In addition to having the right people in the team, the right resources were also important. Max took a large amount of equipment to camp. Max's classmates took obvious pride in Max's participation at camp. When the researcher first entered the classroom students were asked to tell her about the highlights of camp. They called out their highlights - "Max went on the flying fox." "We made fires." "We saw a stingray." "We went kayaking."



As a group, use Figure 3 to help you list the people in your school community and local community who might support you when planning to include students with additional needs in education outside the classroom? What approaches to shared planning have been effective in your school community? What other approaches do you want to develop?

Day-to-day collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration don't just happen. They are supported by processes that focus on positive ways of working together and effective, regular communication. They require participants to get to know one another and to work together closely. They take time, and they develop over time. Making time is therefore an important issue for teachers and whānau.

“Mason Durie talks about the domain of time - not about the hands of the clock, but about processes and practices - and comes back to Paulo Friere's notion of 'conscientization', or 'consciousness raising'. Because if what's in people heads is 'We don't have time to do this', then guess what? We won't get time to do it.”

Academic, project interview, 2013

The core group in Figure 3 - the teacher, the student, and the whānau - work closely together day to day. They take time to agree on how they will work together, including how a teacher's aide may work with teacher direction to support the student in the class. They talk about what is coming up in the class and school programme and who will ensure everything is in place on the day. Taking time to work on the detail means day-to-day processes and activities are more likely to run smoothly.

For the class trip outlined below, Sam and his mum help make the plan with the class teacher and teacher's aide (Outreach teacher, project interview, 2013). They take time to plan the detail, which means that Sam can be fully involved in the activity.

A year 3 class is planning to do a three-park walk and to take a train ride back. For one of the students in the class, Sam, the walk is too far. He needs help with going to the toilet. So Sam walks to the first park with the other kids. He is driven back to school to go to the toilet and then catches up with the others at the second park. He has lunch, walks round the park and catches the train with the others.

Sam has a great day and produces some excellent response work back at school. His mother goes on this trip, and gains confidence that the teacher is well organised and has her finger on the needs of her son. The day goes well because of the willingness shown by all who are involved.

Working together day to day requires regular, effective communication to ensure every student can participate in learning. Sometimes this will be a challenge. There can be pressure to plan ahead as well as keeping up with a myriad of everyday tasks. With the constraints of busy schedules, people will sometimes forget to communicate regularly. A foundation of strong relationships will mean that when things *do* go wrong, people understand and work together to manage on the day.



In [Example 6](#), a teacher collaborates with a speech language therapist and occupational therapist about a student's programme, and demonstrates strategies for the teacher's aide during a mathematics lesson.

Perspectives of whānau

“ Having teachers who believed in their child's potential was critical to successful and sustainable learning partnerships. ”

ERO, 2008, page 9

At the centre of the framework for an inclusive school curriculum (Figure 1), relationships between the student, the teacher, and whānau provide the core interactions for building a rich knowledge of the student's capabilities, needs, and aspirations. A student's close family relationships, and those with wider whānau, can reveal information not apparent to members of the wider team.

Every parent wants to support their child's learning at school. However the whānau of students with additional needs often have more significant concerns in relation to their children's education. ERO (2008) asked parents of students with special education needs what they wanted from schools, and how schools could best work with them to meet the needs of all students. Some parents reported receiving confused messages about the responsibilities of home and school, especially regarding learning and wellbeing, with staff only contacting parents when there was a crisis, and often too late. Others said schools were just not open to working with them, and that they felt unwelcome.



Parents felt that it was critical that teachers trusted them as parents for the knowledge they had about their children. With trust, engagement is enhanced and schools can more easily tap into parents' knowledge and expertise.

Further examples of parents' responses reported by ERO are provided in the table below.

<p>What did parents want from schools?</p>	<p>Children and whānau to be valued as part of the school community</p> <p>To be treated with respect</p> <p>Relationships based on empathy and mutual respect</p> <p>Students to be welcomed for their differences</p> <p>Staff to be approachable, accessible, and interested in them and their children</p> <p>To work in partnership with the school and be involved in solutions to problems, sharing responsibility for learning and well-being</p>
<p>What did parents think schools expected of them?</p>	<p>To be responsible for behaviour at school and home.</p> <p>'Intelligent and well-behaved' children; if their child didn't fit this description, they should consider enrolling him or her elsewhere.</p>
<p>What did parents identify as positive ways of working together?</p>	<p>Regular and constructive communication that keeps parents in the loop</p> <p>Being contacted with positive messages about their child, not just when things are not going well</p> <p>Opportunities for parents to learn and be supported in working with their child</p> <p>Having teachers who believed in their child's potential, critical to successful and sustainable learning partnerships</p>
<p>What made it difficult to work together?</p>	<p>Struggling with entrenched attitudes by some school staff about their child and his or her learning or behavioural needs.</p> <p>Labelling their child or themselves, which undermines the development of constructive relationships</p> <p>Being expected to be at the school's 'beck and call' to supervise their child or take him or her home when things got difficult.</p> <p>Feeling rejected and misunderstood by other parents and children</p> <p>Difficulty getting information about funding and support for their child</p>



To view the full findings of this report, see the ERO report [*Partners in Learning: Parents' Voices*](#).

For further information on whānau perspectives, see the guide [*Partnering with Parents, Whānau, and Communities*](#) on the Inclusive Education site.



In [Example 12](#), a teacher in a junior class shares snapshots of students' learning electronically with whānau; parents of students with additional learning needs are affirmed to see their children succeeding at school.



As a group, think about your school community and the ways in which whānau perspectives are visible and responded to. What actions can school staff take to set up successful ways for whānau and staff to work together with a focus on student learning? Invite whānau to participate, or plan to interview whānau. If your school has used (or is planning to use) the Inclusive Education Tools, you may wish to use your data from the tools as the basis for your thinking.

Working together in your setting

As schools move towards inclusive practice, it is important that staff support one another to work together. This means moving away from processes that leave people isolated, confused, or overwhelmed by the task of teaching all students. The following table summarises some of the shifts in practice that working together effectively requires.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Teachers feeling unsupported	Teachers feeling supported by senior leadership and working together with others
Hierarchical teams	Effective teams and communities of practice that value the knowledge of all members Collaborative problem solving over time with the student as the central focus
Teachers considering they need specialist skills to teach some students	Teachers' skills being valued and supported by others who know the student well and/or have the additional knowledge needed
Students being seen as the responsibility of someone else, such as a specialist teacher or teacher's aide	The role of the classroom teacher being central, within a supportive team
Struggling to find time to get together as a team	Teachers using time in ways that work for them and others Planning ahead and making time to meet and to stay in touch day to day
Role confusion	Negotiation of roles so team members know what they are doing and what is expected of them
Thinking "It's not my job."	Agreeing "It is everyone's job", with accountability for high standards across roles
Issues with communication between team members	Agreed communication processes that work for those involved
Whānau feeling unsupported	Whānau being actively involved and respected



In [Example 4](#), a learning support coordinator and year 13 English teacher work together to include a student who is learning at a very different level to the rest of the class; the teacher and the students in the class all benefit from taking an inclusive and supportive approach.



As a group, review the key messages from this section in the table below. Choose several statements that are pertinent to inclusive practice in your school and, for each statement, think about:

- what we should *keep* doing
- what we should *start* doing
- what we should *do differently*.

When we work together ...

- Teachers know who can support them.
- Teachers are supported by, and learn in, effective teams and learning communities.
- We listen to and make changes to respond to student views.
- We know 'how' we treat one another matters. We take personal responsibility to treat one other well.
- All students belong in class, in the school, and in their local communities.
- Time is used effectively, and we discuss how we will make time to come together when we need to.
- People plan together for the future.
- People are accountable. We do what we say we will do.
- School systems support our collaboration.
- Whānau are involved, listened to, respected, and understood.
- We negotiate roles and responsibilities.
- We agree on effective ways to communicate.
- We focus on the positive and celebrate success.
- We problem-solve effectively.





Effective Pedagogy for All Students

*Tungia te ururua, kia tupu
whakaritorito te tupu o te harakeke.*

*Burn or dispose of whatever hinders
progress in all that is done,
in order that what is desirable may
indeed grow and bear fruit.*

“High gains are possible for low achievers, high achievers, students of different socio-economic backgrounds and ethnic heritages, and students with special needs within the same class grouping. This principle is taken as definitional of quality teaching. Quality teaching is not effective for just some learners but is effective for all learners.”

Quality Teaching for Diverse Learners Best Evidence Synthesis, 2003, page 16

Teacher actions that promote student learning

Effective teachers teach all their students effectively. *The New Zealand Curriculum* (page 34) explains that although no formula guarantees learning for every student in every context, there is strong evidence of the kinds of teaching approaches that consistently improve student learning. The evidence shows that students learn best when teachers establish strong relationships with students and their whānau and when they:

- create a supportive learning environment
- encourage reflective thought and action
- enhance the relevance of new learning
- facilitate shared learning
- make connections to prior learning and experience
- provide sufficient opportunities to learn
- inquire into the teaching-learning relationship.



As a group, reflect on what effective pedagogy looks like in practice in your school, either in the school-wide environment or in the classroom. The questions in the table below are to support the discussion.

Teacher actions (NZC, pages 34–35)	Questions to consider	What does this look like in your school or classroom?
Creating a supportive environment	<p>How do you foster and demonstrate positive relationships within the learning environment that are caring, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and cohesive?</p> <p>How do you value and attend to the cultural and linguistic diversity of all your students?</p>	
Encouraging reflective thought and action	<p>What tasks and opportunities have you designed that encourage all students to reflect on their learning individually and with their peers?</p>	
Enhancing the relevance of new learning	<p>How do you stimulate the curiosity of your students?</p> <p>How do you challenge them to use and apply what they discover in new contexts and new innovative ways?</p>	
Facilitating shared learning	<p>How does your learning community foster and demonstrate learning conversations and partnerships where all contributions are valued?</p> <p>How are all members of the classroom encouraged to give constructive feedback on learning?</p>	
Making connections to prior learning and experience	<p>What are some deliberate strategies you use to build on what students know and have experienced?</p> <p>How do you support students to make connections across learning areas, home experiences, and the wider world?</p>	
Providing sufficient opportunities to learn	<p>How do you plan for multiple opportunities for all students to engage with, practise, and transfer new learning?</p> <p>How do you encourage students to take ownership of and manage their own learning?</p>	
Teaching as inquiry	<p>How do you use what you observe in daily teaching and learning to ensure that all students' learning needs are planned for and met?</p>	

Planning for all

Effective planning supports all students to access rich and broad learning opportunities across the learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. Such planning recognises different ways to support student achievement. Effective teaching and learning is based on teacher belief that the core of teaching and learning is the same, regardless of whether a student has a disability or requires additional support.

Effective teachers:

- ensure that every student can access learning, if necessary drawing on specialist support to achieve this
- ensure that learning opportunities connect with students' prior knowledge and experience
- ensure that every student has multiple opportunities to interact with others and with a variety of material
- provide opportunities for students to express themselves in a range of ways
- provide opportunities for students to show what they know and are learning.

Universal Design for Learning

No two students are alike in their thought processes, abilities, interests, and approaches to learning. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a useful framework to support schools to plan for all students from the outset. It helps them to ensure that the school curriculum meets the needs of all students, providing everyone with equal opportunities to learn.

“UDL is a framework for looking at how we plan our goals, our teaching methods, the resources and materials we use, and the way we design assessments. UDL is based around three principles that ensure that there are options for all learners to have equal access to learning.”

Te Kete Ipurangi (n.d.)

The principles are:

- provide multiple means of representation – the ‘what’ of learning – because students differ in how they perceive and understand information
- provide multiple means of action and expression – the ‘how’ of learning – so that all students can participate and show what they have learned
- provide multiple means of engagement – the ‘why’ of learning – because different students are engaged by different types of tasks and learning situations.

Adapted from Center for Applied Special Technology, 2011, page 5



In [Example 13](#), a teacher provides her year 5–6 students with multiple options for engaging in a technology task and showing their learning.

Approaching school and classroom planning by considering the Universal Design principles will help develop a classroom programme that gives all students equal opportunities to learn. The emphasis is on designing the most responsive curriculum and environment for all students. At the outset, barriers to students' learning are identified and minimised in partnership with students and those that know them well. This can reduce the demands on you during teaching and learning activities, as students are often able to independently adapt the environment and activities to meet their own needs.



As a group, view the [video clip](#) in which Learning facilitator Chrissie Butler discusses Universal Design for Learning (UDL).



Drawing on the video, what do you think you need to consider at the outset of planning a lesson or series of student tasks? Why?



More information on Universal Design for Learning is available on [TKI](#) and in the [guide on UDL](#) on the Inclusive Education website.

Teaching as inquiry

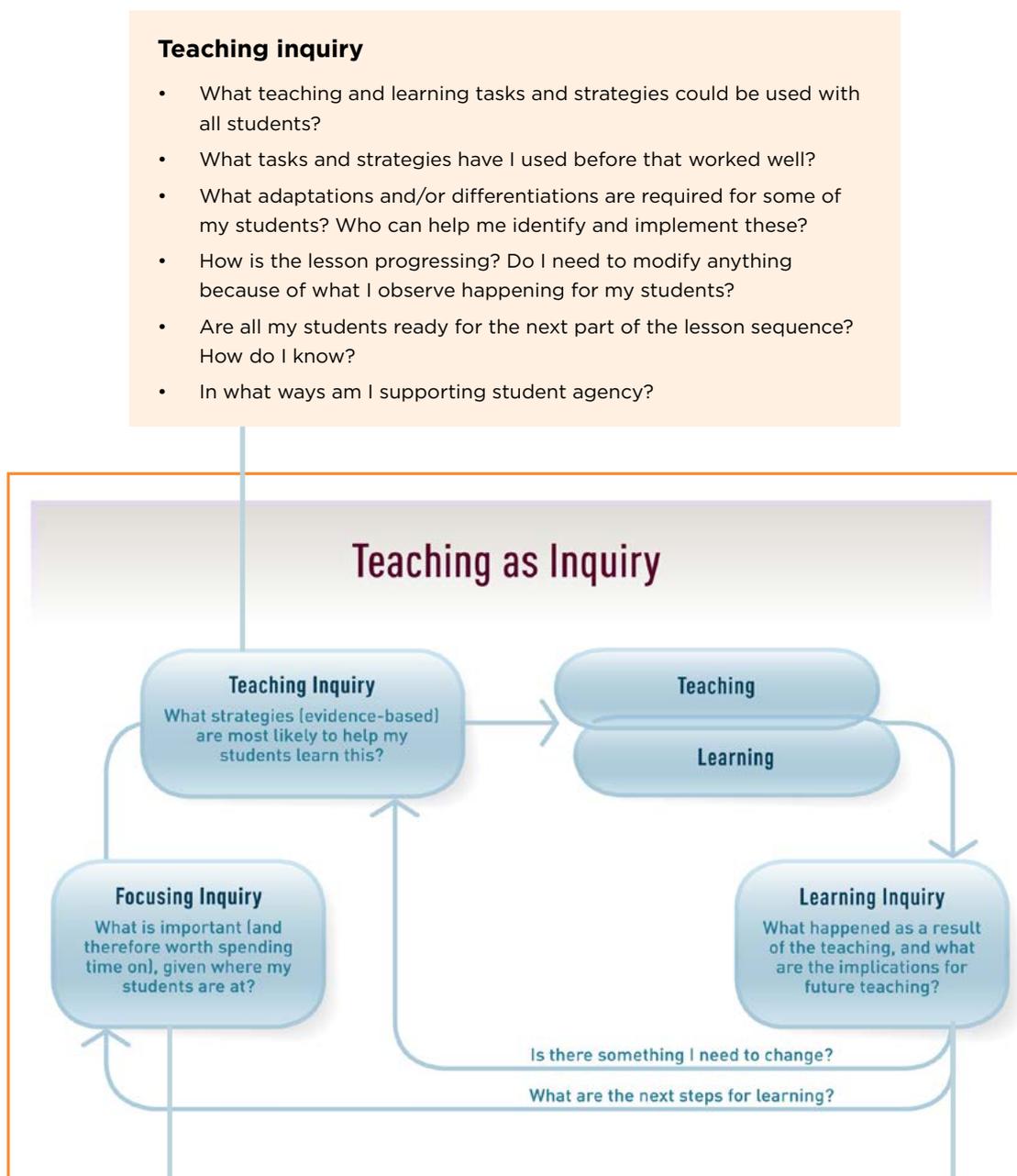
“ Since any teaching strategy works differently in different contexts for different students, effective pedagogy requires that teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 35

Teachers inquire into the teaching–learning relationship “moment by moment (as teaching takes place), day by day, and over the longer term” (page 35). When planning for learning opportunities, you need to carefully consider the needs of all students in your class and the additional support you may require to ensure that their learning needs are met.

Figure 4 shows the teaching as inquiry cycle from *The New Zealand Curriculum* (page 35). The prompts above and below it help to unpack the three inquiries within the cycle.

Figure 4: Teaching as Inquiry



Teaching inquiry

- What teaching and learning tasks and strategies could be used with all students?
- What tasks and strategies have I used before that worked well?
- What adaptations and/or differentiations are required for some of my students? Who can help me identify and implement these?
- How is the lesson progressing? Do I need to modify anything because of what I observe happening for my students?
- Are all my students ready for the next part of the lesson sequence? How do I know?
- In what ways am I supporting student agency?

Focusing inquiry

- What learning area(s) and achievement objectives am I considering?
- What are the big ideas?
- What are the desired learning outcomes, including key competency development?
- Where are my students currently at with regard to these outcomes? How do I know? What do my students say?
- What prior knowledge and diverse perspectives do my students bring to the teaching and learning context?

Learning inquiry

- How well were students able to understand and achieve the intended learning outcomes? What evidence do I have?
- What was the impact of the differentiations and adaptations I used for some students?
- What have I learned through feedback from my students?
- What are the next learning steps?



The [examples from the classroom](#) in this resource illustrate how teachers have endeavoured to include all students in participating, learning, and achieving alongside their peers. The examples align to the teaching as inquiry model and demonstrate the strategic actions and reflections made by the teacher, students, and their whānau on their learning.



As a group, discuss the questions alongside the two dimensions below from the [Educultural Wheel](#). Add to the questions from your own teaching experience.

Dimension	Teacher questions
Rangitiratanga Teacher effectiveness	In what ways do I advocate for the unique needs of the students in my classroom? How effective and enabling is my teaching pedagogy? How does my practice and planning unleash the strengths and potential of my students? Do I understand the challenges my students face at school?
Kotahitanga Ethic of bonding	How does the culture of the classroom encourage collaboration? What opportunities are there for students to work together? In what ways am I modelling unity and collaboration in my interactions with others?

Differentiation and adaptation

Teachers are responsible for planning, developing, and reviewing the classroom curriculum. Making curriculum accessible for all students may require ‘thinking outside the square’ in daily practice. This requires you to be prepared to do things differently, to work towards a shift from being a ‘routine expert’ to an ‘adaptive expert’ (Timperley, 2011). You will best achieve this when working as part of a collaborative, supportive learning community.

Effective planning includes thinking flexibly about how to organise teaching and learning. For example, a class may all be working in the same learning area and participating in shared learning activities. At the same time, some students may be working with different content, within different curriculum levels, toward different learning outcomes, or in relation to different assessment criteria. The students and their whānau should contribute to decisions on these different approaches in the light of the outcomes that are of value to them.

The general principle within such flexible approaches is to be as unobtrusive as possible while still ensuring that students' individual learning needs are met. When providing access to the curriculum, you and the teams working with students who need additional support should first consider whether the students can pursue the same learning outcomes as their classmates. Secondly, you should consider whether a learning programme is needed that has broadly similar learning outcomes for the whole class but appropriately meets the learning needs of these students at their levels. Thirdly, some students will need individualised content and individualised supports.



In [Example 8](#), a teacher uses mixed ability groups, differentiated content, adaptations such as visual representations, and support from a teacher's aide to ensure all his year 9 students can engage in shared mathematics tasks.



Two key approaches for effective planning and teaching are **differentiating** and **adapting** (Mitchell et al., 2010). Most teachers already use both these approaches to some extent. As you develop your expertise with these approaches, you will:

- recognise that units of work can easily be modified in the classroom programme to cater effectively for students with diverse needs, by using a range of approaches and strategies in planning and teaching
- recognise that some students need multiple opportunities to engage with a range of materials to support their understanding, and that these opportunities may involve using assistive technology or simple adaptations
- reflect on and evaluate multiple ways students can demonstrate their understanding in different learning areas; for students with diverse needs, it may be at the same level or a different level to their peers
- identify ways that all students might assess their capabilities and reflect on their own learning.

Differentiating the classroom programme, adapting the supports

Giangreco, Cloninger, and Iverson (2011) developed a framework to broadly characterise each student's participation in learning along two dimensions:

- the programme – what is taught (the classroom curriculum), annual goals, specific learning outcomes, and so on
- the supports – what is provided to assist the student to access and achieve educational outcomes, including materials, people (such as specialist teachers), specific teaching strategies, changes in the classroom and environment, and so on.

The school and classroom curriculum can be made accessible to all students through:

- **differentiations:** changes to the *classroom programme* – the content of the school and class curriculum and expected responses to it (the 'what')
- **adaptations:** changes to the *supports* – the school environment, the classroom, teaching strategies, and teaching and learning materials (the 'how').

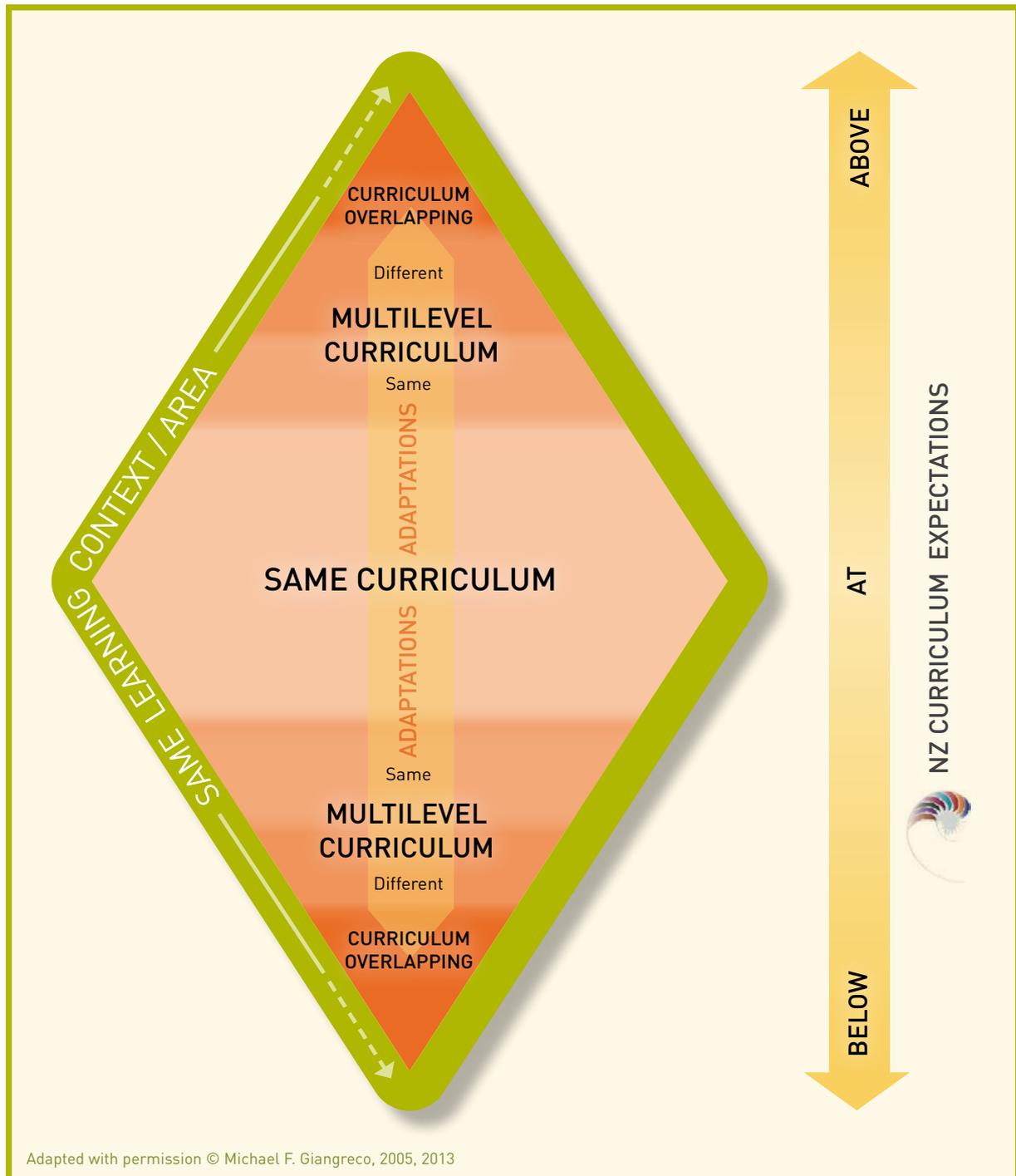
Differentiating the programme

Where some parts of the curriculum content need to be individualised for some students, you can differentiate your classroom programme using two approaches that Giangreco (2007) discusses: **multilevel curriculum** and **curriculum overlapping**.⁶ Both approaches support students who require additional support to fully participate in classroom learning.

Figure 5 illustrates these different types of differentiation within the classroom curriculum.

⁶ In New Zealand, teachers are familiar with the concept and approach of differentiated instruction, usually to meet learning objectives within the same curriculum level for all students in the class. Multilevel curriculum and curriculum overlapping, on the other hand, aim to meet learning objectives within several curriculum levels for students in the class.

Figure 5: Differentiation within the classroom curriculum



The different approaches shown in Figure 5 are discussed below. **In all the approaches, students work within the same learning context** (i.e., in the same physical location and related learning experiences). They also work in the **same learning area** (or areas, for an integrated unit or activity), although this is not always the case for curriculum overlapping.

In **'same curriculum'**, students experience the same content and activities, the same level of complexity (curriculum level), and the same number of learning outcomes to be achieved. For example:

A class is mostly working at level 3 in science and are learning about the concept of a fair test. Groups of students are required to set up four pots that have the same amount of soil and the same seed, and that receive the same amount of water each day. One pot is given some fertiliser to see if this makes a difference. The learning outcomes are understanding the importance of controlling variables to determine what makes a difference, and understanding how an adequate sample size makes a test more robust and minimises other factors.

In **'multilevel-same curriculum'**, students experience the **same** content and activities as the rest of the class, but the level of complexity and number of learning outcomes are adjusted in keeping with the students' learning strengths and needs. For example:

In the science unit, Joel and Tama set up the same experiment using the four pots and are expected to understand that one plant grows more quickly because it receives some fertiliser. They are not expected to work on the other learning outcome related to sample size.

In **'multilevel-different curriculum'**, students experience **different** but related content and activities, and the level of complexity and number of learning outcomes are adjusted in keeping with the students' learning strengths and needs. For example:

In the science unit, Sharon is learning how to pot up a plant, and she uses an activity that involves matching pictures of plants with seeds to identify what the seed she is planting will turn into.

In **curriculum overlapping**, students may participate in similar activities to the rest of the class, but the level of complexity and number of learning outcomes are significantly adjusted in keeping with the students' learning strengths and needs. The learning outcomes cover more than one area of the curriculum – generally the area the rest of the class is working in, as well as, for example, social sciences, health and physical education, English, or the key competencies. For example:

In the science unit, Katie helps her group set up the experiment. However, the targeted learning outcomes for her relate to communication (from the learning area of English) and the key competency of participating and contributing. With adult support, she uses a visual schedule to follow the instructions and sequence of activities and works on maintaining attention and turn-taking.

Airini excels in scientific investigations and is an advanced reader, absorbing several library books a week. She enjoys working in the school's vegetable garden, which she helped design in the gifted programme and now maintains as a member of the student council. While other students are working on the fair test experiment, Airini is reading cultural folklore about plants. She loves the Chinese story *The Empty Pot*, and, based on it, she and her teacher agree she should design an experiment around her question, 'What happens when seeds are heated to different temperatures before planting?' Airini develops hypotheses and procedures for data collection. She will share her research results with the student council at their planning meeting for the spring garden.

As Figure 5 demonstrates, multilevel curriculum and curriculum overlapping are appropriate for students working both above or below most of their peers. Students with gifts and talents (such as Airini), including those who are twice exceptional (such as Kathryn below), also benefit from them:

“ Although multilevel curriculum and curriculum overlapping are primarily ways to include students with disabilities, they also enable more meaningful participation for students functioning above grade level. Applying multilevel curriculum allows teachers to stretch their curriculum away from a ‘middle zone’ in which all students share the same curricular content, level, and amount of work.”

Giangreco, 2007, page 5



In [Example 6](#), all the students in a year 4–5 mathematics lesson are learning about fractions. Most students are solving word problems at curriculum level 3. The teacher supports some students to solve different word problems at level 2, and one student explores fractions using objects and pictures.



In [Example 4](#), an English teacher differentiates a year 13 oral presentation unit for students working at NCEA levels 1 and 2, and, in collaboration with the learning support coordinator, uses curriculum overlapping to include a student who is working towards a curriculum level 1 goal in the arts.

Kathryn is a year 6 student who has been identified as ‘twice exceptional’. She is articulate, has an extensive vocabulary, and can confidently discuss and debate complex issues in a clear and logical way. However she has significant difficulty capturing her thoughts and opinions in written form. Consequently, although she has been assessed as having above average intelligence, her literacy and numeracy skills are well below national expectations for her year level. Kathryn receives support from an RTLB, who has been investigating using digital technologies to enable her to better demonstrate her learning. Her teacher has been providing her with more time to complete written tasks in class, and he has been exploring her passions and interests in order to motivate her to further develop her literacy and numeracy skills.

Adapting the supports

If differentiating the programme is about the ‘what’ of teaching, deciding on adaptations is about the ‘how’. Once you have identified specific content you intend to teach within their classroom curriculum, you need to decide *how* you will ensure that all students will be able to access this content. This may involve making changes to the learning environment, adopting specific teaching strategies, modifying teaching and learning materials, or adjusting a task or activity.

Some examples of how you can adapt supports are:

- using cooperative learning groups
- using visual representations – such as graphic organisers, visual timetables, and Venn diagrams – to organise information and reduce the amount of text required
- providing written or visual versions of spoken material (e.g., sign language, transcripts for videos)
- providing adapted computer keyboards or other alternatives to the standard keyboard and mouse (e.g., switch access with corresponding software)

7 And of course, for an individual student ‘same curriculum’ may be appropriate for one learning area (e.g., mathematics) and multilevel curriculum or curriculum overlapping for another (e.g., English).

- using tactile equivalents of written or visual material (e.g., Braille, three-dimensional objects)
- using interactive web tools and social media (e.g., interactive animations, chats)
- arranging the class layout so that specific students are close enough to clearly see the whiteboard or hear instructions
- reducing noise for students who find it distracting (e.g., by providing ear muffs or sound-proofed quiet areas in the classroom).



In [Example 2](#), the teaching team in a year 4-5 class uses a range of classroom and task adaptations that allow students with additional learning needs to generate and express ideas in a poetry lesson.



In [Example 9](#), a year 5-6 teacher adjusts the tasks and learning materials in a science activity to ensure all students remain engaged and learn.

When are adaptations and differentiations needed?

The goal for teachers is to provide meaningful participation for all students within the classroom curriculum. To achieve this, you need to make decisions around curriculum content and level, environment, teaching and learning materials, and responses expected for and by students.

A general guide when deciding on adaptations and differentiations is to **change as little as possible** while still ensuring that students' individual learning needs are met. Some students may need only adaptations to access the curriculum – for example:

Daniel has a hearing loss. Mr Jones is trialling a Soundfield system, which could help Daniel. This will only be effective for him when he wears his hearing aids. Mr Jones has asked the specialist teacher (RTD) to support Daniel to understand the benefits of wearing his hearing aids. This system may also help other students in the class who find it difficult to concentrate or who have auditory processing difficulty.

Alannah has severe dyspraxia so struggles to reach the same writing output as others in the class. However, she can achieve the same outcome as everyone else when she uses her iPad. A teacher's aide with good knowledge of assistive technology makes sure that her iPad can access the class technology systems.

Richard's teacher gives instructions once for all the class, then repeats them using shorter sentences and less complex language for Richard, who has difficulty processing language.



Other students may need only differentiations to access the curriculum – for example:

The class is conducting an inquiry into their local environment. Students can each select new spelling words from a vocabulary list the class has brainstormed for the inquiry. Dennis knows that he can comfortably learn five new words in a week, and that he will need to consolidate them by putting each of them into a sentence.

A few students will need both adaptation and differentiation but rarely on a full-time basis – for example:

Julie’s teacher is aware that Julie trips over things easily, so she has arranged the classroom furniture to provide a clear and easy passage. She knows that Julie struggles to find her bag to get her play lunch because she is smaller than other members of the class, so her bag is on a low hook and a friend helps her to find it. Julie is learning to recognise and write her name – although others in the class are writing a sentence. She needs to use a pencil grip to manage the pencil. The teacher supports Julie during writing to guide where to start each letter.

Grace has autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and is working within level 1 of the curriculum in her year 5–6 class. She has an individual education plan (IEP) which shows the goals her team have agreed on and the aspects of learning that require adaptations or differentiation. Her teacher and classmates use non-verbal visual supports for both social and academic prompts. Her current focus is a social learning goal to take turns.

It is important to acknowledge that individual students may require access to some or all options throughout a school day or even in one lesson or task. The options should be viewed as being fluid rather than static. Remember the principle of **using the least intrusive option available** that meets the student’s needs. For this reason, Giangreco (2007, page 5) cautions against too readily adopting curriculum overlapping:

“In the interest of access to the general education curriculum teachers and teams working with students with disabilities should first consider whether the student can pursue the same learning outcomes as classmates or whether multilevel curriculum and instruction will provide enough accommodation before using curriculum overlapping.”



As a group, discuss how differentiation and adaptation are currently evident in your planning and teaching.

- Can you think of a specific example that illustrates each approach?
- How could you use Figure 5 in your planning processes to include all students?

Shifting teachers’ practice

Shifting teacher beliefs and actions is an important focus for inclusive practice because teacher beliefs and attitudes can support or limit a student’s access to learning. As teachers build towards inclusive practice their beliefs and attitudes become more inclusive and they move away from practices that limit learning opportunities for everyone.



The following table lists some of the ways in which teachers shift their practice as they plan to meet the needs of all their students. (The last three rows are specific to secondary teachers.) Working within a group of teachers, discuss how your beliefs and attitudes are reflected in the table.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Beliefs and attitudes that limit opportunities to learn	Beliefs and attitudes that support opportunities to learn
Low expectations of student learning, progress, and achievement	High expectations of student learning, progress, and achievement
A one-size-fits-all curriculum	Curriculum access that may differ for different students, but curriculum for all
Teachers not knowing how to teach some students	All teachers being capable of teaching all students, with support when required
A belief that “It’s not a classroom teacher’s job to teach ‘these’ students.”	A belief that the learning of all students is the responsibility of all teachers
An attitude that any student with special education needs will require a teacher’s aide	Support in the classroom that is coordinated and appropriate
The teacher’s aide working with the student	The teacher’s aide supporting the teacher to include all students
A belief that “These students do not belong in a mainstream class, they belong in the unit.”	A belief that all students belong in the classroom, learning within the NZ Curriculum
Teachers feeling isolated	Coordinated support for teachers and students
Someone else planning for students with special education needs	Collaborative planning with the LSC/SENCO, student, and whānau
Teachers teaching their subject	Teachers teaching all students
An examinations-only focus	All students having the opportunity to undertake appropriate assessment
Restricted options and pathways post school	Meaningful pathways supporting citizenship, full participation, and lifelong learning



For further information and examples of differentiation and adaptation, explore the guide *Making the Curriculum Accessible to All* on the Inclusive Education site.

For information on differentiated programmes for gifted and talented students, see Component 4 (pages 54-79) in *Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting Their Needs in New Zealand Schools*.



Building on Strengths and Aspirations

E tipu e rea mō ngā rā o tōu ao ...

*Grow, tender young shoot, in the days
destined for you ...*

Āpirana Ngata, 1874–1950

We all have dreams and aspirations, shaped by where we come from, what we already know, who we interact with, and where we see ourselves in the future. And we all have strengths, which we build on and draw on to work towards our aspirations.

When we work in collaboration, we learn together and achieve more through the support we give one another. In such situations, some students may readily build on their strengths and work towards their aspirations. Others will require more support to do so. Along with whānau and peers, teachers and leaders play a key role in providing this support.

It is critical that we recognise and respond to students' aspirations and strengths. A common barrier faced by all students is others underestimating their potential. Teachers also need to look for the *yet-to-be-discovered* abilities and talents of their students (Giangreco, 2010).

“ [We need to] pick up on how we perceive the learner ... because if the teacher doesn't believe the student can do it, guess what? They won't.”

Academic, project interview, 2013

Why is building on strengths and aspirations so important for students with additional learning needs?

A diagnosis tells us something about a student with additional learning needs, providing some understanding for the student, their family, and those who support them. However, it may not tell us much about their strengths and aspirations. In many ways, students with additional needs are at greater risk of people focusing on what they *can't* do and overlooking their capabilities and dreams. Everyone should actively challenge low expectations for any student, regardless of who holds them. (In some contexts, this may include members of their whānau.)

All students have a right to express themselves in a non-judgmental, safe environment in which they feel their aspirations are valued. It is essential that they are supported in planning for what they want to achieve. Building on their strengths, prior knowledge, and interests will then engage and motivate them as they work towards realising these plans.

If we are to recognise every student as an active learner, we need to get to know them in order to understand and reflect back their strengths and aspirations. When teachers, peers, the student, and whānau work together to achieve this, the student will see their learning as purposeful and of use to them in becoming contributing, active members of their communities.

Regular conversations provide opportunities for a student and those in their network of support to share their understandings of the student's strengths, passions, and interests and the changes in these over time. They are an important forum for exploring ways of supporting aspirations and addressing challenges or barriers.



The following table outlines the benefits of collaborative conversations for a student, their whānau and teachers, and others in the student's network of support. Working in pairs, choose 2-3 rows and identify examples of how they are seen in practice in your school.

Collaborative conversations support ...	
... students to:	... whānau, teachers, and others to:
share their aspirations, their preferences for learning, their strengths, and their knowledge	share their specific knowledge of the student
develop relationships with their teacher, peers, and others supporting them	build relationships with both the student and one another
feel welcomed into a new class or school and know that their needs will be met	understand the context for support and the strengths of the school community
talk about what helps them to learn	discuss and agree on appropriate differentiations and adaptations in the classroom
have a say in what happens for them and where they are heading	use the knowledge and skills that others bring to agree with the student on what is best for them and where they are heading
know that the school recognises them as a learner within the school community	know that they are part of an effective network of support for the student and their teacher
identify the key people working with them, who they are, and what they do	identify the key people and their roles in the family, the school, and other agencies providing support
plan for working together in the future.	plan for working together in the future.

Paora, a year 8 student, is a non-verbal student who uses a communication device effectively and independently. Recently at a student-led conference, he shared how he was interested in learning te reo Māori in order to be able to communicate on his marae. His teacher, Ms Scott, discussed how they could programme his communication device in English and Māori so that he could work independently and with his peers and specialist support to learn the language. Paora's whānau commented that they hoped this strategy would also support Paora to gain NCEA Level 2 in te reo in the future. They asked whether the collaborative team (including Paora) could plan a pathway that would help Paora to achieve this.



As a group, view the video clip [My Dreams and Future Plans](#) and discuss how the school is supporting Katrina to work towards fulfilling her dreams. Then consider how, in your school, you:



- support students to share their aspirations with others
- develop interim goals that support these aspirations
- provide experiences for students that relate to their aspirations.



Family and whānau aspirations for their children

Parents and other whānau members have important knowledge about a student's strengths and aspirations. They are likely to have discussed their own goals and aspirations for the student and to have clear ideas about the student's possible future within and beyond the whānau. There should be regular opportunities for them to share their ideas within the student's support team, especially at the start of the year. A shared understanding between the student, their whānau, their teachers, and other team members illuminates a clear pathway forward. Supporting the student to move forward on this path then becomes a collective responsibility.

Sometimes whānau aspirations for a student may differ from those of the student or school. For example, whānau members may wish for the student to follow in the family's footsteps by doing what others in the family have done. Or their aspirations may be influenced by the circumstances of the community in which they live. Sometimes they may need help to understand the opportunities available to their child. What is important is that everyone works together to support the student to identify realistic goals and aspirations and to work towards achieving these.

It is also important that the student develops an awareness that they will hold dreams and aspirations both at school and in their later life – and that everyone has goals that may develop throughout their life. No student should feel that they are letting others down by changing their goals or aspirations as they progress through school. Sometimes this occurs because they have been made aware of new options that they didn't think were possible for them.

“ No one expects us to do well in exams and go on to have a career or even a decent job. Changing this means challenging the mindset that sees the disability, not the person, and that fails to recognise that while it might take a young person with a disability longer to achieve goals, we can still do it. ”

A young adult quoted in Educable Project, 2000, page 56

Learning opportunities that build on strengths and aspirations

“ In deep expressions of practice, students' learning activities and the curriculum/ knowledge content they engage with are shaped in ways that reflect the input and interest of students, as well as what teachers know to be important knowledge. ”

Bolstad, Gilbert, et al., 2012, page 19

Learning involves making connections between what is already known and new information, skills, and understandings. Research also demonstrates the importance of emotion and motivation for learning – for example, a major OECD review of the research on learning calls emotion and motivation the 'gatekeepers to learning' (Dumont, Istance, & Benavides, 2012). Therefore it is vital that the learning opportunities you provide build on each learner's strengths (linking to prior knowledge), aspirations and interests (linking to emotion and motivation), and identity, language, and culture (linking to both).

A second key consideration is supporting students to acquire the knowledge and skills that have been identified by the New Zealand Curriculum as important and appropriate for their age and stage of development. In this regard, broad learning experiences will provide contexts for developing students' overall capacity to learn: that is, to use knowledge effectively, to be curious and questioning, to think independently, and to plan and evaluate.

Over time and on balance, teachers' planning has to take account of these two key considerations. At times this will involve supporting students' short-term goals – for example, they may want to have a friend who will sit beside them and talk to them, or to be able to give a presentation like their classmates. At other times, it will support longer-term goals, such as being able to ride the bus by themselves, to drive, to obtain a qualification, or to live independently. In both cases, the learning opportunities you provide will enable your students to draw on and develop the key competencies, to develop the specific knowledge and skills they need in relation to their goals, and to understand why these are important for achieving these goals.



In [Example 4](#), a student in a year 13 English class is supported to build on her strengths and interest in photography while working towards an IEP goal of talking to others about why and how she takes or selects particular photographs.



In small groups, view the video [Involving Families in Transitions](#). Discuss how as a school you listen to and support the aspirations of whānau for their children throughout their schooling, particularly at transition points. How might [learner profiles](#) help to capture the aspirations of both students and whānau?



Connecting pathways with strengths and aspirations

It is important to build on students' strengths and aspirations when planning learning pathways with them. The people around them need to work together with them to agree on where they are going, how they are going to get there, and the knowledge and skills they will need. Such discussions about pathways should take place throughout schooling, particularly when planning for transitions. In the secondary context, listening to students and having conversations about their future becomes even more important.

It is important to recognise that pathways for students with additional needs may change as they progress through school and the diverse experiences it provides. Pathways are also influenced by what students encounter in their lives outside of school. What is important, however, is that learning is always seen as useful, purposeful, and leading to outcomes that are important for the student.

Ben talks about the pathway he has taken and how it links to his strengths and aspirations: “I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school but the Gateway programme helped me think about what I could do. Mr Ames and Michelle found out what I liked to do and the things I was good at. I love sport, any sport. So I got to go to the local golf course one day a week for most of the year. I learnt to drive ride-on mowers and how to use a weed eater, change green holes, mow the tees, and look after the equipment. From my time at the golf course, I discovered I liked to work outside and didn't want to be stuck in an inside job. I discovered that I really enjoy mowing grass and can mow lawns in a straight line. I learnt that there is a lot more to mowing grass than I thought. I'd have to do some study to know how to do it correctly. With the help of my parents, I've got lots of small goals for me to achieve so that I can work towards my big goal of mowing sportsfields. I know it won't be easy, but I know I have my family and the garden volunteers where I work to help me get there. Each time I achieve a small goal I feel proud of myself and that I am getting closer to my big goal.”



Related information is available on [support for students to continue their education](#), on [deciding on what to do after school](#), and on [transitioning from school](#).

Information on vocational pathways is available from [Youth Guarantee](#) and [STAR](#).



In pairs, select and discuss 2–3 rows of the table below. As you do so, identify:

- examples of how you support your students to build on their strengths and aspirations
- how the pathways students decide on complement their strengths and aspirations
- what else you could do to better support students to work towards their goals and aspirations.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Teachers' beliefs limiting students' aspirations	Teachers expecting that all students are able to work towards their goals and aspirations
Little agreement or guidance on pathways	Personalised pathways agreed and planned through collaborative teamwork
Students' strengths being unrecognised and their potential unfulfilled	A strengths-based approach leading to meaningful pathways and learning
Peers seeing the disability before they see and know the student	Peers supporting and valuing the uniqueness of every student
Students' aspirations seldom being recognised or sought	Students feeling confident that their aspirations are listened to, acknowledged, and supported
Differing views of students' strengths and aspirations limiting the support they receive	Shared views supporting students to work towards their aspirations
Others making decisions on behalf of students (with the best of intentions)	Students knowing they have a range of options available to choose from
Classroom cultures that do not value and support diversity	Teachers and students valuing diversity and what each student brings to the classroom



Making Learning Visible

*He kokonga whare e kitea, he kokonga
ngākau e kore e kitea.*

*The corners of a house are visible; the
corners of the heart are invisible.*

Recognising when learning is taking place and making this visible is another of the foundations on which inclusive practice is built.⁸ There are many ways of sharing information about progress and achievement to make learning visible to the student, to you as the teacher, to whānau, and to other team members.

For some students with additional learning needs, such as those learning at a very different level to their peers, there is a risk of focusing only on their *presence* or *participation* at school and not paying enough attention to what they are *learning*. Learning must be visible for every student, regardless of how much additional support they require. A small group of students in New Zealand schools have health needs that need to be met to keep them safe at school (e.g., daily medications). Other students need support for their self-care. While meeting a student's needs for health and care at school is important, this must not become the sole focus for that student's education. All students must be recognised as learners within *The New Zealand Curriculum*, in which health and care needs are seen as additional to learning needs.

⁸ It is important to remember that you cannot understand or capture all learning that takes place, only that which you can observe from your students' behaviours, your conversations with them, and the artefacts they produce.

Assessment and making learning visible

“ The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 39

Inclusive schools confidently use assessment as an ongoing process for making the learning of *all students* visible. During the past two decades, teachers have gained a great deal of knowledge about the power of assessment to improve students' learning and support a greater understanding of their progress. There has been a shift in emphasis from summative to formative assessment, from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* learning. The principles and practices of assessment *for* learning allow students and teachers to be absolutely clear about the learning process and its results.

Assessment *for* learning encourages students to take responsibility for their learning by continually asking themselves questions about their progress, achievement, and next steps. Focusing on greater student participation within the assessment process is important because students' understandings and beliefs about their capacity as learners can influence their achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). When school staff openly and honestly share their understandings about assessment approaches and language with a student and their whānau, conversations about teaching, learning, progress, and achievement are more effective. Such conversations can offer everyone an opportunity to contribute their unique knowledge of the student and to participate in planning for and responding to their learning pathway.

Assessment *for* learning gives students ownership of their learning and supports agency, self-regulation, and metacognition. It underpins the learning-focused relationships that are key to successful teaching and learning. It plays a key role in creating a classroom in which “there is no power differential between teacher and students, where both have equal agency and the locus of control is jointly maintained so that the learner is able to maximise his/her ability to regulate his/her own learning” (Absolum, 2006, page 39).

Assessment for learning is in keeping with the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum. For example, it promotes the active participation that is an essential aspect of students learning to learn – of understanding how they are going and where they might go next. And it plays a role in supporting inclusion across the school, when it is well embedded in school practice and regularly monitored and evaluated by school leaders.

It is important that you consider a wide range of assessment approaches for *all students* in your class, rather than, for example, assuming from the start that you will need to take a different approach for students with additional learning needs. Working in this way will help you to better identify when you need to differentiate or adapt approaches to ensure you are being responsive to the needs and abilities of individual students. For this reason, this section provides a broad overview of assessment approaches used by New Zealand schools and teachers, with examples to illustrate how these approaches have been used for students with additional needs.

i

Assessment for students with significant learning needs often requires individualised approaches. The section ‘Supporting Students Working at One Curriculum Level for an Extended Period’ is currently in development and will provide information on and links to such assessment approaches.

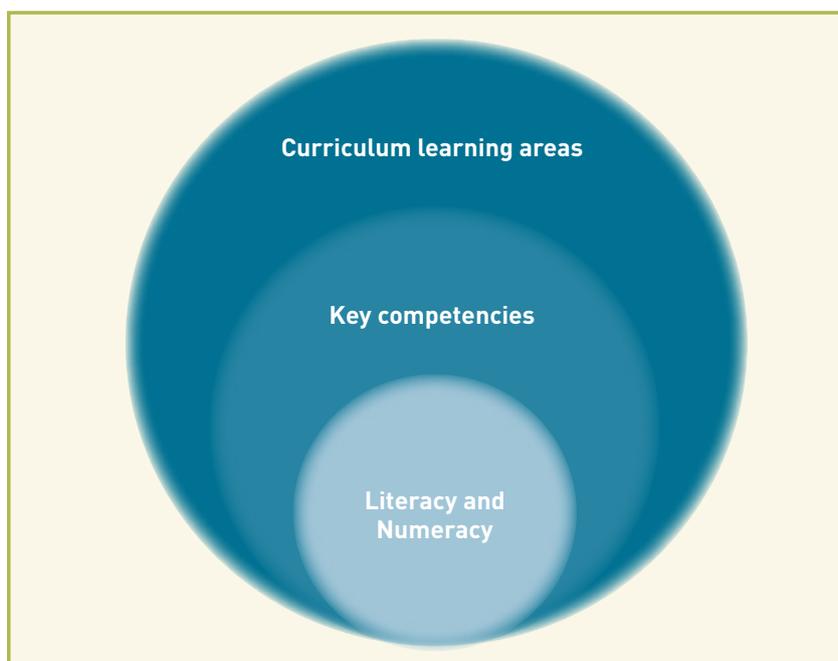
Foundations for learning

As Figure 6 shows, there are three interrelated foundations for learning within the New Zealand Curriculum. For all students, skills and understandings in **literacy and numeracy** are critical for accessing all elements of the curriculum and for daily living.⁹ Assessment of progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy needs to encompass a wide range of contexts in which students can demonstrate their capabilities and use their skills and knowledge.

Figure 6 also shows the critical role of the **key competencies** in students' learning. The key competencies are a useful lens for understanding a student's openness to learning and ability to learn, particularly when a specific competency requires focus and development. Appropriate tasks and activities will provide you with multiple opportunities to observe your students' ability to apply the competencies in increasingly complex and diverse situations. You also need to provide your students with rich opportunities to develop and apply the complex behaviours and dispositions associated with the key competencies.¹⁰

Finally, as students work within the **learning areas** of the New Zealand Curriculum, they both draw on and build their understandings and skills in literacy, numeracy, and the key competencies.

Figure 6: Foundations for learning within the New Zealand Curriculum



⁹ Literacy and numeracy are not learning areas of the curriculum but are capabilities and understandings that all young people need in order to access the curriculum and progress within it. Figure 6 shows them as nested inside the key competencies because they are key to thinking, relating to others, managing self, participating and contributing, and using language, symbols, and texts.

¹⁰ Figure 6 shows the key competencies as nested inside the learning areas because the competencies are context dependent, and every context can be linked to one of the learning areas.

Aleki is a year 7 student with Down syndrome. His class is currently exploring the perspectives of volunteers as part of an inquiry on how people respond individually and collectively to challenges in their community. Aleki and his peers have interviewed a range of local volunteers. Their task is now to identify the key points and perspectives from their interviews and to group them into themes. Aleki shares his key points with a small group and, with support from a peer, writes them on sticky notes. In the grouping task, he is able to identify and collate points and perspectives from other interviews similar to what he has identified. Aleki has demonstrated an understanding of the social sciences achievement objectives the class is working toward and that he can draw on the key competencies of relating to others and participating and contributing.





As a group, reflect on what effective assessment looks like in practice in your school. The questions in the table below are to support the discussion.

Characteristics of effective assessment (NZC, page 40)	Questions to consider	Our responses to these questions
It benefits students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you ensure <i>all</i> your students understand what they know and can do and what they still need to learn (and why this is important)? • Are your students motivated and confident because of your assessment practices? How do you know? 	
It involves students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you support students to reflect on their goals and progress with you, their parents, and their peers? • What strategies do you use to develop students' capacity for self- and peer assessment? 	
It supports teaching and learning goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do your students understand the desired outcomes and the criteria for success in their learning experiences? • How does the feedback you give support students to reach their learning goals? 	
It's planned and communicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do your students know in advance how and why they are to be assessed? • How do you ensure your planning is flexible and responsive to new information, opportunities, or insights on a daily basis? 	
It's suited to the purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assessment approaches do you use? • In what ways do they fit the learning being assessed, the diversity of your students, and the purpose for which the information is to be used? 	
It's valid and fair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you ensure the assessment approaches you use are appropriate and within the capability of <i>all</i> your students, including those with additional needs? • How confident are you that the judgments you make are valid? For example, are the approaches you choose actually assessing what they are supposed to? 	

Approaches for making learning visible

A variety of assessment approaches and activities should be used to make the learning of all students visible to themselves and all those in their network of support – their whānau, their teacher(s), their peers and friends, school leaders, and others supporting their learning at school.

The *purpose* of the assessment will drive the *choice of approach*. A common purpose is for student and teacher to regularly keep track of learning through informal day-to-day interactions within the classroom, using, for example, learning intentions and success criteria to do so.

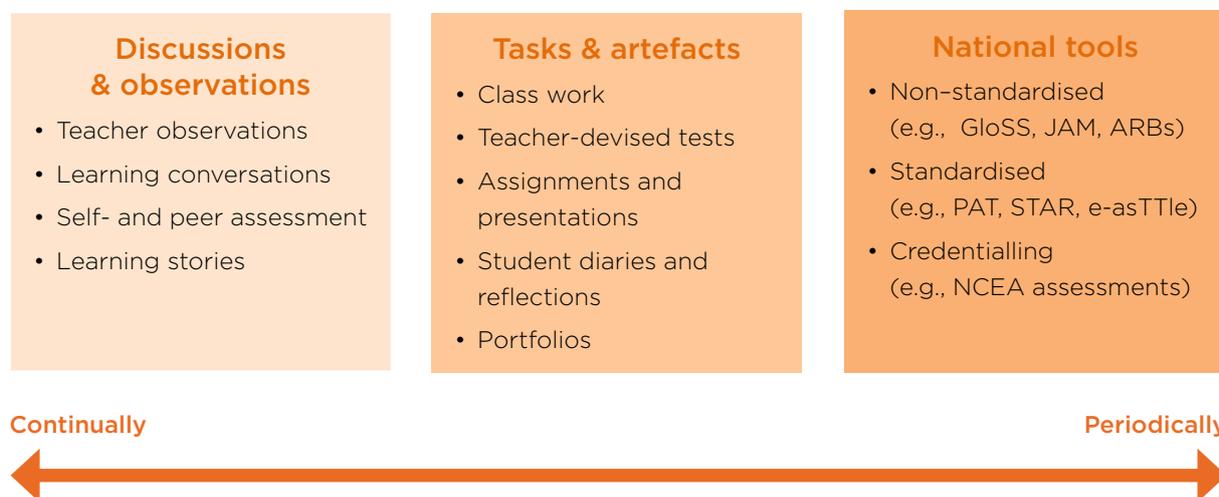
Sometimes the purpose will be diagnostic, as in the example of assessment immediately below, which helps the teacher and students identify their next teaching and learning steps. When such assessment information is shared with whānau, it supports them to understand their children's progress and achievement and to play an active role in their learning.

A science teacher wants to get a better picture of his year 9 class's understanding of forces. He selects four Assessment Resource Bank tasks, one at each of curriculum levels 2, 3, 4, and 5, and allows the students to choose which task to complete during the period set aside for the assessment. Several students who choose the level 3 task quickly realise it is too easy for them and move on to the level 4 task. Two others realise that the level 3 task they've selected is too difficult and move to the level 2 task instead. The teacher uses the results of the assessment to differentiate an upcoming unit on forces, aiming for all students to be challenged and to progress in their understanding of the topic.

At other times, assessments will provide a more formal, big-picture understanding of students' progress. This kind of information feeds into school-wide assessment data, enabling the school to compare the relative achievement of different student cohorts and to report effectively to the board of trustees and the Ministry of Education.

All the above approaches contribute to the effective use of teaching as inquiry and provide valuable information for both its “focusing inquiry and learning inquiry” (New Zealand Curriculum, page 40). The approaches you choose should result in a rich and reliable picture that illustrates ‘where your students are at’ and ‘what needs to happen next’ and that documents progress across a range of curriculum learning goals and outcomes. As Figure 7 shows, this should involve a broad range of approaches, the most frequently used being focused *discussions and observations* that support students to self- and peer assess.

Figure 7: Assessment approaches for making learning visible



In addition, specific *tasks and artefacts* will periodically provide information on where students 'are at' in relation to curriculum signposts and standards.

Finally, at specific points in the school year, national tools such as the Assessment Resource Banks (ARBs), GloSS, PATs, and NCEA assessments will provide more formal information about progress and achievement. These national tools are not appropriate for all students. For students with significant learning needs, there are specific frameworks that support teachers to understand where their students are up to in their learning and where they will move to next. The section 'Supporting Students Working at One Curriculum Level for an Extended Period' (currently in development) will provide information on these frameworks.

The remainder of this section unpacks the three columns of Figure 7.



The [assessment tool selector](#) is a resource for teachers and schools to help them select the most appropriate assessment tool to suit a particular purpose.

Discussions and observations

“ Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning. It involves the focused and timely gathering, analysis, interpretation, and use of information that can provide evidence of student progress. Much of this evidence is “of the moment”. Analysis and interpretation often take place in the mind of the teacher, who then uses the insights gained to shape their actions as they continue to work with their students. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007, page 39

Making learning visible starts with you, the teacher, regarding all students as learners and asking “What is each student in my class learning day by day?” and “How do they learn best?” Your goal should be a shared understanding with each student about what they are learning, how they will know when they have learnt it, and what their next learning steps will then be.

The sections below discuss four examples of approaches that you can employ to ensure that **every** student takes ownership of their learning and their achievement is understood, shared, and celebrated:

- teacher observations
- learning conversations
- self- and peer assessment
- learning stories.

Teacher observations

Teachers' and other team members' observations of students are key to understanding where students are up to in their learning and what their next steps are. Observations range from everyday, informal 'noticing' as you move about the classroom to more planned, structured observations. In all cases, effective observation is underpinned by a strong understanding of what achievement looks like in the relevant learning context and area:

“ Good observation requires detailed knowledge of what you expect a student to need to be able to do in order to make progress. You then observe whether they can do this or not. If not, what do they do and what are the implications for what you need to do next? ”

Absolum, 2006, page 111

Your observations of your students will therefore be informed by your knowledge of the expectations outlined in documents such as *The New Zealand Curriculum*, the *Literacy Learning Progressions*, and the *English Language Learning Progressions* (ELLP). They will also rely on your understanding of the learning goals that have been set by or for your students – for some students with additional learning needs, these will be detailed in individual education plans (IEPs).

Robinson and Lai (2006) distinguish between observations that *explore* what is happening versus those that *check* what is happening. Observations that *explore* what is happening tend to be more open-ended and informal. In order to obtain reliable information from them, you need to distinguish between what is happening and your inferences about what this means. Robinson and Lai suggest recording words and actions accurately and separating them from your inferences. The following example illustrates this, using a recording template they recommend:

Description of the Incident		Inference
Words	Action	
Bridget asks Israel, "Is there a better strategy you can use than 'counting on' to solve this problem?"	<p>Israel thinks for a moment and then shrugs his shoulders.</p> <p>Bridget writes down the first two numbers of a skip-counting sequence.</p> <p>Israel smiles and completes the sequence to solve the problem.</p>	Israel is open to coaching from his peers.



Observations that *check* what is happening require more precision in defining what to observe and how to observe. For example, if your syndicate or department wanted to observe how supportive students are of one another, you would need to agree on specific demonstrations of what such support looks like – for example, one demonstration might be ‘The student responds positively and promptly to a request for help from a peer’.

Marko is a year 7 student who is non-verbal and enjoys baking at home with his family. He attends food technology classes with his peers and the support of Sam, his teacher aide. In today’s lesson, the class is learning to make pancakes. Sam sets up a visual schedule of the lesson structure, which is shared with the class. Marko’s learning goal is to be able to use visuals to select the right ingredients.

Miss Malcolm, the food technology teacher, models to Marko and two other students the order for the ingredients. She uses the expression “*First we need flour, then we need ...*”, supported with visuals on the board. She then selects the cup measure and says “*We need 1 cup of flour*”, placing the cup visual beside the flour visual on the board. Following this demonstration, Sam supports Marko to select the ingredients for his pancakes from a range of ingredients.

Both Sam and Miss Malcolm observe Marko during the lesson, with Sam recording photos and anecdotal comments on an iPad. They notice that Marko is able to gather the right ingredients but needs support to identify the correct measuring receptacle for each item (e.g., cup, teaspoon). He is also vocalising more than in the past as he puts each ingredient in the bowl. Sam captures this on video for Marko to share with his home-class teacher. The next learning step for Marko will be to identify the correct measuring receptacle for each ingredient.

Much of your understanding about your students’ learning comes from activities involving listening, discussing, conferencing, and questioning. Because observations often take place during such interactions with students, they also require you to be open to your students’ ways of seeing and making sense of the world and to draw on your knowledge of their interests, strengths, and cultural backgrounds. Marie Clay’s description of what is required to understand what a student brings to reading can be applied to most learning activities and experiences:

“*[Observation] involves being a teacher who interacts with the child, who notices the child’s responses to the story, its language and its meanings, and who takes the time to gather evidence of how the child is working on print. The teacher must be reflective and responsive to the negotiations of the child.*”

Clay, 2005, page 11

As this quote shows, an effective observation will often reflect the ‘noticing, recognising, and responding’ rubric that many New Zealand teachers are familiar with (Cowie, 2000). In the example below, the teacher *notices* what Michael is doing, *recognises* the learning that is occurring as a result, and *responds* by providing follow-up activities to extend Michael’s literacy development.

Michael is a year 2 student who likes ordering numbers and letters. His teacher Mr Simpson notices that Michael often listens to the song 'Today is Monday' on the HelpKidzLearn website. He decides to try using the song and Michael's love of ordering to help Michael and some other students learn the sequence for the days of the week. He makes cards with the days of the week and models the sequence for the students as they listen to the song. This quickly becomes a favourite independent activity for the small group.

On several occasions, Mr Simpson observes Michael during this activity and takes notes. He notices that Michael holds the cards, listens to the song, and puts out the matching card. He recognises that through these multiple interactions Michael is now self-regulating and correcting himself when sequencing the days of the week. He also notices that, when self-correcting, Michael doesn't have to go back to the beginning and say the days in order. Mr Simpson uses the understandings he has gained from his observations to extend Michael and his peers' engagement with literacy – he uses a different text and matching song on the days of the week; he creates a [Clicker](#) forced-order writing activity, using simple sentence starters with specific choices (Today is ..., Tomorrow is ...); and he adopts the technique of ordering with songs as a basis for literacy activities around months of the year and opposites.

Teacher observations of individuals or small groups form the basis of a number of the assessment approaches discussed later in this section (e.g., learning stories). Formal diagnostic tools such as GloSS and running records provide a structured approach and set templates to use, but teachers, syndicates, and departments will also devise their own approaches and templates for their observations, based on their professional knowledge and particular contexts.



The role of learning conversations

Everyday conversations with your students about their learning are a key strategy for both strengthening teaching practice and improving learning outcomes. Feedback and feed-forward between yourself, other team members, your students, and their whānau help to clarify the learning purpose and learning expectations, and it can make visible the successes, small or large, that are occurring.

Feedback during a conversation is most effective when it is given at the time of learning, so students can make improvements as they proceed. Because you will frequently refer to artefacts (such as student work) during a conversation, you need to take into account that:

- some students may have difficulty understanding and processing feedback; in these cases, using visual representations such as pictures, diagrams, and mind maps can be helpful
- when students are presented with grades and comments, the grades can cancel the beneficial effects of the comments
- teachers often give too much feedback, which students find overwhelming and difficult to understand.

Specific, descriptive feedback is necessary for improvement and success. Teachers who combine strong subject knowledge with effective feedback can offer students rich, focused information about their learning and how to improve it.



More [information on effective feedback](#) is available on TKI.

Consider also the formats you use to support regular learning conversations in the learning environment. Every student needs to be able to give and receive feedback and to play an active role in the feedback process. A feedback conversation uses a shared language, which both parties need to understand. Approaches based on Universal Design for Learning will help to ensure this is the case. For example, formats such as plain language, audio, photos and videos, NZ sign language, and audio notes will support conversations with students, particularly those with additional needs. Feed forward strategies such as diaries, schedules, social stories, visual schedules, 'I-am-learning-to ...' goal cards, and videos can be used to remind students and yourself about the next learning tasks and steps. Regardless of the formats you draw on, learning conversations between you and your students are important and the responsibility for them primarily rests with you.

Self- and peer assessment

“ [In effective assessment, students] discuss, clarify, and reflect on their goals, strategies, and progress with their teachers, their parents, and one another. This develops students' capacity for self- and peer assessment, which lead in turn to increased self-direction. ”

The New Zealand Curriculum, page 40

Self-assessment makes learning visible because it involves students taking some responsibility for assessing themselves and their learning. They can only engage in this process effectively if they clearly understand their expected learning outcomes and why they are important. Therefore you need to support them to think about what they are trying to achieve, the process they are engaged in, and how they can strengthen their work. They can then take part meaningfully in determining their next learning steps.

There are two aspects of learning that have to be clear for students in self-assessment:

- Firstly, they need to have a clear understanding of *the task or activity* and what success in it looks like. Working with you to establish learning intentions and success criteria is key to this for all students. You also need to provide access to examples that demonstrate what achieving the criteria can look like (Dixon, 2011).
- Secondly, they need to have a clear understanding of what *effective self-assessment* looks like. Schools need to consider how they can best support their students' understanding of self-assessment and provide models (assessment formats) to scaffold and build this understanding. These models need to be accessible and understood by all students. For students with additional needs, they may need to be adapted or simplified, and students may need additional opportunities to explore self-assessment so they can take part in a meaningful way. The principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) can guide you in this work.



In [Example 2](#), a year 4-5 teacher gives her students two options for self-assessment: to complete a self-evaluation sheet or to take part in a short video interview in which they show their work and answer questions on it.

Carla is a student who is non-verbal and in year 4. One of her goals is to interact more with her fellow students during learning. After a class music session, her teacher Mr Hasson shows her a video of her engagement with fellow students as they played along with a new song. He asks:

- Did you like the song?
- Did you work well with the other students?
- Do you want to have another turn at playing along?
- Are you ready to learn a new song?

Carla responds using her yes/no cards. Peter, a teacher aide, films the conversation and puts the video into [Book Creator](#) for sharing with Carla and discussing what they might do in the next music session.

Peer assessment helps make learning visible through students collaborating and sharing their learning. They learn how to make constructive comments and give meaningful feedback to one another. The collaborative nature of peer assessment offers students the opportunity to learn from, and with, their peers.

As with self-assessment, you have a responsibility to make the expected learning outcomes explicit. And, again as with self-assessment, this involves supporting every student to understand what success looks like in both the particular task (or activity) they are engaging in and in peer assessment itself. Using success criteria, examples, and assessment models provides opportunities for students to practise skills and make sense of how both the task and peer assessment can be attempted and completed successfully. For example, you might provide some of the language and sentence starters your students will require as they feed back to one another. The ['ladder of feedback'](#) is a useful support in this regard.

Mr Anderson teaches a year 11 mixed-ability social science class. He has set up peer assessment processes to help all students to own their learning. After co-constructing success criteria and examining exemplars of what success looks like, students assess each other's writing against the agreed criteria. They use two stars and a wish to feed back on what is successful and what needs to be developed further. Mr Anderson shares how this approach supported a student with ASD.

"Lara has a great sense of humour and has worked hard to develop positive relationships with her peer group. We talked about who would be best as her peer assessor. Lara selected Brenda, as she felt that Brenda would share feedback in a way that would support her to be able to improve her writing. Lara had to ensure this was okay with Brenda, and she approached her instead of me. From my observations, Lara and Brenda's feedback session was very successful. I could hear Lara asking Brenda for suggestions on ways she could rephrase the paragraph that needed to be developed further. Lara came up to me after the session and said, 'I know what to do now. Brenda has helped me write a plan. She is going to check in at the end of tomorrow's session to see how I am going and read what I have changed. I think my writing is going to match those exemplars this time.'"

i

The [section on self- and peer assessment](#) on TKI contains useful links to resources that you and your students can use in the classroom.



Using learning stories

“ Assessment through learning stories is personal, meaningful, respectful, and directive - such a positive way to describe learning. ”

Teacher comment, *Narrative Assessment*, 2009, page 30

Sometimes, assessment challenges us to think about, and make changes to, the ways we work with students. You may recognise that a student is learning, but the assessments you are using don't make this learning visible. Narrative assessment is one response to this dilemma. Narrative assessment recognises all students as learners. It supports you to recognise, respond to, and revisit student learning in ways that are meaningful for students, their whānau, and for you. It also supports your on-going reflection and thinking about next-step learning for your students.

Narrative assessment uses learning stories (narratives) to capture learning within a variety of contexts - the settings where a student works, plays, and lives. It can be used to capture stories of learning from a class, a small group, or an individual student. Learning stories have been used to make learning visible for students from early childhood settings, primary schools, and secondary schools. They have been used to support those students recognised as having additional learning needs (Ministry of Education, 2009) and those recognised as being gifted and talented (Margrain, 2012). When schools recognise that achievement can occur across a range of abilities and learning contexts, there are more opportunities for students to demonstrate competence and capability and to be seen as successful learners.

Narrative assessment is also an effective way of showing and sharing progress over time. Strings of learning stories over time, and in different contexts, can highlight student progress and achievement in relation to, for example, particular learning areas and key competencies. Linking learning episodes helps all involved to notice emerging learning. Learning stories alongside photographs, video clips and other learning artefacts can be annotated within a student's learning portfolio (see below). Moments of progress may then form the basis for an accompanying longer summary story, that includes aspects of how the learning environment supported the learner.



An [example of a string of learning stories](#) that include student, teacher, and specialist voices is available on TKI.



In [Example 12](#), students use Story Creator on the class iPad to create 'photo stories' about their creation of a new biscuit; the learning stories are then shared with their families via email.

Name/Ingoa: JACKSON Date/Te rā: 30.6.2014 Title/Taitara: JACKSON MAKES CONVERSATION	
Background He kupu whakataki	<p>Jackson is a happy student with a passion for plants and animals. He is in a class of 24 years 5-6 children. He is on the autistic spectrum.</p> <p>Although many of the students attempt to draw Jackson into their circle of friends, he prefers the company of his brother at play times and adults during class.</p>
Strategies to help the student Ngā rautaki kia haere whakamua te akoranga	<p>We have been seeking ways to help Jackson interact with other students in the classroom and to participate in classroom activities. The skills we have been working on across a range of learning areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking turns • looking at the speaker • waiting and responding to questions. <p>This strategy used by adults and peers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of visual cues • modelled interactions • consistent verbal cues • turn taking in pairs.
Narrative Ā-paki	<p>This morning before school had started I noticed Jackson initiating a conversation with his classmates, something he has never done before because of his difficulties in expressing his ideas and thoughts. He asked students what they enjoyed most at camp and waited for their responses. At times he even provided a simple description of his favourite activity, speaking animatedly with a huge grin on his face.</p>
Commentary on these observations He kōrero mō te āhuatanga o tēnei mahi	<p>Jackson is beginning to see himself as a member of our class community. His peers are responding to him and are keen to include him in their games on the playground and to support him with his learning in the classroom. They take turns at being his buddy and give him positive feedback when he is on task or completes an activity. They are also keen to report back the positive changes in his behaviour to the teacher.</p> <p>In time we will aim for Jackson's circle of friends to include children from neighbouring classrooms and, with the support of close friends, for him to participate at school-wide events such as assembly.</p>
Next steps in learning Tātāritanga o tēnei akoranga hei tirohia ki te mahi kei mua i te aroaro	<p>Use role play with the support of the teacher and Jackson's peers, asking a greater variety of questions and modelling ways of responding.</p> <p>Take photos and display these on Jackson's laptop, using the pictures to stimulate discussion with his peers.</p> <p>Increase Jackson's level of participation through a range of activities that enable him to "experience" the learning and to tap into his interests - for example, ask him to be one of the monitors for our class garden, working with two other classmates to water, weed, and aerate the soil of the vege garden.</p>

It is critical that you use narrative assessment as one of a number of assessment approaches, and that you as the classroom teacher are involved in it; without this, it may fail to realise its benefits. A 2010 review of narrative assessment practices for students with additional learning needs in New Zealand showed that it often became the responsibility of the teacher's aide to capture learning stories, rather than the classroom teacher. This impacted on what was identified as learning and compromised the potential usefulness of narrative assessment as an assessment process. In other examples, specialist teachers tended to use learning stories separately from classroom learning and teaching, rather than as a way of demonstrating progress and achievement within the classroom programme.

“ The report recommends that narrative assessment has potential to enhance and support student learning but the implementation requires further refining in a school context, with classroom-based teachers actively participating in the process as part of their pedagogical repertoire, rather than handing it back to the teacher-aide or visiting specialist to undertake. More specifically, narrative assessment is of most use when linked explicitly to the curriculum and with clear identification of both student achievement [and the] need for further learning (i.e., goals). ”

Bourke & Mentis, 2010, page 5

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Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers has further, detailed information on learning stories.



In pairs, look at the stories on the [Through Different Eyes](#) website. Think about the students in your class and some of their learning goals. Identify a story from the website that focuses on one or more similar goals. How has learning been observed? How does the assessment support others to recognise the student's strengths, skills, and aspirations? How is the student's learning made more visible?

As a group, discuss how learning stories might support the presence, participation, and achievement of students within your school. How would they help to make the learning of **all** students visible?



Tasks and artefacts

Along with everyday discussions and observations, you and your students will often use discrete tasks and artefacts to gain a picture of their progress and achievement. As well as providing important information about student learning, the tasks and artefacts usually involve interactions that provide further opportunities for conversations about teaching and learning.

Tasks and activities

Tasks and activities include routine class work, such as practical activities and independent or collaborative tasks, and regular assignments and presentations. They also cover more formal tests and assessments developed by the school or teacher (tasks and assessments from national tools are discussed in the next section).

Some students require task differentiations and adaptations in order to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to curriculum expectations. This might require you to *differentiate* the content and level of the task and expected responses (the 'what'), for example by:

- asking fewer questions
- providing a parallel task in which the concepts are the same but the content reflects a different curriculum level
- personalising a task to reflect particular students' interests or passions and their identities, languages, and cultures
- giving several assessment activities to choose from.

Andy is a year 6 student with a passion for reading non-fiction about animals and insects. He has no problems decoding text, but he has difficulty putting his thoughts into words during reading response activities. His teacher Ms Carmichael decides to try a new approach in which Andy can choose from multiple choice options. Once he is familiar with this new approach, Ms Carmichael ensures the questions require Andy to use inference to select the correct response.

Andy's parents have recently commented that Andy finds it difficult to talk about what he does at school each day. Ms Carmichael adopts the multiple choice approach for the question 'What did you do today?' within home-school communication for Andy. He is now able to select responses and give his parents a better insight into his days at school and how he feels about them.



In addition (or alternatively), you might choose to *adapt* the supports (the ‘how’), for example by:

- allowing additional time
- using flexible groupings (e.g., mixed-ability groups, self-selected groups, co-operative groups)
- providing technological support (e.g., iPad apps for recording)
- providing written or visual versions of spoken material (e.g., via sign language, braille, or captioned videos)
- using one or more artefacts (e.g., culturally significant objects such as shells or pictures of wharehau)
- allowing for multi-media as well as written responses (e.g., videos, Powerpoint presentations).

Daniel is a year 1 student with autism who uses one- or two-word phrases when he speaks. He shows no interest in engaging with reading or writing but loves Thomas the Tank Engine, iPads, and computers. His teacher Ms Hakia found the story *Thomas and Friends* on the Tarheel website. She used the read-aloud function on the website to tell the story to a small group of students when Daniel was on the floor nearby with the trains. The minute he heard the name “Thomas” he looked up, saw the picture of Thomas, and came over to join the group and listen to the whole story.

Over the following days, the sound of the title of the story has become a cue for Daniel to come to the computer to listen, and he has started speaking a favourite sentence out loud. Ms Hakia uses *Clicker* to create a simple five-page story about Thomas (she chooses Clicker because it can speak each word as it’s clicked and because of its forced-order sentence template). As he interacts with the story, Daniel quickly masters left-to-right directionality and the importance of the full stop. Using assistive technology to adapt the supports for a reading task is enabling Daniel to develop some key basic literacy understandings and Ms Hakia to recognise that this is happening.



For **further information** on differentiating and adapting tasks and activities, see the section [Differentiation and Adaptation](#) in this resource.



Artefacts

Students can also share and demonstrate their learning through artefacts and collections of evidence of their learning. These make student learning clearly visible to students, their teachers, and their whānau and provide opportunities for celebrating progress and planning future teaching and learning.

Ms Francis's year 6 class are each creating a recount of an experience of their choice. As a class they have brainstormed a range of engaging and informative ways in which they can share their recount - as a Powerpoint, written account, iMovie, speech, or poster presentation.

Sean requires support to express his ideas in a logical order and to write independently. After chatting with his teacher, he decides to base his recount on making a smoothie - a favourite activity at home with his family. In the planning stage, Sean selects pictures for a visual mind map to sequence his recount. Following a group teaching lesson, he selects a basic recount structure with simple sentence starters such as "First I put in ..." and "Next goes ...". To share his recount with the class, he asks a peer to help him put the photos in an iMovie with music.

Artefacts and collections of evidence may include:

- digital presentations of learning (e.g. Powerpoints, videos, photographic records)
- progressive drafts of students' work
- blogs, diaries, and journal entries
- individual, pair, or group reflections
- collaborative 'thinking books' (e.g., group problem-solving books in mathematics).

Often artefacts such as the above come together within a student portfolio.

The value of portfolios

A portfolio is a collection of samples of a student's learning - examples of student work, learning stories, video clips and photographs, whānau observations, and so on. Portfolios can demonstrate current learning and progress over time and may be presented in hard copy or electronic form. They can include a range of assessments and are developed collaboratively - students often share responsibility for creating their portfolios and are encouraged to think and talk about the learning evident in the work samples (Bourke & Mentis, 2013).

Portfolios can be a valuable source of information in meetings such as student-led conferences and IEP reviews, in which participants can use the information to discuss successes and to plan for future learning together.

A portfolio can travel with the student at key transition points - from early childhood to primary school, primary to intermediate and secondary settings, and out into the community. Portfolios can belong to the student and their whānau for on-going reference.

A good portfolio gives a personalised picture of a student's learning and progress in relation to learning areas and key competencies and the student's developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions. It helps a student's unfolding learning to be made visible in ways that are clear to all.

The use of technology in schools has seen the emergence of e-portfolios that can be accessed online (e.g., [SeeSaw](#), [Storypark](#), or [Google Blog](#)). The advantage of this type of resource is that others from outside of the school may add information about successes outside of the classroom.

Letitia has recently transitioned to school from kindergarten. As part of the transition, three months ago Letitia's teachers at kindergarten shared her Storypark portfolio with her upcoming classroom teacher and learning support coordinator (LSC). This enabled them to get an insight into Letitia's interests, strengths, and next learning steps, and it supported Letitia and her parents to describe learning experiences from home. The teacher and LSC continue to use Storypark to share learning stories on a weekly basis, tagging them with the relevant learning areas and key competencies. The stories are written to Letitia herself and include photographs, videos, what Letitia says to her peers and teachers, and identified next learning steps.



In [Example 7](#), a video of a student using NZSL signing during a mathematics task is placed on his e-portfolio page for sharing with his family.



[Information on e-portfolios](#) and [examples of portfolios](#) for students at Johnsonville School are available on TKI.



National tools

National assessment tools will inform your professional judgments about your students' progress and achievement at specific points in the school year. Remember that the information they provide is a snapshot of a moment in time, showing what a student knows and can do within the context of the assessment. So it is important that you see this information as part of a wider picture that includes what you understand from daily discussions and observations, regular tasks and activities, and artefacts.

The table below gives examples of national tools used in New Zealand schools:

Non-standardised tools	Standardised (norm-referenced) tools	Credentialing tools
Running records	Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement	NCEA assessment standards
Assessment Resource Bank tasks	PATs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achievement standards unit standards
GloSS, IKAN, Junior Assessment in Mathematics (JAM)	STAR	
Progress and Consistency Tool (PaCT)	e-asTTle	
Learning Progression Frameworks (reading, writing, and mathematics)	Science: Thinking with Evidence	

National tools are not appropriate for all students. The section 'Supporting Students Working at One Curriculum Level for an Extended Period' (currently in development) will provide information on frameworks that can support learning and assessment for students with significant learning needs, such as the Key Competencies Pathways and Central Region Special Schools Curriculum Exemplars (CRSSC).



The [Assessment Resources Maps](#) show the full range of national tools available for years 1-10.

Carl is a year 9 student with a passion for graphic novels and comics. His literacy skills and understandings enable him to work at level 3 of the New Zealand Curriculum. His teacher for English and social studies monitors his progress carefully so she can support his learning with appropriate text selections. During a unit on gold mining in New Zealand, Carl works with *In the End*, a level 3 text from the School Journey Story Library series, listening to the audio the first time he reads the book. Two weeks later, with the support of the learning support coordinator the teacher uses an excerpt from the same text to conduct a running record with Carl. She uses the information she gathers, along with what she has learnt from her discussions with Carl, to identify a number of texts that will be at an appropriate level and engaging for Carl in the next unit.

As a result of reviewing their teaching of mathematics, a primary school staff has identified that they need to develop their understanding of moderation processes to support consistency in their judgments. The staff decide to explore the illustrations within each of the eight aspects in the PaCT mathematics framework. They expect that unpacking the illustrations will help them to achieve reliable and valid overall teacher judgments in mathematics, schoolwide. They anticipate that their learning will be especially useful for understanding progress and achievement in mathematics for their students, including those with additional learning needs.

Differentiations and adaptations for national tools

National tools are designed to give information about students' progress and achievement, often in relation to national norms and expectations. Changing the tasks in them can therefore compromise the validity of the results. If a national tool is differentiated in some way for a student, the non-standard conditions must be recorded; otherwise there is a danger that subsequent teachers may believe the tasks were completed under standard conditions and have unreasonable expectations of the student. For this reason, differentiation for national tools is generally achieved by selecting a task at a different level, rather than by changing the specific content of the task (as in the previous section).

Differentiating the content, level, and/or expected responses (the 'what') could include:

- giving an assessment task based on a student's learning needs rather than year level (e.g., asking a year 8 student to sit PAT Reading Comprehension Test 2)
- agreeing with a student to work on just one NCEA achievement standard within an end-of-year examination (whereas most of their peers will attempt all three).

Students sit a mathematics PAT assessment at the start of each year in an Auckland intermediate. Miriam is a year 8 student who loves mathematics, particularly practical measurement activities – she applies her learning from these in technology classes. During the first four weeks of term, Miss Thorn observes Miriam's responses to tasks in small group situations and speaks with her previous year's class and technology teachers. From these discussions, she decides that Miriam is working within early level 2 in mathematics and so will be given PAT Mathematics Test 1 with the support of a reader. Miss Thorn will use the results to share with Miriam and her family her strengths and next steps and to plan teaching and learning opportunities to meet her specific learning needs.

When selecting a tool it is important to remember the purpose behind the tool and to consider the needs of each student, particularly those with additional learning needs. Some students will require adaptations to the tool's processes and supports in order to be able to demonstrate what they know and can do – for example, you may need to provide opportunities to experience particular types of tasks ahead of the assessment (e.g., multi-choice questions), and it may be important to decide who's best to undertake the assessment with the student and the best time of day for it.

Adapting the assessment process and supports (the 'how') of national tools could include:

- providing a reader and/or writer
- providing technological support
- using a signing reader or interpreter
- providing a quiet location for the assessment
- enlarging written text
- ensuring there is enough white space on the page (e.g., with only one question per page)
- providing written versions of spoken material (e.g., via braille or captioned videos)
- allowing for multi-media instead of written responses (e.g., videos, Powerpoint presentations).



In [Example 8](#), a teacher successfully adapts an NCEA level 3 task for a student with verbal dyspraxia by suggesting that the student give the required speech to two friends instead of the whole class.



For NCEA there are specific guidelines about adaptations. Detailed information on special assessment conditions is available on the websites of the [Ministry of Education](#) and [NZQA](#).

Sam is a year 11 student completing six subjects in NCEA Level 1. He has a visual impairment and reads and writes using Braille. Sam's first external exam is science, for which the following special assessment conditions have been put in place:

- an extra 30 minutes for the exam (given he is sitting all three papers)
- a separate room for the exam
- an extra 10-minute rest break
- specialised technology including BrailleNote linked to a monitor
- two RTVs (Resource Teachers: Vision) to be present during the assessment, the first as a reader/writer and the second as an invigilator to oversee Sam's responses on the monitor
- the papers to be available in both Braille (for Sam) and the standard NZQA print version (for the reader/writer).





In pairs, identify 1-2 rows of the table below that are particularly relevant to your context and, in relation to them, identify examples of how you make the learning of **all** your students visible and how you might better do so.

Moving from ...	Towards ...
Viewing assessment as separate from teaching and learning	Viewing assessment as integral to improving student learning and teacher pedagogy
Teachers leading the learning	Students actively taking responsibility for their learning in partnership with their teachers
Students unable to demonstrate what they know and can do because individual student needs are not considered within assessment activities	Students able to demonstrate what they know and can do because of differentiations and adaptations to assessment activities
Assessment practices focusing on what students cannot do	Assessment practices focusing on what students can do and what they should do next
Teachers relying on a small routine set of assessment approaches	Teachers using a broad range of assessment approaches flexibly and effectively
Students unaware of what learning looks like	Students aware of when learning is taking place and confident in sharing this with others
Assessment planning being the sole responsibility of the teacher	Assessment planning by the teacher, the student, their whānau, and specialist support
Health and care needs being the sole focus for some students with additional learning needs	Learning outcomes being a key consideration for all students with additional learning needs
Feedback being about <i>what</i> students know	Feedback supporting metacognition by helping students to understand ' <i>how they know</i> '
Little feedback for students that impacts on their learning	Students receiving and giving feedback that motivates and supports ongoing learning
Students having little or no say in assessing their learning	Self- and peer assessment being integral to classroom teaching and learning



Glossary

This glossary defines key terminology used in the *Inclusive Practice and School Curriculum* resources. While some of these terms will be familiar to many readers, they have been included here with definitions appropriate to an inclusive education context.

Achievement: a measure of student learning over time; this may be in relation to individualised learning goals or to expectations for year levels in the New Zealand Curriculum, national standards, or NCEA.

Adaptations: changes to the school and classroom environment, teaching and learning materials, and associated teaching strategies that support students to access and respond to the school and classroom curriculum.

Additional support register: a register developed by each school that identifies students requiring additional support and monitors their support and progress; also known as a special needs register.

Assessment: the process of gathering information from multiple sources to develop an understanding of what students know, understand, and can do as a result of their educational experiences. Assessment also informs ongoing teaching.

Classroom culture: the climate that teachers, other staff, and students create as they work together; ideally one that promotes caring and respect.

Collaboration: a process in which people work together to achieve shared goals by building relationships and trust. The process typically involves listening, working creatively together, and co-constructing knowledge.

Curriculum overlapping: a process of differentiation in which a student participates in similar activities to the rest of the class, but the level of complexity and number of learning outcomes are significantly adjusted in keeping with the student's learning strengths and needs. The outcomes may be from a different area of the curriculum from that the rest of the class are working in.

Differentiations: changes to the content of the school and classroom curriculum and expected responses to it that support students to experience success.

Dissonance: the discomfort that occurs when we recognise our existing model of professional practice, in this case, teaching practice, as problematic. Dissonance can lead us to reinterpret our personal beliefs and take on new practices.

Diversity: the range of unique characteristics within any group, particularly students, including their strengths and skills, languages, cultural backgrounds, and abilities or disabilities.

Formative assessment: assessment activities that provide information that is used to adapt subsequent teaching to meet the needs of students.

IEP: see individual education plan.

Inclusive education: education that involves the full participation and achievement of all learners alongside their peers.

Inclusive practice: teaching practice in which barriers to learning are identified and removed so that groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion, or underachievement are present, participating, learning, and achieving.

Inclusive schools: schools that foster the identity, language, and culture of all students to create a sense of belonging in an environment that supports progress and achievement for all.

Individual education plan (IEP): a plan that brings together knowledge about the needs, aspirations, personality, and cultural background of a student with special education needs, that outlines priority learning goals for the student, and that shows how the school programme will be adapted to support the student to meet these goals.

Key competencies: five capabilities for living and lifelong learning outlined in *The New Zealand Curriculum*; thinking, using language symbols and texts, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing.

Learning areas: eight areas identified in *The New Zealand Curriculum* as important for a broad, general education: English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology.

Learning context: the physical location in which a student is working and the learning experiences they have within it.

Learning story: a form of narrative assessment that provides observations, interpretations, and analysis of learning events within the framework of a story. Learning stories frequently include possible pathways or next learning steps and capture the perspectives of families and the students themselves; they may include photographs, videos, and artefacts. Strings of learning stories from diverse voices (including family) can be used to gather, share, and build assessment data to show progress within the New Zealand Curriculum.

Learning support coordinator (LSC): a resource person in a school who leads and coordinates support for students with additional learning needs. This role can also be called special education needs coordinator (SENCO); in secondary schools it is often called head of learning support.

Modelling book: a book or sheet of paper that captures the interactions and student learning in group discussions, particularly in mathematics. Students and the teacher collectively record the mathematical thinking that is occurring using pictures, diagrams, equations, number lines, tables, and so on. Teachers can also record anecdotal notes to support planning for future learning and to capture student progress over time.

Multilevel curriculum: a process of differentiation in which a student experiences either the same content and activities as the rest of the class or different but related content and activities; in both cases the level of complexity and number of learning outcomes are adjusted in keeping with the student's learning strengths and needs.

Narrative assessment: a form of assessment that records interactions between a student, their learning environments, their peers, and their learning activities. Narrative assessment often takes the form of a learning story and can be used with any student.

New Zealand Sign Language: a complete visual-gestural language unique to New Zealand and with its own grammar, vocabulary, and syntax; one of the three official languages used in New Zealand.

Outreach service teacher: a teacher who provides specialist itinerant teaching for students on the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) and enrolled in their local school.

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS): a funding scheme that provides support for a very small number of students, with the highest level of need for special education, to help them join in and learn alongside other children at school.

Peer assessment: the assessment by students of one another's work with reference to specific, negotiated criteria and using a range of strategies.

Portfolio: samples of student learning collated by the student, their teacher, and their family and used to demonstrate current learning and progress over time. Portfolios can be in physical or electronic formats and can be used in student-led conferences and to support the IEP process.

Prior knowledge: pre-existing knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes that influence new learning and how a student will respond to new learning.

Progress: valued learning, across settings and over time.

Self-assessment: a process by which students review their progress and achievement, usually in relation to an exemplar, success criteria, or other criteria.

SENCO: see Learning support coordinator

Sensory processing needs: some students' needs for more or less sensory input in order to experience or avoid particular sensory stimulations – for example, the need to avoid loud noise, or to move about or perform a repetitive action. Recognising and allowing for different sensory needs helps students to manage themselves in their learning environment.

Speaking frame: a framework that provides a sentence starter and linked phrases as a model for students who may not have sufficient oral language or knowledge of standard sentence structures to be able to express themselves independently.

Specialist services: people and agencies that form part of a student's network of support and who are trained in special areas of education or therapy; this includes Special Education staff from the Ministry of Education (e.g., speech language therapists, psychologists, and special education advisors).

Specialist teachers: teachers who usually have additional training to support schools and students with special education needs. Some specialist teachers – teachers from Outreach Teacher Services, Resource Teachers of Vision, and Resource Teachers of the Deaf – are included in the additional support that is part of a school's 0.1 or 0.2 staffing allowance for a student supported through ORS.

Student agency: the sense within a student that they are capable of having an impact on their own learning and can act to accomplish their goals.

Student voice: the expression of students' thoughts, feelings, and opinions in ways that make these accessible to others. Student voice allows for students to influence their learning by describing the supports and processes that assist them to progress and achieve.

Students with additional support needs: in Ministry of Education resources, students with special education needs are referred to as 'students with additional needs', 'students with additional support needs', 'students with disabilities', and 'students with diverse needs'; this avoids the labelling of students and views of 'special education' as separate from 'education'.

Talk stems: similar to speaking frames, these are sentence starters that support students to participate in discussion and ask questions.

Teaching as inquiry: the process that underpins effective pedagogy as teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students in an ongoing cyclical process over time.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): an educational framework that guides the development of flexible learning environments and curricula that meet individual learning differences and the needs of all students. UDL is underpinned by the principles of providing multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement.

Visual representation: a type of pictorial strategy in the form of a poster, timetable, list of steps in a task, or prompts for activities that remind students what is to be done to help them stay on track. The pictorial format supports students with emergent literacy skills and students who have a preference for visual information over auditory.



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