



Making Learning Visible

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

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.² 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.

² 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.



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.

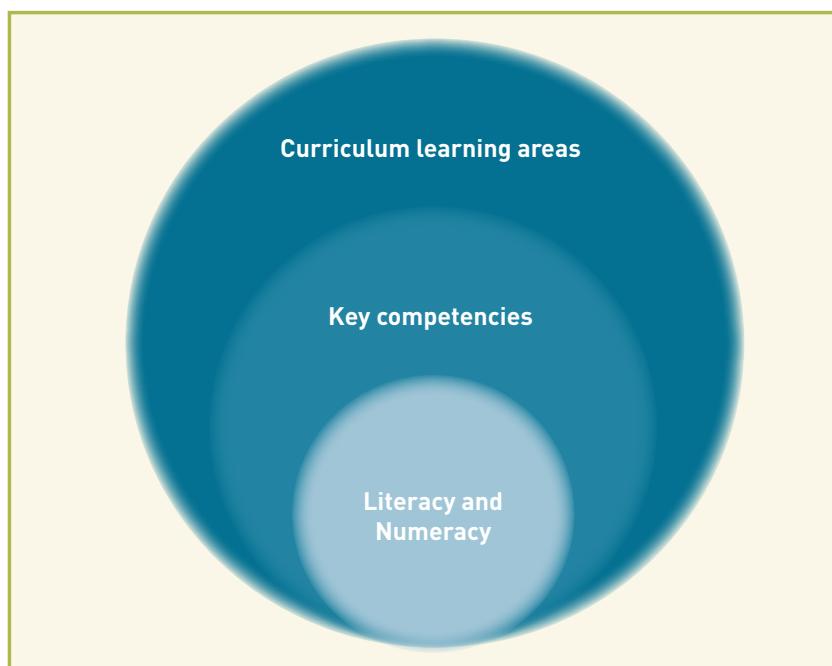
Foundations for learning

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.³ 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.⁴

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



³ 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.

⁴ 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.

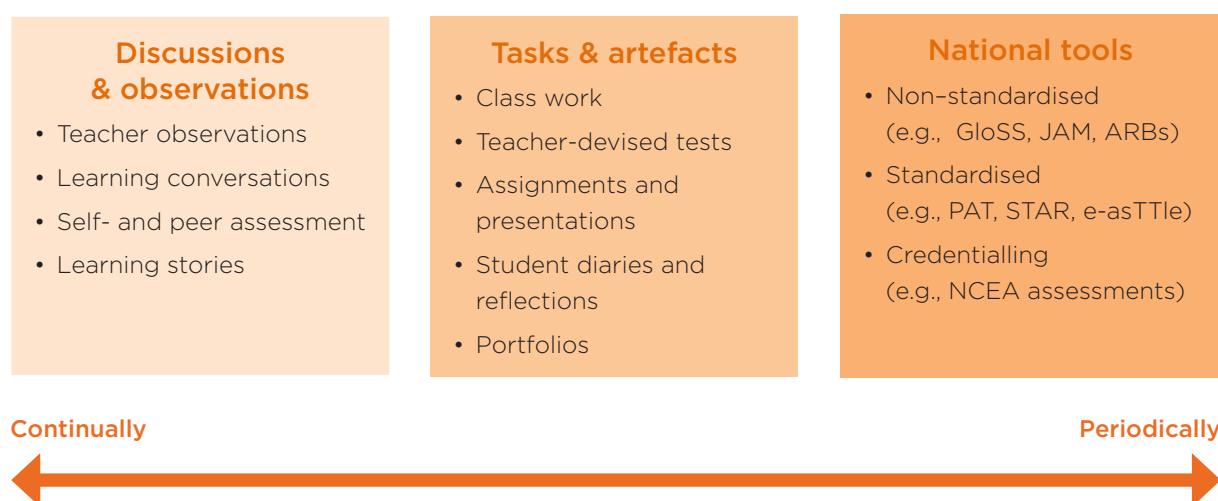
Sometimes the purpose will be diagnostic, as in the example of assessment immediately below, which helps the teacher and students identify their next teaching and learning steps. When such assessment information is shared with whānau, it supports them to understand their children's progress and achievement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



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	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. 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.
Strategies to help the student Ngā rautaki kia haere whakamua te akoranga	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking turns • looking at the speaker • waiting and responding to questions. This strategy used by adults and peers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of visual cues • modelled interactions • consistent verbal cues • turn taking in pairs.
Narrative Ā-paki	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.
Commentary on these observations He kōrero mō te āhuatanga o tēnei mahi	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>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 Tātaritanga o tēnei akoranga hei tirohia ki te mahi kei mua i te aroaro	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>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 & Mantis, 2010, page 5



[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 wharenui)
- 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 became 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