



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

A RESOURCE TO SUPPORT
THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM
EXEMPLARS FOR LEARNERS
WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

narrative assessment

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



Assessment for Learners with Special Education Needs

The Ministry of Education is committed to promoting and supporting effective teaching and learning for all students. This resolve is embodied in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007), which brings together key competencies, learning areas, assessment, and effective pedagogy for all students in all learning contexts.

The project Assessment for Learners with Special Education Needs focuses on supporting students who are expected to work long term within level 1 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Effective teaching and learning relies on collecting, analysing, and using robust, valid, and reliable assessment information. Teachers use a range of assessment tools and approaches, including narrative assessment, to plan effective, individualised teaching and learning programmes for their students. Narrative assessment provides a rich picture of students' skills, strengths, and learning support needs. It uses learning stories to capture progress in students' learning, and records the often subtle interactions between the student, their learning environments, their peers, their learning support team, and their learning activities. The use of this information to engage with parents and whānau, allows those who know the child best to collaborate in planning next steps learning as part of the child's Individual Education Programme and plan. In this way, narrative assessment provides clear and specific reporting about the individual student's learning, support needs, and progress in relation to the National Standards.

The project includes development of narrative assessment exemplars, guidance for those involved, and resources for use by specialist, resource, and classroom teachers and by providers of specialist education services.

Together *Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers* and *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs* will support teachers to identify, broaden, and deepen understandings of what students can do and the progress that they make. These resources will help teachers to focus on what their students' learning looks like when opportunities are maximised and possible learning pathways within the New Zealand Curriculum are identified.

In *Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers*, the format of the sample learning stories, or of extracts from them, has been simplified and edited for publication.

The Ministry of Education would like to thank the children, young people, parents, and teaching teams who generously gave permission for their photographs, views, and experiences to be included in this guide.

All weblinks contained within this book were correct at time of publication. The Ministry of Education takes no responsibility for subsequent alterations to or deletions from websites.

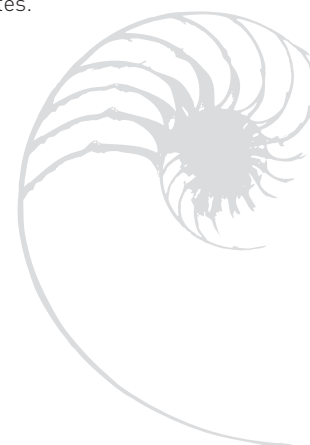
Published 2009 for the Ministry of Education by
Learning Media Limited, Box 3293, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
www.learningmedia.co.nz

All text and photographs copyright © Crown 2009.
All rights reserved. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

Dewey number 371.26
ISBN 978 0 7903 3383 0
Item number 33383

Visit www.throughdifferenteyes.org.nz to access:

- *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs*
- an online version of *Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers*
- an appendix of useful resources to support teachers wanting to develop and use learning stories.



A RESOURCE TO SUPPORT
THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM
EXEMPLARS FOR LEARNERS
WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

narrative assessment

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti
arahia ō tātou māhi

Let the uniqueness of the
child guide our work

Ministry of Education
Learning Media
Wellington



Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Education thanks everybody who contributed to the development of this guide and to the exemplar project in general.

In particular, the Ministry would like to thank the project team at Education Plus, University of Canterbury: Missy Morton (Project Co-ordinator), Keryn Davis, Sue Molloy, Geoff Moore, Ross Palmer, and Jocelyn Wright.

The Ministry also thanks:

- the schools, the teachers, the students, and their families and whānau who graciously allowed their learning to be shared
- the Facilitators and Curriculum Advisors from Education Plus, University of Canterbury: Chris Archer, Viv Belcher, Jude Callaghan, Ainslee Coates, Lois Hawthorne, Sue James, Maureen Keen, Anna McLeish, Helen Moore, and Sally Unwin, plus all those who helped with moderation
- the teacher-writers who documented their students' learning: Julie Baker, Marion Bayley, Jane Chartres, Christine Coomber, Mary Dalzell, Graeme Eastwood, Meegan Fraser, Megan Gare, Annie Guerin, Denise Jackson, Maureen Keen, Keryn King, Joan Letufuga, Anne-Marie McLroy, Meeling McMillan, Sara Moppett, Jenny Randall, Yvonne Smith, Loriann Wakefield, Ali Ward, Kirsty Woods, Libby Wycherley, and Cathie Zelas
- the Project Advisory Team: Bridget Carter (also a parent-writer), Llyween Couper, Jude Macarthur, and Trish McMenamin
- the colleagues from Christchurch and beyond who helped the project team with their thoughtful and critical comments on the exemplars and the guide itself.

.....
In memory of Barbara Stuart
.....



Table of contents

4	<i>Nathan uses language in the classroom</i>
5	Looking at a learning story
6	<i>Part 1: Introduction to the exemplars and the guide</i>
6	What is a narrative assessment exemplar?
7	What is included in this guide?
7	What can we learn from using learning stories?
8	We're seeing and looking with different eyes
8	Seeing the student
9	Seeing the student through the student's eyes
9	Seeing the family and whānau
10	Seeing the learning
10	Seeing assessment
11	Seeing myself
12	Seeing our classroom
13	Seeing the impact of learning stories on students' families and whānau
13	Ways of seeing and interpreting
15	<i>Part 2: How to read the narrative assessment exemplars</i>
18	The wheel
20	What should I look for?
20	The description of the student's background
20	Ways in which the exemplars highlight learning
21	How to consider the student's learning over time
22	Connections between teacher practice and effective pedagogy
22	Reflective questions or comments
24	<i>Part 3: Using narrative assessment</i>
24	What learning should I take notice of?
25	Understanding and fostering the key competencies
28	Using narrative to assess learning
28	Learning stories as an approach to narrative assessment
28	How do I write a learning story?
32	Who can be involved in narrative assessment?
32	How can I analyse learning over time when using narrative assessments?
32	Learning areas
32	Linking strings of learning stories
33	How will I manage this approach in my setting?
34	<i>Part 4: The theoretical background</i>
34	Key documents
34	Perspectives on curriculum for students with special education needs
36	How have other educators and researchers described narrative assessment?
36	Assessment and learning
37	Features of narrative assessment
38	How have other educators and researchers described learning stories?
38	Learning stories as one approach to narrative assessment
38	Validity and consequences
40	<i>References</i>

Sample learning story: Nathan uses language in the classroom

Learning stories are the main part of *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs*. The project team hope that reading learning stories, such as the example below, in conjunction with *Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers*, will inspire teachers to write their own rich learning stories about their students.

Nathan uses language in the classroom

Student Nathan

Date June 2008

Observer Mary

Intended Learning

- Nathan will begin to use language in the classroom and respond to people with fewer prompts.

For the past few weeks Nathan has been saying "Hi" in response to greetings. Until recently, when people said "Bye", Nathan would give eye contact and a wave with his hand. Several days ago when prompted, Nathan said "Bye" as well as gave a wave.

During maths maintenance, I ask children to choose what number we should count from and what number we should count up to. A child chose to start counting from 20. I then asked, "What number should we count up to today?" Nathan called out the word "hund."

I asked Nathan if he would like us to count to 100. He responded "yes" clearly and without further prompting. The next day, while reading through the months of the year, Nathan said "April" and then pointed to the month April on the wall chart.

Yesterday, Nathan was out in the cloak bay trying to put his reading folder away. When he had been gone for a while, the teacher aide went to see what was keeping him. The folder had caught. Nathan was standing beside his bag saying, "Help, help."



Analysis – What learning is happening here?

Key competencies

It's fantastic to see Nathan clearly having a go at using his voice in the classroom.

These are just some examples of Nathan managing himself as a learner, participating and contributing, and using language by responding to questions from his teacher and asking for help from his teacher aide.

Learning area

Level 1 English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: purposes and audiences

Nathan is continuing to develop his awareness of audience as he communicates socially and participates in familiar and regular classroom routines.

Where to next?

Nathan's next step is to continue to verbalise responses whenever appropriate. As Nathan builds a bank of words that he readily uses, encourage him to begin stringing them together in phrases and sentences. For example, "Bye Mum" instead of just "Bye", or "Can you help me?" He will need to be given the language models to use.

Looking at a learning story

Each narrative assessment exemplar is made up of the following sections, which are discussed in more detail in Part 2 of this guide. A short introductory section **backgrounds** the student and his or her learning setting.

Student background

Name	Nathan	Nathan lives in a small rural community, and has been at school for almost a year. He currently attends school three half days and two full days. From term 3 2008, Nathan will attend school full time.
Age	5	
Year	1	Nathan is demonstrating a passion for literacy. He loves being read to and spends a lot of time browsing through books. He spells many words with his magnetic letters.
School	Primary	

There has been significant growth in Nathan's literacy capabilities, especially understanding text, sharing excitement with text, and communicating with text.

Nathan has autism and was essentially non-verbal, except for using "ah ha", with different intonations, to communicate intent. He communicates using Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Makaton (sign language). The school education team is currently assessing communication devices to enable Nathan to communicate with others in and out of the classroom.

A string of **one or more learning stories** highlights the student's learning in the key competency or competencies and the learning area(s). Each learning story includes a section with **next step suggestions** for future teaching and learning.

The story (opposite) is the third from a string about Nathan the speaker.

A concluding section uses a frame for showing development over time and connects teacher practice to effective pedagogy in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Effective pedagogy

What does this tell us about teaching and learning in this setting?

Nathan feels accepted and secure in his class and with his peers. His teacher (Mary) and teacher aide (Debbie) make sure he is included and that his learning needs are catered for in a supportive learning environment. The teacher and class members support each other's learning with familiar and consistent routines along with visual and verbal prompts.

Mary and Debbie encourage Nathan to take part in all class activities. Nathan is able to integrate new learning into what he already understands and makes connections across all learning areas. This is helped by the integrated nature of his classroom programme.

Many opportunities are given for Nathan to engage with, and enhance the relevance of, his new learning. The activities described in the learning stories show a variety of learning opportunities, including the regular and familiar.

The exemplars generally conclude with **reflective questions or comments** for the teacher or reader, for example:

"In what other ways do you encourage the opportunity for communication amongst your students?"

Part 1 Introduction to the exemplars and the guide

Narrative Assessment: A Guide for Teachers and the accompanying collection, *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs*, are designed to help those involved in learning and teaching to notice, recognise, respond to, and revisit student learning in ways that are meaningful for students, their families, whānau, and educators (Carr, Jones, and Lee, 2005; Cowie, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2005).

Teachers are sometimes puzzled about how to include students with special education needs in their planning, teaching, and assessment. This guide and the associated exemplars aim to support all teachers to:

- recognise these students as active learners, who may learn different things or learn in different ways to other students but who are all learners;
- see how *The New Zealand Curriculum* is relevant to and for this group of learners;
- try narrative assessment as a form of ipsative¹ assessment.

This guide and the exemplars have been developed within a professional learning project involving teachers, parents, other educators, and professional development advisers. Both are designed to help teachers to:

- assess student learning;
- use this assessment when considering possible next steps for student learning and reflecting on their teaching.

What is a narrative assessment exemplar?

A narrative assessment exemplar is an authentic account of student learning in relation to the key competencies, the learning areas, and effective pedagogy in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

The narrative assessment exemplars highlight what features teachers need to watch for, collect information about, and act on to promote learning. *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs* helps to answer the questions:

- What might learning look like for students working predominantly within level 1 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*?
- How might this learning be noticed, recognised, and responded to?
- What features of the student's environment support this learning?

¹ Ipsative assessment refers to the ways in which teachers notice the progress of an individual student rather than comparing his or her achievement to that of others. The point of comparison is the individual's previous performance. See, for example, Te Kete Ipurangi, Assessment 2: Gathering Information, at www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/two/index_e.php

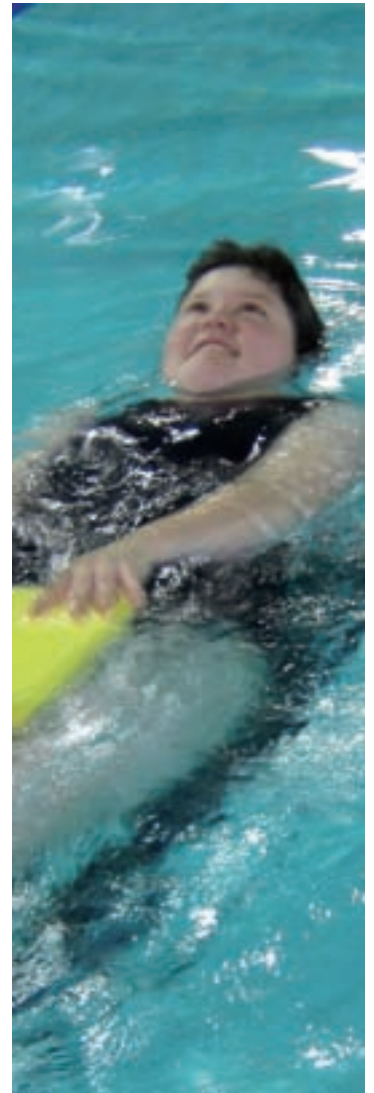
What is included in this guide?

This guide presents the central ideas behind the use of narrative assessment within a classroom context and provides examples of how the teachers, students, and parents or whānau involved in the project have worked with narrative to support assessment for learning.

The guide and the associated exemplars offer an approach to narrative assessment adapted from the work of Margaret Carr (1998a and 1998b) on learning stories.²

The guide to narrative assessment describes how the exemplars are structured and identifies what teachers should look for in them. It also outlines how to:

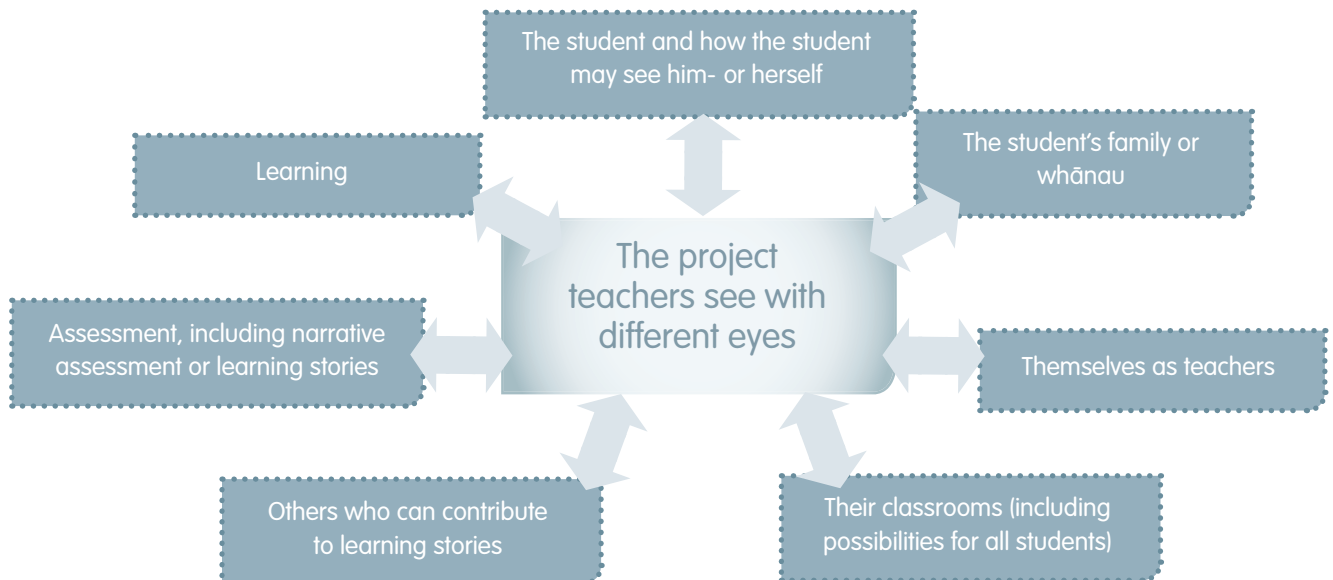
- use learning stories in classroom settings;
- begin to write learning stories;
- analyse learning stories to illustrate learning over time.



What can we learn from using learning stories?

The exemplar learning stories have all been written by teachers, parents, and other educators in the project. They discovered that developing learning stories about and for their students changed their thinking and their practices. The project team observed that the process of writing learning stories allowed the teachers to document achievement in learning areas in *The New Zealand Curriculum* not so easily represented or highlighted in more traditional assessment approaches.

Part 1 now offers a brief overview of how the project teachers came to “see things with different eyes”. The diagram below shows some of the things that they began to see afresh.



² Carr’s learning stories are discussed in Part 2 of this guide.

In the headings and quoted text below, “we” expresses the teachers’ shared observations and discoveries.

We’re seeing and looking with different eyes

The teacher quoted below indicates how writing learning stories has affected her thinking. She talks about how this kind of assessment has made a difference for her student, the student’s family, and her colleagues.

Now I can capture what the child can do on a particular day, not what others have dreamed up for the student ... [I can capture] what and how he will learn best. In the past, we were getting the student to do things in classroom contexts in ways that suited us. Now we can see the student do things in authentic contexts. The key competencies have assisted us to see the student’s achievement. In this project, I have been able to see things with different eyes, through the support, for example, of the maths adviser.



Seeing the student

The teachers describe how they (and others) have come to see their students as more competent learners than they had previously appreciated. In some instances, the students have begun to exceed their teachers’ expectations.

Have our students always had these competencies – perhaps we simply hadn’t noticed before?

One possibility is that working with learning stories led the teachers to look at the students in new ways (as one teacher put it: “Are they doing it because we are watching them harder?”) and to notice different behaviours.

Could it be that what we called “delayed response time” was processing or thinking time?

Another possibility is that the teachers reframed and reinterpreted what their students were doing, particularly when using the key competencies as a lens through which to view student behaviours. The teachers concur that this perspective enabled them to give value to certain behaviours that could now be recognised as demonstrating achievement within the context of a learning area.

A third possibility is that, by using learning stories to reflect on student learning and teacher learning, the teachers began to facilitate different learning opportunities and provide students with support for new learning.

In our discussions about the student background section included in each exemplar, we became more acutely aware that the ways we presented students might impact on the way other people see the students. We came to a deeper appreciation of the message in the whakatauki “Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia ō tātou māhi/Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.”

Seeing the student through the student’s eyes

Students are part of the core audience for learning stories, which are written about, and sometimes addressed to, the student. The teachers in the project observed how learning stories enabled students to revisit their learning. For example, one teacher describes a student who particularly loves photographs and who carries around photographs of herself showing the learning she is proud of. The teachers note the immense pleasure that students get from sharing and reflecting on their learning:

Learning stories have been well received by our school community, and our students really enjoy hearing stories about themselves. They celebrate the positive – some of our students have heard mostly negative feedback [about their learning] – and to hear such positive stories boosts their self-esteem.

Seeing the family and whānau

The teachers describe the positive impact of narrative assessment on families and whānau, as in this example of a parent’s response:

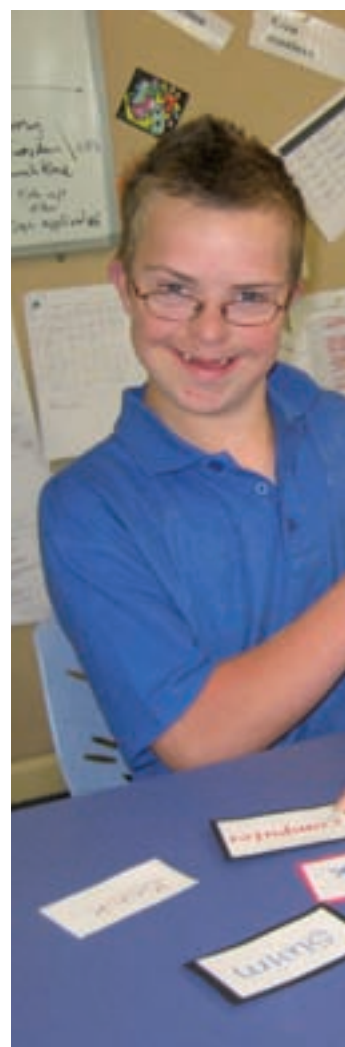
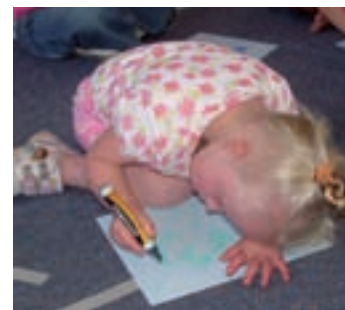
You sort of want to skite about what he’s done. I never thought I’d say that about my son – my other two, yes, but not him.

Learning stories give parents insight into what is going on at school. Parents value the visual aspects of the stories and frequently share them with other family and whānau members. Some teachers send a portfolio of learning stories home each term. One teacher describes how she set up a “learning wall” in her classroom so that stories about learning in the class could be displayed for all to see.

Learning stories can also inform planning with parents. Many teachers indicate positive parent reactions to stories incorporating suggestions from home about learning, the student’s preferences, and possible strategies. Such suggestions can influence the direction of learning opportunities at school and at home. For example, in the exemplar ‘Matthew looking to learn – learning to look’, Matthew’s mother suggested that soccer was a real interest. This interest was utilised at school as a way of encouraging Matthew to look down when running. This helped the teacher meet her goal of encouraging Matthew to look down in general for his greater safety.

Parents can also be writers of learning stories. Bridget, a parent-writer, used her own background as a playcentre parent to develop learning stories for her two school-aged sons. Her sons’ teachers are now interested in learning stories as an approach to assessment in their classrooms, and stories written by one of these teachers are included in the exemplars. Extracts from a conversation between Bridget and the teacher can be found on the inside back cover of this guide.

Extensive research highlights the positive impact such home–school partnerships have on outcomes for learners (Ministry of Education, 2003a; 2003b; 2003c).





Seeing the learning

Participating in the project allowed the teachers to look closely at the key competencies in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Their professional learning gave them the language and a framework to consider what these capabilities would look like in their classrooms.

Now [that] we're focusing on the key competencies in these learning stories, it opens up the world for these kids.

Learning stories work well because, in the reflective process, we are designing curriculum that meets the needs of the individual rather than focusing on little bits of skills that link to curriculum.

This gives us a different set of eyes – what learning happened? And what else happened?

With the support of curriculum advisers, the teachers began to see more evidence of their students achieving within level 1 of the learning areas. The teachers note that, when they first started writing up a learning story, they were able to observe evidence of all of the competencies within the context of a particular learning area. It reminded them of what they really valued in teaching and learning. It gave them permission to recognise and celebrate the learning.

For the purposes of developing exemplars, the project team asked the teachers to focus on one or two clearly identifiable competencies and learning areas in each string of stories rather than seeking to make

every possible link. The project team also asked the teachers, given what they knew about their students, to consider what was pertinent at the time each learning story was recorded.

With guidance from the curriculum advisers, and in subsequent discussions with their fellow participants, the teachers analysed more deeply the competency (or competencies) they had focused on, which in turn helped them to see additional connections.

Meeting with other teachers in the cluster meetings gave us a chance to really dig into the learning that we were seeing. We had great discussions about the learning processes.

The New Zealand Curriculum is relevant to all students in all schools. Students in this project were predominantly working within curriculum level 1. However, while a student's learning in a particular learning area may fall within level 1, in another area their learning could be identified as at level 2 or beyond.

Seeing assessment

The teachers found learning stories to be holistic and authentic ways of reporting student learning. Storying enabled teachers and other writers to offer multiple perspectives on the learning.

The concept of learning stories tested some participants' thinking about assessment more generally. Learning stories made them stop and rethink the purposes of assessment and its consequences for learning and teaching in their settings.

Assessment doesn't have to be a tick on paper in a box.

Some of the teachers also began to report assessment differently to wider audiences. One teacher got a very positive response when she sent a portfolio of narrative assessments to a board of trustees' meeting to introduce this form of assessment and reporting.

The teachers were excited and invigorated by the process of collecting together a group of stories, then looking back and across stories documented over time to see other learning that may not have been noticed or recognised originally.

[When looking back] You can see where [we] have come from.

It became increasingly apparent that progress is often evident with the benefit of hindsight. This recognition challenges the belief that learning progressions should be predictive and predictable. Narrative assessment reminds all of us of the complexity of teaching and learning; it also provides us with the means of better describing some of this complexity.

For some participants in the project, understandings about feedback (and feedforward) are changing. Feedback is no longer simply a gift from teacher to student (Askew and Lodge, 2000). Both teacher and student are learning about each other and about themselves in each interaction. As the teacher quoted below points out, the process of using learning stories invites teachers to be reflexive:

In the process of setting learning goals for the student, you necessarily set learning goals for yourself.

Seeing myself

Teachers in this project appreciate learning stories as a way of assessing that allows them to show learners as they see them. In the past, the ways they assessed did not portray their students with special education needs as capable and competent. Learning stories allow the teachers to report in ways more congruent with their beliefs and philosophies about teaching, learning, and assessment.

Learning stories allow you to teach and assess honestly. As a teacher, through learning stories, I am able to express better what happened.

Assessment tools can both enable and constrain what can be noticed and reported. Teachers appreciate narrative assessment as an approach that supports noticing student learning in more personalised and holistic ways. One teacher comments on how her exemplar learning stories evolved:

The difference between the first and later drafts is that they are now more personal.





The more personalised and holistic qualities of narrative assessment show learning in a way that is highly accessible to students and their families and whānau.

The project provided an opportunity for teachers and advisers to act as a community of practitioners and co-construct professional knowledge, while at the same time developing new understandings about their own learning. The teachers in the project shared their emerging work in an atmosphere conducive to learning that fostered positive, descriptive feedback for learning (Watkins, 2000). An approach to professional learning based on the idea of a community of learners (Rogoff et al., 2001) models the learning and assessment paradigms that also underlie narrative assessment. The focus on constructing knowledge through co-participation in professional learning encourages participants “to view their contribution collaboratively rather than through an expert lens” (Anning, Cullen, and Flear, 2004, page 79).

Sadler (2002, page 249) talks about “vital dispositions for teaching”. The project provided an opportunity for all of the participants (teachers, advisers, and project team members) to explore and experience many of the dispositions Sadler describes.³

These dispositions encompass the competencies required to work both independently and interdependently. Sadler’s dispositions share many of the characteristics of the key competencies, which *The New Zealand Curriculum* identifies as essential capabilities for “lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved” (page 4).

The teachers told the project team that beginning to document learning stories changed them personally, both as assessors and as teachers of their students. They describe feeling more confident in their professional judgments as they sought comment and critique from their peers. The process of narrating learning helped the teachers to establish clearer connections between a student’s learning and their role in that learning and made visible what was working well and what they might need to change.

Seeing our classroom

At cluster meetings, participants discussed who might contribute to learning stories and considered the roles and responsibilities of adults in classrooms and in the wider learning communities that are associated with schools. Some participants considered that anyone could contribute to writing learning stories but felt that teachers had responsibility for working with others to think through the analysis. Others reported parents taking the lead or teacher aides providing some of the more insightful analyses.

A wave of enthusiasm is also taking over with the ancillary staff. They are the photographers and the assistants.

Other teachers have been coming on board with learning stories!

Also considered were the implications of a sociocultural view of assessment in which different members of a community could be responsible for crafting a learning story. Working together to write, analyse, or study learning stories is a powerful form of professional learning.

I’m seeing teachers feel empowered and seeing a difference for individual children.

³ Sadler’s dimensions are: persistence; recovery from setbacks and failures; imagination and improvisation; experimentation and lateral thinking; confidence in tackling the unknown; self-control; infectious enthusiasm for learning; dedication to learning for mastery; joy in emerging capability; goal-directedness; palpable curiosity; and conviviality.

Some project participants are enthusiastic about learning stories as an assessment approach for all students. A teacher in a regular primary classroom, with three students with special education needs, has been writing learning stories for five years. She uses learning stories with all the children in her classroom. Another teacher (secondary) has been talking with her colleagues in other classes about learning stories as a useful approach for reporting on students identified as gifted and talented.

Seeing the impact of learning stories on students' families and whānau

While preparing the exemplars, the project team talked with some of the parents and whānau of students whose learning features in the learning stories. The parents said they valued learning stories because of the focus on the child, the stories' ability to illustrate the nature of learning for their child, and the ways in which possibilities for learning were made clear. These parents felt that discussing the learning with teachers promoted greater awareness for the teachers of what they needed to learn in order to facilitate the child's learning. Parents also valued the ways in which teachers talked about their own learning.

Some parents also noted that learning stories made a difference to the nature of the goals and objectives developed through the Individual Education Programme (IEP) process (Ministry of Education, 2007b). In particular, they felt that learning stories capture a sense of progress in learning, and of the impacts of that learning on important life outcomes, that is sometimes missing from IEPs.

An earlier study (Lepper, Williamson, and Cullen, 2003) on the use of learning stories in the IEP process suggests that parents feel more comfortable with this approach to assessment and, as a result, more empowered to contribute to the IEP process. Participants in this study identified various ways in which learning stories contributed to stronger relationships between parents and others contributing to the IEP process.

Ways of seeing and interpreting

Clearly, assessment methods as much as the results of assessment can lead to painting different kinds of pictures about students and teachers.

When any of us decides to write a learning story, we each do so with a particular way of understanding a student – a particular way of seeing and interpreting a student. When we share this narrative with other people, including the student, we are sharing our way of interpreting the student and our sense of who the student is. The participants in any conversation about a narrative are co-constructing and reconstructing the student's identity as a learner. Some versions, some viewpoints, are likely to be stronger, more persuasive, perhaps more overpowering than others. In our conversations about narratives, we can be excited, affirmed, or even challenged in our sense of who a student is.

Our writing of narrative assessments is influenced by how we understand ourselves or how we see and interpret ourselves and our actions. The way we construct our own identity shapes, and is shaped by, the identities we construct for our students as well as the other people in our classroom and school communities. If we cannot see our students' learning, how can we see our teaching and how can we see ourselves as teachers?

Dunn (2004) argues that learning stories "can become a vehicle for inclusion, as the teacher increasingly sees the learner, not the disability" (page 126). This way of assessing has the potential to help us resist the powerful pull of deficit thinking. It allows us to focus on what we can do rather than on things over which we have little or no control.



Those who document learning stories need to be aware of the power of the stories in contributing to the construction of a learner's identity. We should not underestimate the power of writing something down nor how the written word can make something feel "more real". As we write, we might sometimes "catch ourselves in the act" of creating a particular view of a student or drawing on generalised views of disability. (See Part 4 for a discussion about views of disability.)

Where to next

The next two parts of the guide describe how to read the exemplars, and how to use narrative as an approach in different teaching and learning settings.



Part 2

How to read the narrative assessment exemplars

The learner, along with how and what they are learning, is the focus – at the heart of teaching and learning – in each of the narrative assessment exemplars.

Each exemplar is put together like a story: it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning part (front page) is an introduction. It includes a description of the student and their learning setting. The middle part consists of the learning stories. The end part provides a summary and a reflection on what the story or stories show.

The learning story layouts used in the exemplars are individual and look different from one setting to the next. For example, some learning stories make use of explicit and detailed descriptions of key competencies while others express the competencies more broadly.

Each narrative assessment exemplar is made up of the following parts, which are discussed in more detail later in Part 2.

A short introductory section includes a background description of the student and his or her learning setting.

Student background

Name	Michael
Age	5
Year	1
Class	Primary

Michael is a cheerful boy and arrives at school each day with a big smile on his face. Michael has global developmental delay. He can say the words “mum” and “no” clearly; he can communicate “yes”. He always joins in every class activity, observing what his classmates are doing and then following suit.

When the other class members are practising handwriting, Michael is practising his handwriting, although his programme is modified to suit his needs. Michael has friends and is accepted as an equal by his classmates. Michael is a student in a class of 24 children. The school receives teacher aide support for 11 hours a week as well as 0.1 FTE learning support teacher time.

The string of one or more learning stories highlights the student’s learning in the key competency or competencies and the learning area(s).

Bird stencils

Student	Brittany	Date	19 August 2008
Topic	Visual arts, English, technology	Observers	Libby (teacher) Helen (arts and EfS advisor) Rob (cameraman)
Resources	Photocopied birds, shells, fish that have been cut out and backed with stiff card, a large variety of paint in many shades of green, brown, and blue. Resource books and photographs of New Zealand birds in their natural environments.		

How we created opportunities for learning

Brittany will:

- be part of an ongoing discussion about the creatures that live in the habitat of the sandy shore and estuary
- place shapes of birds, water creatures, and shellfish in the composition with an understanding of what their needs are
- use the shapes to make stencils of the creatures.

Background

There were many birds, shellfish, and fish in the sandy shore environment where Brittany had been to camp. We had photographs of the black shag (kawau) drying his wings and a group of white fronted tern (tara) on the sand. There were birds at the farmyard and sculptures of birds in the playground. We continued to talk about the birds we had seen, and we talked about their habits and their habitat. We looked at our camp photographs, and we looked at books from the library about birds that lived in the coastal environment. The teacher and support staff had made a resource of bird and animal shapes backed with stiff card. We had used this resource over a number of weeks to place the cut-out pictures of the creatures on our painted backgrounds and to talk about where they would feel most at home, what food would they eat, and whether they were food for some other creature. By the time we came to using paint on the birds and creatures, Brittany was familiar with them and knew some of their names and where they may live in the sea, mud, or sky.

Learning story

Some children from Room 9 were with us on this day; they were eager to join in and help. Helen gave a demonstration of how to carry out a further stencil technique, this time involving sponging around the shape. We also tried a dye wash and a tea bag wash to give a more natural look to the white, photocopied paper shells and native mudfish. The teacher gave Brittany a choice of two birds. Brittany was able to name the seagull (tarapunga). She was anxious to get started and said, "Undo my straps, please". This was to enable her to move about more freely in her wheelchair and to access the equipment on either side. Emily Rose (student) offered to help her by holding onto the paint tray; Brittany was happy to have help from Emily Rose. She was focused on her work, and tried painting on the shape and sponging around it. She spoke freely throughout the session, talking about the birds and the paint. She was confident and assured. When she had done a number of bird stencils, and she wanted to continue painting and mixing paint colours, she was able to ask for paint and paper, and continued to work independently for an extended period. Brittany was very interested in her work when we reflected on what we had done. She was able to comment on colours and recognised the work of other children, saying the names of the birds.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Brittany's confidence in decision-making and her self-reliance meant she could work independently and simply request assistance when she needed it. I was amazed at the progression since our first painting session in May, when Brittany was saying "I want to do it all by myself" but, in fact, was needing quite a bit of support. Four months later, in August, she was able to say what she needed and make requests for help.

Brittany was able to articulate her need to keep painting and was able to ask for the things she needed and the time she needed to carry on with her work.

Learning areas

Level 1 the arts: Developing Practical Knowledge: visual arts

Brittany demonstrated a depth of knowledge about paint: colour mixing, using the roller, and sponge work.

Level 1 the arts: Communicating and Interpreting: visual arts

Brittany could ask for birds by name and remembered things about particular birds we had discussed at earlier sessions. Her concentration level and the length of time she was able to maintain her focus was astonishing as was her interest in her classmates' work.

Level 1 the arts: Understanding the Arts in Context: visual arts

Brittany was able to talk about her decisions regarding colour choices and preferences, she could request a colour, or bird shape with confidence.

Levels 1 and 2 science: Living World

Brittany could ask for birds and other living creatures we had discussed in earlier sessions by name. She was beginning to have an idea about their individual needs, whether they lived beside the water or in the bush, and what they may like to eat.

Science/Education for sustainability — learning in the environment, *The New Zealand Curriculum* pp. 28 and 29.

“Biodiversity and interdependence.” Education for Sustainability: education in the environment, education about the environment. (Refer p. 14, *Guidelines for Environmental Education in New Zealand Schools, 1999*; Principle of Future Focus, p. 9, *The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007*.)

Each learning story includes a subsection with next step suggestions for future teaching and learning.

Where to next?

We will consider obtaining copies of the recipes before cooking class. Tegan is easily stressed by anything new, and stress levels are significantly reduced if she is prepared for what is ahead. It may be worth adding visuals to the recipe, as this will make it easier for Tegan to repeat the recipe at home. This will help to consolidate her learning.

As cooking is highly motivating for Tegan, it may be useful to focus on recipes for instructional reading.

We will consider incorporating practical measuring tasks into mathematics lessons, focusing on measuring half and quarter, using cups and spoons, liquids, and dry ingredients. We can increase complexity by looking at measuring devices and comparing and contrasting volume.

Tegan can practise the recipes she has learned at school and make food for her family at home.

Future individual education programme goal

A future IEP goal will be to develop Tegan’s skills and independence when using a sharp knife.

Tegan can select a knife she is confident to use. We can scaffold learning through success in cutting items, such as bread or cheese, before progressing to more difficult items, such as carrots.

A final overview section uses a frame for showing development over time and includes commentary connecting the teacher practice in the learning stories to effective pedagogy in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Effective pedagogy

What does this tell us about teaching and learning in this setting?

Elliott’s learning was supported by teaching that provided him with a safe and supportive environment in which to express his thoughts and needs. At the outset of this unit, the teacher decided that she wanted to have an environment that allowed the students to ask any questions and have them answered. The teacher informed the students they could ask questions wherever they felt more comfortable. That could either be during the class lesson or individually at another time (creating a supportive learning environment).

With consideration paid to initial information gained via questioning, the teaching provided

Elliott with the opportunity to make connections with what he already knew. This was shown by Elliott being able to draw conclusions from both what he knew previously and what he learned during the unit. This allowed him to build a clearer picture of his sexuality (making connections to prior learning experiences).

As part of the preparation to teach this lesson sequence, the teacher built a rapport with the caregiver of this student to ascertain the family’s perspectives on this unit. This was done by sending home a questionnaire and also through a teacher/parent evening to discuss the sexuality unit in an open forum. During this meeting, discussion arose around how the unit would be taught. Concerns were raised by caregivers around public/private touching and socially appropriate behaviour. In an Individual Education Programme (IEP) and through a questionnaire, Elliott’s caregiver indicated that she wanted the school to cover some work around sexuality, particularly in relation to public and private behaviour. She expressed that Elliott needed to have consistent messages given between home and school to build on what she had already said to Elliott regarding erections and masturbation (teaching as inquiry).

Using information gained from the questionnaires and meetings, and from questions raised by Elliott, his caregiver and his peers, the teacher planned the unit. The reflective practice used by the teacher determined the way the unit progressed. As Elliott and his classmates asked questions within the classroom, the teacher altered planning and resources to accommodate the understandings and needs of the students as they became evident.

Many of the exemplars conclude with reflective questions or comments for the reader/user.

Reflective questions for the reader

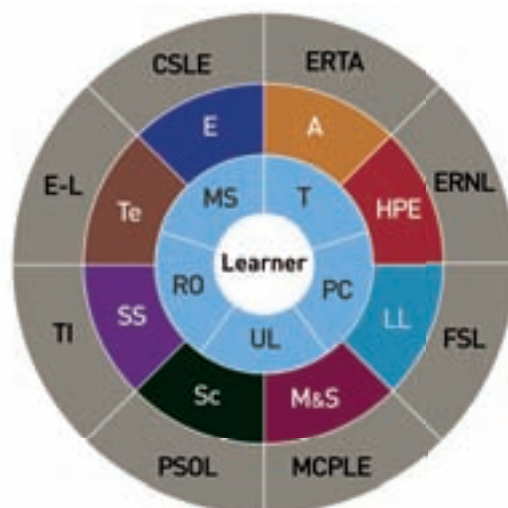
“Are you aware of the variety of communication strategies and systems for students like Hugh?”

“What difference might an effective communication strategy make for any of your students? Could this reveal hidden strengths?”

“How do you fully use your teacher aides in your learning community and provide professional development opportunities?”

The wheel

The project team designed a wheel image (presented below) to make visible the layers of learning and effective pedagogy recognised within each exemplar. The wheel illustrates how students’ learning, as narrated in the learning stories, connects with the key competencies, learning areas, and effective pedagogy defined and described in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.



At the centre of the wheel is the learner.

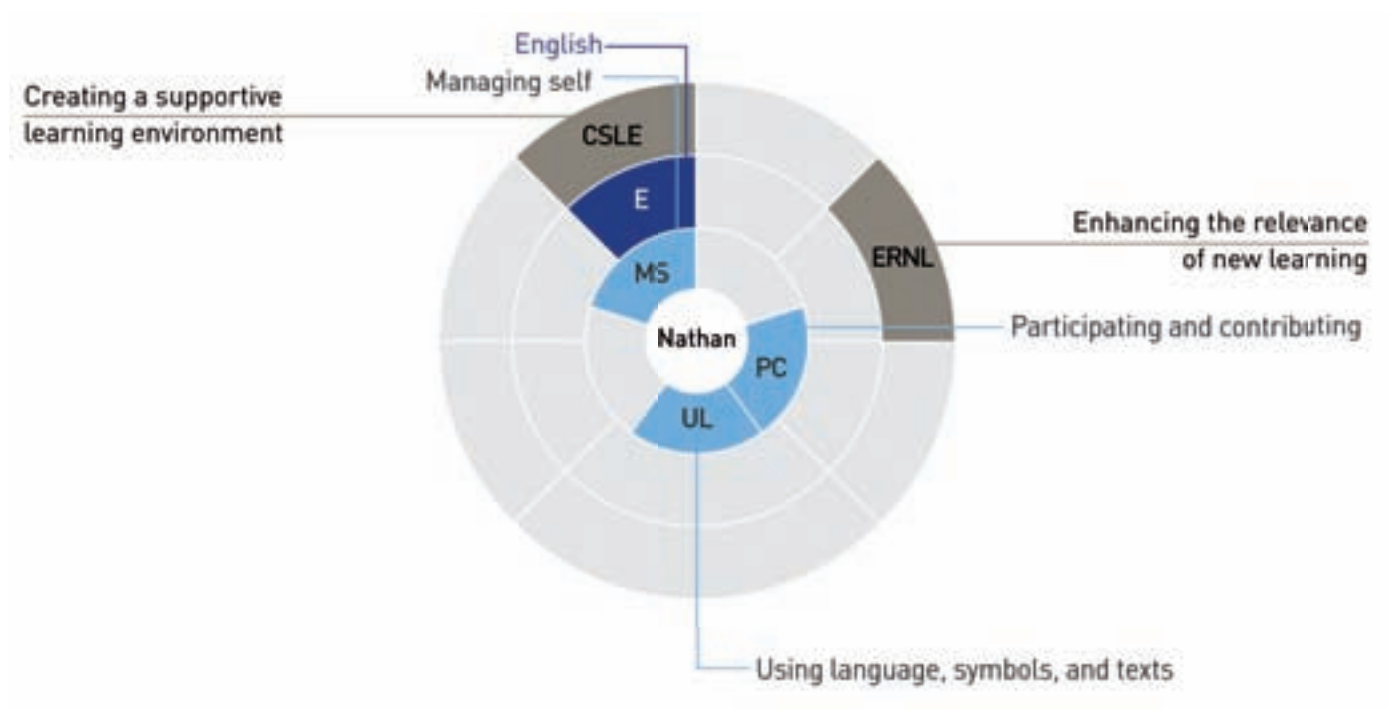
Innermost ring:
key competencies
(The New Zealand Curriculum, pages 12–13)

Middle ring:
learning areas
(The New Zealand Curriculum, pages 16–33)

Outermost ring:
features of effective pedagogy
(The New Zealand Curriculum, pages 34–36)

Key competencies		Learning areas		Effective pedagogy	
T	Thinking	A	The arts	ERTA	Encouraging reflective thought and action
PC	Participating and contributing	HPE	Health & physical education	ERNL	Enhancing the relevance of new learning
UL	Using language, symbols, and text	LL	Learning languages	FSL	Facilitating shared learning
RO	Relating to others	M&S	Mathematics & statistics	MCPLE	Making connections to prior learning and experience
MS	Managing self	Sc	Science	PSOL	Providing sufficient opportunities to learn
		SS	Social sciences	TI	Teaching as inquiry
		Te	Technology	E-L	E-learning and pedagogy
		E	English	CSLE	Creating a supportive learning environment

In each exemplar, the wheel is adapted to express the student's learning, with connections to the key competencies, learning areas, and effective pedagogy, as in the following example:



What should I look for?

Look for

The description of the student's background

The background section provides information about the student and their school setting. This section establishes the context in which the student's learning takes place.

A bit of background helps to understand the change that has taken place.

Look for

Ways in which the exemplars highlight learning

The core of each exemplar is either a single learning story or a string of connected stories about a student's learning. Each exemplar shows learning recognised as significant by those involved in that student's life. The learning has been noted and nurtured by the student's teacher, other educators, and/or parents and family or whānau.

As well as a story or stories about the learning event(s), each exemplar includes:

- an analysis of the learning recognised within the stories;
- an indication of possible learning pathways or opportunities and possibilities for learning and teaching.

Making the link between students' learning, the key competencies, and the learning areas enabled students, teachers, and families and whānau involved in the project to see that each of these students is a capable and competent learner. This has been a very empowering experience.

The project participants were able to recognise students for what they can do, no matter which learning area is the focus of the learning, and this recognition is transforming attitudes and expectations. Carr, Jones, and Lee (2005) have noted that "When children are listened to, the power balance tips towards the child" (page 129). As one teacher put it, "Now we're focusing on the key competencies, I'm looking at him in a whole new light."



Recognising learning for learners with special education needs means being open to:

- the many ways in which students demonstrate their learning;
- the ways in which teachers adapt the curriculum and make it relevant in order to uncover and foster learning.

Recording learning events through learning stories provides a platform for dialogue about what learning has occurred (key competencies as well as learning areas), how the learning occurred, and what might happen next. Such dialogue keeps everyone's eyes open to the endless possibilities for learners.

Learning stories encourage multiple perspectives, which contribute to a more comprehensive picture of learning. After sharing a learning story with several colleagues, one teacher said, "I didn't see the literacy aspect [before]."

It is important to note that the next steps section of each exemplar offers suggestions of possible ways forward for the particular learner, supported by his or her teacher, family/whānau, and others working with that student. The teachers on this project comment that "With student-led learning (as distinct from teacher-led), it can be difficult to predict specific next steps." As well as further intended learning goals, the next steps section may also include teaching strategies to try.

Look for

How to consider the student's learning over time

The exemplars for students with special education needs focus on promoting the use of the key competencies within the context of the learning areas in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. For this reason, possible pathways for learning are not expressed as progress indicators set out in matrices. Rather, the project team draws on Margaret Carr's (2006) *Dimensions of Strength for Key Competencies*⁴ as a framework for understanding the ways in which key competencies develop over time.

Teachers in this project found the ABCD dimensions useful for describing the ways in which students' interactions with people, places, ideas, and things change over time.

Using the ABCD framework enabled everyone involved to see student development in relation to both the key competencies and the learning areas. Teachers liked the idea of expressing this development (for both the key competencies and learning areas) in terms of interactions being extended into a broader range of environments and increasingly complex contexts.

For teachers reading the exemplars for the first time, it is important to read the whole string of learning stories before considering the application of the ABCD dimensions. A particular exemplar may not apply all four of the ABCD dimensions but only those that can be evidenced by an explicit shift in the student's learning and participation.



Instead of traditional smaller steps and progressions, Carr offers four overlapping (intertwining) dimensions for considering development of key competencies: Agency, Breadth, Continuity, and Depth. She suggests these be summarised as the ABCD of dimensions of strength.

A = Agency (mindfulness)

People make the practice of using key competencies part of their own identity and expertise. They "own" them and are motivated to use them in different circumstances and in relation to different interests or topics.

B = Breadth

Competencies develop over time. They are not acquired or possessed at some point in an education. They are strengthened (or weakened) by interaction(s). Breadth is about key competencies being connected to more than one place or to more than one space, that is, to communities and social practices, including those outside the classroom.

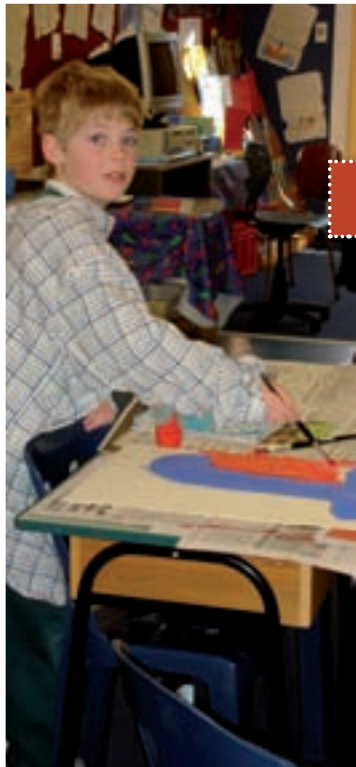
C = Continuity (frequency)

Continuity means interactions in contexts that are increasingly wide-ranging and become more frequent over time.

D = Depth (or distribution/complexity)

Depth is about interactions in contexts that are increasingly complex and distributed across an increasing number of mediating resources.

⁴ A downloadable version of *Dimensions of Strength for Key Competencies* is available at http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/nzc_resource_bank/key_competencies/key_resources



Look for

Connections between teacher practice and effective pedagogy

Each of the exemplars makes links to the effective pedagogy described in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (pages 34–36) and aims to show what effective teachers do to strengthen their students' learning.

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies the following aspects of effective pedagogy:

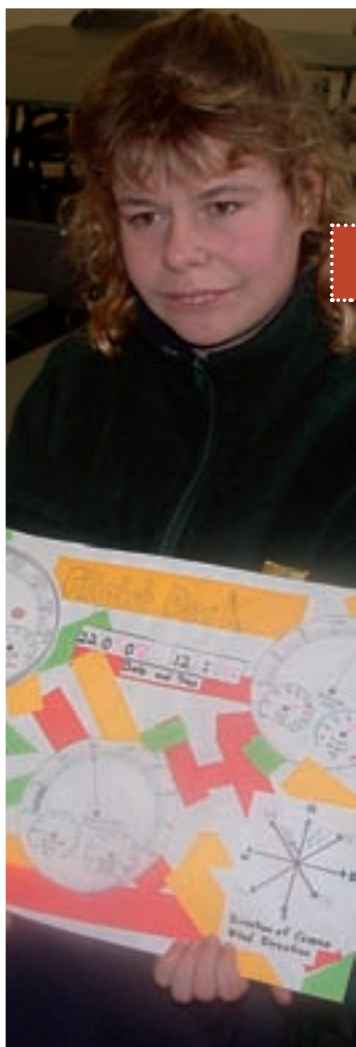
- creating a supportive learning environment;
- encouraging reflective thought and action;
- enhancing the relevance of new learning;
- facilitating shared learning;
- making connections to prior learning and experience;
- providing sufficient opportunities to learn;
- teaching as inquiry;
- e-learning and pedagogy, as a support to the teaching approaches outlined above.

Readers of these exemplars may have their practice affirmed, challenged, and strengthened by the explicit links to effective pedagogy that they illustrate. The project team hopes that those working with students with special education needs will come together as communities of learners to reflect on and interact with the materials presented here and to construct ways forward to benefit their students.

Professional learning opportunities based on these exemplars will help teachers deepen their understandings about a narrative approach to assessment and about including all learners in all settings.

Effective pedagogy begins with knowing the student well. As the two teachers quoted below note:

It's all about the teacher changing, not the student. We've just read him or her better.
If I listen to you, students, I can help you learn.



Look for

Reflective questions or comments

In the exemplars, reflection takes the form of questions or comments designed to challenge the reader's thinking, attitudes, and practice.

Each reader should consider these comments and questions carefully in the light of their practice and beliefs about assessment and in relation to how they view their students' abilities and what expectations they have for them.

The reflective questions or comments can contribute positively to teachers' understandings of the exemplified learning and can improve their understandings of, and relationships with, their own students and their families and whānau.

The comments attached to some exemplars are the reflections of teachers, students, parents, and other educators involved in the project. For example, one project teacher (Jane, see next page) included parent voice, peer voices and a personal reflection in the exemplar 'Molly makes her way'. These different perspectives help strengthen knowing the learner and working together as a learning community.

Parents' voice

Molly has blown us away with how well she is going at school. No two ways about it! Full credit to the people working with her. Her reading and speech progress has been amazing. Phenomenal. Rocking on lots better than 18 months ago.

Absolutely fabulous, she is coming on in leaps and bounds. Far exceeded our expectations. Her speech has improved so much.

Students' voices

Children are independently seeking Molly's involvement in their games and verbally encouraging her, for example, "Your turn, Molly", "Run, Molly, run", and "Well done, Molly". These interactions will encourage Molly to become an active participant in the school environment.

Teacher reflection

The teacher and teacher aide are very attuned to Molly's emotions and pace, for example, smiling when Molly expresses joy in her involvement in the playground game with peers, or slowing the pace of the interaction when Molly gets overloaded with sensory issues (the wind, the number of peers involved).

We will follow Molly's focus of attention, for example, we will encourage and develop Molly's interest in her peers when she is approached in the playground.

Where to next

Part 3 of this guide explores using narrative assessment, in particular, how to write and use learning stories.



Part 3 Using narrative assessment

Black and Wiliam (1998) take the view that teaching and learning is an interactive process driven by what happens in the classroom. This view positions assessment inside, or as a part of, the curriculum. Black and Wiliam argue that teachers should be encouraged to make best use of the interactive teaching and learning process as a platform for assessment, and in doing so, make assessment more formative.

From their comprehensive study of international research literature about assessment, Black and Wiliam concluded that considerable evidence pointed to “problems and short-comings” in the then current classroom assessment practices. They called for urgent changes to the way assessment was practised and for supporting teachers’ understanding of their role in formative assessment (see also Cowie and Bell, 1999; Clarke, 2001; Crooks, 2006; Hill, 2003; Sadler, 1989 and 1998).

Growing advocacy of narrative, as a method for assessing, points to a shift in thinking about the multiple ways in which learning can be captured for the purpose of supporting assessment for learning.

When considering how to assess, we must first stop to think about what to assess.

This part of the guide explores three interrelated questions that all teachers will need to consider when using a narrative approach to assessment for learning:

- What learning should I take notice of?
- How will I use narrative to assess this learning?
- When using narrative assessment, how should I analyse learning over time?

What learning should I take notice of?

The New Zealand Curriculum provides guidance in this area:

The national curriculum ... gives schools the scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their particular communities of students. In turn, the design of each school’s curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes.

page 37

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies *values* to be encouraged and modelled and to be explored by students, *key competencies* that students will develop over time and in a range of settings, and *learning areas* that describe what they will come to know and do. Schools need to consider how each of these aspects of the curriculum will be promoted and developed in teaching and learning.

page 37



The eight learning areas describe learning outcomes identified as achievement objectives. When teachers are planning programmes of learning, the curriculum achievement objectives may be adapted and articulated as intended learning outcomes.

Involving students in the process of planning intended outcomes and in identifying criteria for success can enhance the effectiveness of assessment. During teaching, intended outcomes can be recognised and strengthened, as can unintended positive outcomes. Narrative approaches particularly enable both intended and unintended outcomes to be fostered. The student, peers, teacher, and others in the learning community, including families and whānau, can all benefit from knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes. The more people in the learning loop, the more that learning can be supported.

The New Zealand Curriculum observes that “The broader and more complex an objective [outcome], the more significant it is likely to be for a student’s learning” (page 39). Narrative assessment captures such complex learning because it can offer rich, contextualised descriptions of learning and teaching.



Understanding and fostering the key competencies

The key competencies are both end and means. They are a focus for learning – and they enable learning.

When designing and reviewing their curriculum, schools will need to consider how to encourage and monitor the development of the key competencies.

page 38

People use these competencies to live, learn, work, and contribute as active members of their communities.

page 12



The key competencies are “the capabilities that young people need for growing, working, and participating in their communities and society” (page 38).

The exemplars for students with special education needs view learning, particularly within level 1 of the different learning areas, in the context of these “capabilities”. When observed from such a perspective, the learning of this group of students can be seen as dynamic. The observations can also be shared in a way that is meaningful for these students.

Teachers in the project regard the key competencies, alongside the learning areas, as core components of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Having the key competencies, my children finally fit somewhere (teacher).

The competencies can also be viewed as fostering inclusion (see Carroll-Lind et al., 2006). They support a view of students with special education needs as “lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved” (*The New Zealand Curriculum*, page 4). They decompartmentalise teaching and provide the basis for a holistic, integrated approach, which research shows is effective for students with special education needs (Trent, Artiles, and Englert, 1998, cited in Carroll-Lind et al., 2006). When active capabilities are seen as valued learning and recognised in achievement, related learning within the learning areas seems to be enhanced – success in one breeds success in another.

Hipkins (2007)⁵ states that “new dimensions of learning are highlighted by the inclusion of the key competencies at the heart of the curriculum. These dimensions challenge some assumptions that are deeply embedded in traditional assessment practices” (page 5). She suggests we look at assessment through a different lens:

When key competencies are added to the assessment mix, rethinking these assumptions might lead to ideas more like these:

- ... Performance is context specific, so competency is judged only after evidence has been accumulated from a range of performances in varying contexts. One-off judgments have little validity in themselves but may contribute to a growing assessment picture as the student works towards meeting identified learning goals.
- ... The context of the task requires careful attention. Tasks need not only to provide opportunities for demonstrating competence, but also to invite and foster students’ inclinations to show what they know and can do. That is, the task must be meaningful and engaging for the student.
- ... Changes across similar performances may represent evidence of learning, as the competencies in question are adapted for use in new tasks.

page 6

One project school has completely revised its curriculum by reorganising it around the key competencies. This reorganisation extended to IEPs, along with accompanying portfolios (made up of learning stories) and written reports. Even the school’s strategic goal is written from this standpoint:

That students will achieve their individual IEP goals in the key competencies ... These goals will include literacy and numeracy targets.

Teachers involved in the project considered the features that characterised each of the competencies in their own school settings. Early in the project, the teachers used descriptions from *The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation*⁶ (2006) as well as other literature available on Te Kete Ipurangi (www.tki.org.nz) as a springboard for ideas. These brainstormed ideas, which became known as *cues*,⁷ helped teachers to foster active capabilities in their students.



People adopt and adapt practices that they see used and valued by those closest to them, and they make these practices part of their own identity and expertise.

The competencies continue to develop over time, shaped by interactions with people, places, ideas, and things. Students need to be challenged and supported to develop them in contexts that are increasingly wide-ranging and complex.

page 12

⁵ Hipkins’s paper *Assessing Key Competencies: Why Would We? How Could We?* is available at http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/implementation_packs_for_schools/assessing_key_competencies_why_would_we_how_could_we

⁶ Subsequently, teachers used *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) as their reference to support the development of cues.

⁷ Cues was a term that emerged at this time from the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TRLI) project, Key Learning Competencies across Place and Time [Carr et al., 2008].

Some teachers developed cues that were quite specific, others focused on the bigger ideas around each competency, and some developed a combination of both. More specific cues helped to make desirable indicators of achievement easier for students and their parents and whānau, as well as teachers, to understand. A focus on cues expressed as bigger ideas did help teachers to be more open to other indicators of achievement that weren't initially noted. Teachers' reliance on specific cues in their learning stories appear to lessen over time as they become more familiar with the key competencies.

The following extract from an exemplar shows a teacher identifying more specific cues.

Key Competencies	Cues (indicators)
Relating to others	I can work with others to get a job done.
	I can be kind to others.
<i>The co-operator</i>	I can share.
	I can take turns.
	I can disagree with someone and still be friends.
	I can take care of my friends when they are having a bad day.

One group of teachers identified the following big ideas.

Managing self
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being organised • Managing health • Showing awareness of self • Knowing self as a learner
Thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creatively • Logically • Reflectively • Metacognitively • Being able to question, take risks, and identify and solve problems
Relating to others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles in groups • Interpersonal skills • Equal opportunities for all.

Using narrative to assess learning

This guide, along with the associated exemplars, focuses on narrative as a method of assessment for learning within the context of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.



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.

page 39

Assessment must be central to classroom practice, focusing both on what students are learning and on how they learn.

Narrative assessments capture and document learning in authentic contexts. This documented learning is made visible to the writer and to the wider audience of those who are interested in the student's learning.

When shared with students, narrative assessments create opportunities to strengthen learning relationships, foster motivation for learning, provide a basis for self-assessment, and lead to collaborative planning of further learning experiences.

Learning stories as an approach to narrative assessment

The participants in the project that informs this guide explored Margaret Carr's (1998a, 1998b, 2001) learning stories as a form of narrative assessment. This guide endorses the use of such learning stories as a particularly useful approach to narrative assessment in classrooms.

Learning stories are designed to combine observation, interpretation, and analysis with possible responses. Learning stories are intended to strengthen a student's identity as a capable and competent learner. Each student's interests, strengths, and breakthroughs in learning are highlighted in each learning story or string, for example, in the exemplars 'Bill – from villain to hero' and 'Caitlin holds a conversation'.

Narrative assessments are an excellent means of personalising learning and celebrating diversity.

How do I write a learning story?

The exemplars for students with special education needs provide many different examples of ways to write learning stories. The project team encourages teachers to experiment with learning stories to find an approach that fits the learning community's aspirations for its learners and meets the directions for learning expressed in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

The way each learning community uses learning stories, the formats it develops, and the various purposes for which narrative assessment is used, are likely to change or evolve over time.

After considering what learning is valued, most people begin by writing a story about a learning event. Ideally, this story should be told in a way that is interesting to read without being too loaded with detail. It is important to remember that learning stories are not running records – but neither are they summaries of learning.

Learning is more effective when it is derived from interests, motivation and the sense of confidence that comes from working with one's strengths. In order to champion children's learning opportunities, teachers need a comprehensive knowledge of their abilities. Therefore, an assessment approach that sets out to articulate and highlight these aspects in children's lives is more likely to lead to further learning than approaches which treat children as needy and powerless.

Hatherly and Sands, 2002, page 11

Learning stories record setting and character in sufficient detail to give a rich context to the learning being described. They will describe key interactions. Photographs and video complement the story and may clarify details that are not verbalised in the text.

A key question for the writer is: "Have I included enough information for the audience of my learning story to understand the significance of this learning event?"

Some teachers in the project found that it takes practice to write a good story, whereas writing interesting stories came easily for others.



The following comments from teachers new to learning stories illustrate the positive impact of this form of assessment.

I believe learning stories really have the potential to alter perceptions about disabled students. Stories show them to be successful achievers.

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

Learning stories are about individual strength and about community.

When you look closely at the student interrelating with peers and the environment, you are better able to focus on small steps within the big picture.

As a teacher, I get to be alive in the learning stories, too.

I have never felt as proud of my recording and paperwork, ever.

[referring to ancillary staff] We're all going in the same direction.

Learning stories have given me renewed confidence in my judgment.

I wish we could love IEPs as much as we love learning stories.

Analysis and future planning of learning stories challenge teachers to focus on the teaching process – the stories demand reflexivity.

Learning stories are truly student centred.

The following practical tips are offered by the teachers in the project to anyone starting to write a learning story.

.....

- Just start somewhere and write it down.
- They're the stories you tell your colleagues!
- Focus on one story at a time.
- Have fun with it and try and keep it jargon-free.
- Incorporate the learning community, for example, teacher aides, parents, specialists, students.
- Jot down a key word or dialogue or take a photo to help you remember – be attached to your camera!
- Words can't always easily replicate what facial expressions portray – a photo really is a thousand words.
- Don't forget group and class learning stories.
- What about displaying them, for example, having a learning wall?
- Retell the story a number of times (especially to the student) so the learning catches on and strengthens.
- Drop off some other documentation if you take on learning stories.
- Sometimes we write learning stories over one to two weeks.
- We take photos and get students to write about their learning underneath.





The teachers in the project developed their own styles and formats when documenting learning stories. As these teachers developed their confidence and their own voices, their narratives changed. For example, although written by the same teacher, 'Joshua loves the pool' (2008) is quite different from 'Jayden the communicator' (2007).

When the project team prepared the exemplars, many of the learning stories were edited for a wider audience. Exemplars being prepared for publication need to spell out more detail than will be required by an involved audience, who know the particular student and are keen to discover more or see with new eyes.

Who can be involved in narrative assessment?

The teachers who developed these exemplars come from different backgrounds and work in a variety of settings. One first-year teacher wrote learning stories with the support of her tutor teacher. Other very experienced teachers in the project have worked for up to forty years in the classroom. The project teachers work in regular classrooms and/or resource units in primary (contributing and full), intermediate, and secondary schools and special schools. Some of the teachers in special schools work in classrooms on the special school campus, and some work as itinerant teachers alongside classroom teachers in local schools.

The learning stories in these exemplars are generally written by classroom teachers, with contributions by teacher aides and parents. The classroom teacher has the primary oversight of planning and assessing learning for each student in her or his classroom. (See this described explicitly in some of the exemplars, for example: 'Tom gets play', 'Hugh's Makaton with mathematics', and 'Emma's physical education takes off').

The analyses at the end of each learning story string are usually completed by the classroom teacher but are based on discussion with colleagues and others concerned with the student. Both documented and oral narratives can help to bridge communication gaps between teachers, students, parents, families, and whānau. Narrative assessment invites each of these audiences into the process of assessing, thus supporting the notions of ownership and legitimation that Cowie and Carr (2003) describe as desirable in a distributed sociocultural view of learning.

Regularly reflecting with students on their learning helps to extend that learning in an uninterrupted way. Revisiting invites students to identify their own progress and to develop their own goals. (Refer to *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars*, Ministry of Education, 2007c, Book 10, page 10.)

How can I analyse learning over time when using narrative assessments?

Learning areas

The New Zealand Curriculum sets out eight levels of curriculum-based learning in the eight learning areas. For some learning areas, such as English and mathematics and statistics, learning progressions are further articulated, for example, in the draft *Literacy Learning Progressions* (Ministry of Education, 2007d) and in *The Number Framework* (Ministry of Education, 2007a, revised edition). In other learning areas (for example, health), the learning progressions are less elaborated.

Teachers require pedagogical content knowledge in learning areas in order to be confident in supporting next steps learning. Through using narrative approaches and sharing these with others in their professional community, teachers are enabled to see their students, their competencies, and their learning interests more clearly and know better what to do next.

Linking strings of learning stories

Learning stories were not necessarily grouped together in strings in the initial stages of developing the exemplars. Over time, however, and after teachers had reflected on individual learning stories, strings linking development in key competencies and learning areas became evident. To support learning over time, the project team recommends that teachers revisit learning, looking across and reflecting on collections of stories.

Learning stories highlight what students can do now. What is shown represents new and important learning. Learning stories keep further learning possibilities or potentialities open.

Carr's ABCD potentialities framework is based on the belief that learning "is distributed across, stretched over cultural tools and other people and that a key learning is the capacity to mobilise, orchestrate and sometimes construct this assistance" (2006, page 1). (See Part 2, page 21, for more detail on the potentialities framework.)

The following example of applying the ABCD framework comes from the reflection page from the string of learning stories 'Tom gets play'. In this example the teacher has given particular emphasis to agency (A) and depth (D).

How might these stories strengthen Tom's identity as a learner?

Tom became more independent over time (agency) requiring less support from us. Tom began to teach others, including his peers, that he was ready to play with them and that he could copy them. His peers learned they could interact freely with Tom and no longer required constant prompting from adults.

Tom's learning is occurring in different environments at school and home – the hall, playground, house, and farm (breadth); with different people – peers, father, sister, teacher aides, teacher; and within different roles, either as initiator or respondent (depth). This string of stories illustrates a change in skills and competencies and their occurrence (continuity) within these different environments. Tom is able to show us that not only can he can transfer his new play skills across environments, but he is also able to transfer across resources, using both standard play materials, such as a ball and rope, and other objects, such as the mattress. Tom is able to demonstrate new knowledge of communicating his needs, playing with equipment, and experimenting with this equipment in new ways (depth). As his Mum Leanne says, "He's getting play".

How will I manage this approach in my setting?

Once they start using narrative to document children's learning, many teachers say they begin to see potential learning stories everywhere. They frequently comment on how motivated they are to document the learning they see in their classrooms, although they quickly realise they cannot document everything they would like to. They find they need to make decisions and judgments about which stories to document. It is neither possible nor desirable to attempt to document every example of learning for a student. However, documenting sufficient examples will help both to inform and form the teaching and learning process (Ministry of Education, 2005).

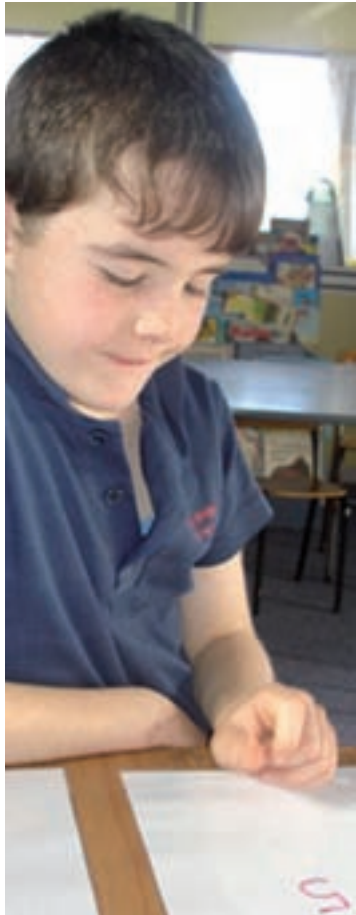
Teachers who value the use of assessment for learning will work with stories in dynamic ways in order to document and analyse learning to support their students. Learning stories may be more time-consuming than some traditional approaches to assessment (Carr, 2001). However, those experienced in using narrative as a method for assessing have found creative and innovative ways for managing the process. More often than not, once teachers establish the use of narrative in their settings, they find this to be an extremely satisfying and motivating approach for themselves, their students, families and whānau, and other central audiences.

Narrative assessment also lends itself to paired, group, and class assessments. The learning event can be the same, but the analysis and possible pathways may be written up for the different students in different ways. In the exemplar 'Amy is part of class sharing time', the second story, 'Amy and Lily share news', also involves Lily. Lily's learning was separately analysed and Lily's documentation, based on the same story, was placed in her portfolio for reporting purposes. Collective narrative assessments can also provide a picture of the ways groups of learners are working together and can contribute to strengthening the learning community.

Collegial support is important, as is school leaders giving active support in providing time and resources to enable teachers to take up the challenge of writing narrative assessment.

Part 4

The theoretical background



Part 4 covers the key documents that informed development of the exemplars for students with special education needs. It offers some perspectives on curriculum for these students. It also discusses how other educators and researchers describe narrative, narrative assessment, and learning stories.

Key documents

These include:

- *The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation* (Ministry of Education, 2006c) and subsequently, *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007g)
- *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2003c; 2004)
- *The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference: Whakanui Oranga* (Ministry of Health, 2001)
- *Ke Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars* (Ministry of Education, 2004 and 2005, 2007c)
- *Statement of Intent: 2007 to 2012* (Ministry of Education, 2007e)
- The National Assessment Strategy (currently under review)
- *Better Outcomes for Children: An Action Plan for GSE 2006–2011* (Ministry of Education, 2006a).

Perspectives on curriculum for students with special education needs

In their review of curriculum policy and special education support, McMenamin et al. (2004) argue that two fundamental beliefs are central to developing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum for students with disabilities, namely that all children can learn and be taught and that educational planning requires an active partnership between the school, its parents and whānau, and the students.

In the past thirty years, there have been considerable changes in the way people view disability and special education. Researchers identify two key ways in which disability and special education are viewed – the functional limitation model and the sociocultural model – with the shift being towards the latter view.

The functional limitation model focuses on an impairment or limitation located within the person. Traditional approaches to special education assessment, and to teaching and learning of students with special education needs, have largely focused on diagnosis of deficit and intervention or remediation. These interventions are carried out by or under the direction of experts. A criticism of the functional limitation model is that it emphasises individual deficit.

The sociocultural model focuses on how people make sense of disability or decide what it means when someone is described as disabled. For example, is disability understood as a form of difference similar to gender or ethnicity? Understandings about disability are not developed in isolation. We learn the meanings of disability in interactions with others – both disabled and non-disabled others. The sociocultural model also endeavours to understand how certain taken-for-granted practices construct disability in particular ways.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy argues that we need to pay attention to how our institutional practices may unintentionally exclude disabled people. An important implication for teaching and learning is that we cannot use a student's disability as an explanation for why we might not have met their learning needs.

Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have. Our society is built in a way that assumes that we can all move quickly from one side of the road to the other; that we can all see signs, read directions, hear announcements, reach buttons, have the strength to open heavy doors and have stable moods and perceptions ...

People and groups of people should not be judged by one particular aspect of their lives – whether it's their race, gender, age or impairment. Individual beliefs and assumptions, as well as the practices of institutions, mean that many disabled people are not able to access things that many non-disabled people take for granted.

page 3

The principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* aim for inclusiveness and to meet the needs of all students:

Inclusion

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.

Coherence

The curriculum offers all students a broad education that makes links within and across learning areas, provides for coherent transitions, and opens up pathways to further learning.

page 9

In identifying the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are particularly important for students with special education needs, we need to recognise that these students make up a heterogeneous group distinguished more by the diversity, differences, and individuality of its members than by their similarities. Despite this diversity, there appears to be consensus on the most important learning outcomes for students requiring adapted or specialist learning support. These global outcomes are generally described in terms of: relationships, meaningful and valued activities, independence, and personal fulfilment (Dymond and Orlore, 2001; Ford, Davern, and Schnorr, 2001; Giangreco, 1997; Hunt and Goetz, 1997; Jorgensen, 1997; Kleinert and Kearns, 1999; Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Curtin, and Shrikanth, 1997; Patton and Cronin, 1997; Shriner, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, and Honetschlager, 1994; Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, and Park, 2003).





The New Zealand Disability Strategy articulates objectives arrived at in consultation with the disabled community. Inherent in these objectives are key knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are important for students with special education needs. These include:

- participation in the community, with particular reference to disabled Māori and Pasifika;
- presence in the community;
- partnership;
- equal opportunity;
- employment;
- choices;
- self-determination;
- recognition of the importance of relationships and interdependence;
- equity.

These values coincide with the five “accomplishments” (Kincaid, 1996) identified in the research literature as essential to a disabled person’s quality of life: being present and participating in community life; gaining and maintaining satisfying relationships; expressing preferences and making choices in everyday life; having opportunities to fulfil respected roles and to live with dignity; and being able to continue to develop personal competencies.

These objectives overlap the key competencies set out on pages 12 and 13 in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

How have other educators and researchers described narrative assessment?

Using narrative to share a message or information is not a new idea. Rather, narrative is an age-old communication method that everyone uses in various ways across many different contexts and disciplines. A recognised aspect of literature, narrative is commonplace in qualitative research, psychology, marketing, and history.

The various types or takes on narrative are shaped by the purpose for which they are used. Some narratives are used to communicate an important message, some are told to deceive or to amuse, while others are used to entice an audience to buy a product. Regardless of purpose, a narrative is a story or an account of an event bound by time (Bruner, 1991).

More recently, narrative has been associated with educational assessment, specifically, assessment for learning.

Assessment and learning

Part 4 began with discussion of how learners with special education needs have traditionally been viewed, in a functional limitation model, as deficient and requiring intervention to address their needs. This guide argues the greater appropriateness of a sociocultural model, in which the individual is viewed within their physical, social, and cultural setting, and where attention is paid to the whole environment in order to improve learning outcomes for students (Cullen, 2004; Perrenoud, 1998). This shift in models or views inevitably affects the way in which assessment will be carried out.



These shifts are consistent with current international research into assessment and learning, which suggests that schools and early childhood education services use assessment formatively – that is, to improve teaching and learning – as well as for educative accountability. Assessment is increasingly being seen as part of teaching and learning, not separate from it.

The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars is designed to illustrate key surface and deeper features of learning, achievement, and quality at different stages of student development. *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars* present authentic pieces of student work and annotate them in relation to the curriculum, including suggested next steps for learning. Exemplars can also be used for self and peer assessment.

The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs utilises narrative to make learning and teaching visible for disabled learners with special education needs. Narrative is used to record (or document) an account of learning, as a focus for the analysis of that learning, and to stimulate ideas about how to support future learning. Narrative becomes a way of representing and understanding learning and teaching situated in time, in place, and in interactions. Narrative supports teaching as inquiry (*The New Zealand Curriculum*, page 35).

Features of narrative assessment

In the context of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, narrative assessment for learning has particular features that are different from traditional assessment methods.

Narrative assessment recounts learning events within and beyond school settings, going further than simply describing. It tells the story of learning by capturing the context, the people, the places, and the things of relevance. It identifies the ways in which learning has been noticed, recognised, and responded to (Cowie and Bell, 1999).

Narrative assessment is bound and defined by the time over which learning is noticed by the narrator. Successive narrative assessments may record learning that emerges over time, possibly over days or months (Hatherly and Sands, 2002), taking note of the ways that learning strengthens over time.

Narrative assessment needs to reflect the values, cultures, and ways of being and learning of students and their families or whānau. Narrative assessment needs to be structured, ordered, and presented to be accessible, relevant, and engaging to the learners, family and whānau, and others who contribute to learning and teaching.

Unlike traditional assessment methods, **narrative assessment** makes personal perspectives or interpretations visible and the voice of the storyteller obvious rather than hidden. Narrative assessment may also include the perspectives or voices of the student and his or her family or whānau.

Narrative assessment is respectful of learners and supports the construction of learner identities as capable, competent, able, included, and valued.

Narrative assessment contributes towards closing the gaps between learners and teachers (strengthening power with and power for relationships). It acknowledges uncertainties in the teaching and learning processes.

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) believe narrative is “the best way of representing and understanding experience” (page 18), particularly in terms of education and educational study. According to Clandinin and Connelly, narrative in this context is:

a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social. Simply stated ... narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

page 20

Although Clandinin and Connelly refer to narrative inquiry for the purpose of educational research, their ideas are highly relevant to narrative in the context of assessment for learning.

According to Peter Lamarque (1990):

Narration of any kind involves the recounting and shaping of events. Description is not enough. A mere catalogue of descriptive sentences does not make a narrative. For one thing, there must be events described, not just things.

page 131

Lamarque identifies four features common to all types of narrative: time, structure, voice, and point of view.



The narrator is able to include their reactions and feelings about the learning they are recognising. Those experienced in using narrative also enjoy being able to use their own words and ideas to capture learning in context – from inside the real spaces in which we notice, recognise, and respond to learning. Narrative assessments present a rich qualitative and interpretive picture of learning-in-action. They engage those involved in striving to understand the learning taking place and its complexities through analysis, interpretation, and discussion (Drummond, 1993). More often than not, narrative assessments lead those involved to respond in some way to the insights of the learner or learners, further informing and supporting the learning and teaching process.

How have other educators and researchers described learning stories?

Learning stories as one approach to narrative assessment

Carr uses the term learning stories to describe the type of documented assessment narratives she believes are useful in the early childhood context of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996). Learning stories are well established within many early childhood education services. The teachers at your local early childhood service may be able to share how they have responded to this approach in their work with young children.

Learning stories are designed to combine observation, interpretation, and analysis with possible responses and to incorporate Carr's (1997) dispositional framework, a distillation of the five strands of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. Learning stories are a local, homegrown response to the emerging sociocultural theoretical views of learning, teaching, and assessment.

Carr (2001) describes how learning stories focus on actions and relationships. Learning stories enable the teacher to see the child and their learning in a wider context. This is empowering for students. This approach does not compare students with others. In this way, learning stories value and foster the student's progress and achievement, at the same time recognising that this progress is socially mediated and co-constructed (Burr, 1995).

Learning stories have been explored in schools (see Carr and Peters, 2005; Carr et al., 2008; Davis and Molloy, 2004; Molloy, 2005). More recently, while exploring the use of the draft and final versions of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, teachers in primary and secondary settings have adapted Carr's learning story approach to suit their classrooms and learners. *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars for Learners with Special Education Needs* shows some of the ways project teachers (in both primary and secondary schools) have adapted Carr's learning stories approach for use in their settings. Working in a variety of formats, the teachers use the key competencies, in the context of the learning areas, as the framework for their learning stories.

Validity and consequences

Many approaches to assessment are shaped by the desire to ensure that the methods used are valid and can stand up to scrutiny. The generalisability (the degree to which results can be extrapolated and applied to other circumstances) and predictability of assessment information are seen as important in this view. Such factors are seen as demonstrating the validity of the assessment as well as making it more useful. The problem with this view is that it assumes that scientific beliefs and criteria are the only way of gauging whether a method is useful or not.



When it comes to using narrative as an approach to assessment, we are called upon to re-examine our beliefs about assessment and the criteria we use to judge the value of that assessment. These criteria might include, for example, the consequences of assessment in terms of strengthening the student's identity. They may include questions such as: How meaningful is the assessment for the student and his or her family or whānau? How useful is the assessment in terms of supporting teaching and learning in the classroom?

This teachers' guide and the associated exemplars for students with special education needs illustrate the importance of challenging preconceived notions about young people's abilities. As those working with students begin to "see through different eyes", the learning stories they develop will more vividly express learning and progress. In this way, assessment becomes constructive and all students' learning can be acknowledged and valued.



References

- Anning, A., Cullen, J., and Flear, M., eds (2004). *Early Childhood Education: Society and Culture*. London: Sage.
- Askew, S. and Lodge, C. (2000). "Gifts, Ping-pong, and Loops – Linking Feedback and Learning". In S. Askew (ed.), *Feedback for Learning*, p. 119. London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Bevan-Brown, J. (2000). "A Cultural Audit for Teachers: Looking out for Māori Learners with Special Needs". *Set*, no. 1.
- Bevan-Brown, J. (2003). *The Cultural Self-review: Providing Culturally Effective, Inclusive Education for Māori Learners*. Wellington: NZCER.
- Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Powell, A., and Teddy, L. (2007). *Te Kōtahitanga: Improving the Educational Achievement of Māori Students in Mainstream Education: Phase 2: Towards a Whole School Approach*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998). *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment*. London: King's College.
- Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (2004). "The Formative Purpose: Assessment Must First Promote Learning". In M. Wilson (ed.), *Towards Coherence between Classroom Assessment and Accountability* (pp. 20–50). Chicago, Ill.: The National Society for the Study of Education.
- Bruner, J. (1991). "The Narrative Construction of Reality". *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18 no. 1, pp. 1–21.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Carr, M. (1997). "Persistence when It's Difficult: A Disposition to Learn for Early Childhood". *Early Childhood Folio*, vol. 3, pp. 9–12.
- Carr, M. (1998a). *Assessing Children's Experiences in Early Childhood*. Final Report to the Ministry of Education (Part One). Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Carr, M. (1998b). *Assessing Children's Learning in Early Childhood Settings*. Wellington: NZCER. (three videos and a workshop booklet for practitioners)
- Carr, M. (2001). *Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Learning Stories*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Carr, M. (2006). *Dimensions of Strength for Key Competencies*. Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Carr, M., Jones, C., and Lee, W. (2005). "Beyond Listening: Can Assessment Practice Play a Part?" In A. Clark, A.T. Kjørholt, and P. Moss (eds), *Beyond Listening: Children's Perspectives on Early Childhood Services*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Carr, M. and Peters, S. (2005). *Te Whāriki and Links to the New Zealand Curriculum: Research Projects 2005*. Final Report to the Ministry of Education: Te Marautanga o Aotearoa/New Zealand Curriculum Project (pp. 127–142). Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Carr, M., Peters, S., Davis, K., Bartlett, C., Bashford, N., Berry, P., Greenslade, S., Molloy, S., O'Connor, N., Simpson, M., Smith, Y., and Wilson-Tukaki, A. (2008). *Key Learning Competencies across Place and Time: Kimihia te Ara Tōtika, hei Oranga mā te Ao*. Teaching and Learning Initiative final report, available at www.tlri.org.nz/pdfs/9216_finalreport.pdf
- Carroll-Lind, J., Bevan-Brown, J., and Kearney, A. (2006). *Critique of the New Zealand Draft Curriculum: An Inclusive/Special Education Perspective*. Report to the Ministry of Education. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

- Clandinin, D. J. and Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clarke, S. (2001). *Unlocking Formative Assessment*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Cowie, B. (2000). "Formative Assessment in Science Classrooms". Unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of PhD requirements. Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Cowie, B. and Bell, B. (1999). "A Model of Formative Assessment in Science Education". *Assessment in Education*, vol. 6 no. 1, pp. 101–116.
- Cowie, B. and Carr, M. (2003). "The Consequences of Sociocultural Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Community, Competence and Continuity". In A. Anning, J. Cullen, and M. Flear (eds), *Early Childhood Education: Society and Culture* (pp. 95–106). London: Sage.
- Crooks, T. (1996). "25 Theses about Learning and Assessment". A paper presented to the Symposium on Validity in Educational Assessment, Education Assessment Research Unit, University of Otago, 28–30 June.
- Crooks, T. (2006). "Some Principles for Guiding Student Learning Effectively". *Occasional Papers*. Wellington: NZEI.
- Cullen, J. (2004). "Adults Co-constructing Professional Knowledge". In A. Anning, J. Cullen, and M. Flear (eds), *Early Childhood Education: Society and Culture*. London: Sage.
- Davis, K. and Molloy, S. (2004). "Learning Stories in Early Childhood Settings and Beyond". *The Adviser*, February. Christchurch: Christchurch College of Education.
- Drummond, M. J. (1993). *Assessing Children's Learning*. London: David Fulton.
- Dunn, L. (2004). "Developmental Assessment and Learning Stories in Inclusive Early Intervention Programmes: Two Constructs in One Context". *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education*, vol. 7, pp. 119–131.
- Dymond, S. and Orlore, F. (2001). "What Constitutes Effective Curricula for Students with Severe Disabilities?" *Exceptionality*, vol. 9 no. 3.
- Ford, A., Davern, L., and Schnorr, R. (2001). "Learners with Significant Disabilities". *Remedial and Special Education*, vol. 22 no. 4, pp. 214–223.
- Giangreco, M. F. (1997). "Persistent Questions about Curriculum for Students with Severe Disabilities". *Physical Disabilities Education and Related Services*, vol. 15 no. 2, pp. 53–56.
- Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Educational Assessment*. London: Falmer.
- Hatherly, A. and Sands, L. (2002). "So What Is Different about Learning Stories? The First Years: Nga Tau Tuatahi". *New Zealand Journal of Infant and Toddler Education*, vol. 4 no. 1, pp. 8–12.
- Hattie, J. (2005). "What Is the Nature of Evidence That Makes a Difference to Learning?" Keynote address at ACER conference: Using Data to Support Learning, Melbourne, 7–9 August.
- Hill, M. (2003). "Assessment in the Real World". *Occasional Papers*. Wellington: NZEI.
- Hipkins, R. (2007). *Assessing Key Competencies: Why Would We? How Could We?* Wellington: Learning Media.
- Hunt, P. and Goetz, L. (1997). "Research on Inclusive Educational Programs, Practices and Outcomes for Students with Severe Disabilities". *The Journal of Special Education*, vol. 33, pp. 3–29.
- Jorgensen, C. M. (1997). "Curriculum and Its Impact on Inclusion and the Achievements of Students with Disabilities". *Issue Brief*, vol. 2 no. 2, pp. 1–15.
- Kincaid, D. (1996). "Person-centred Planning". In G. Dunlap, L. K. Keogel, and R. L. Keogel (eds), *Positive Behavioural Support, Including People with Difficult Behaviours in the Community*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

- Kleinert, H. L. and Kearns, J. F. (1999). "A Validation Study of the Performance Indicators and Learner Outcomes of Kentucky's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Disability". *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, vol. 24 no. 2, pp. 100–110.
- Lamarque, P. (1990). "On Not Expecting Too Much from Narrative". In C. Nash (ed.), *Narrative and Invention: The Limits of Fictionality*. London: Routledge.
- Lepper, C., Williamson, D., and Cullen, J. (2003). "Professional Development to Support Collaborative Assessment". *Early Education*, vol. 33, pp. 19–28.
- McMenamin, T., Millar, R., Morton, M., Mutch, C., Nuttall, J., and Tyler-Merrick, G. (2004). *Final Report to the Ministry of Education on Curriculum Policy and Special Education*. Christchurch: Christchurch College of Education School of Professional Development.
- Macpherson, R. (1996). *Educative Accountability*. London: Elsevier Science.
- Ministry of Education (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2003a). *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. This BES iteration can be accessed at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/5959
- Ministry of Education (2003b). *The Complexity of Community and Family on Children's Achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. This BES iteration can be accessed at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2515/5947
- Ministry of Education (2003c; 2004). *The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars*. Wellington: Learning Media and The Learning Centre Trust of New Zealand. The exemplars can be accessed at www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/index_e.php
- Ministry of Education (2004). *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars: Books 1–8*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2005). *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars: Book 9: Inclusive Assessment/Te Kāhui Aromatawai*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2006a). *Better Outcomes for Children: An Action Plan for GSE 2006–2011*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. The action plan can be accessed at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/BetterOutcomesForChildren.aspx
- Ministry of Education (2006b). *Let's Talk About: Personalising Learning*. Ministry of Education: Wellington. (pamphlet)
- Ministry of Education (2006c). *The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2007a). *Book 1: The Number Framework* (revised edition). Wellington: Learning Media. The Number Framework can be accessed at www.nzmaths.co.nz/numeracy/Principals/NZNumberFramework.aspx
- Ministry of Education (2007b). IEP Guidelines. Retrieved on April 24, 2007, from www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?ID=7359
- Ministry of Education (2007c). *Kei Tua o te Pae/Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars: Books 10–15*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2007d). *Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum* (Draft for Consultation). Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education (2007e). *Statement of Intent: 2007 to 2012*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

- Ministry of Education (2007f). *Te Mana Kōrero: Relationships for Learning 3*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education (2007g). *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium Teaching and Learning in Years 1–13*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Health (2001). *The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference: Whakanui Oranga*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- Molloy, S. (2005). "Early Childhood's Learning Stories Move into the Mainstream Primary Classroom: Another Meaningful Assessment Option". From a University of Canterbury Master's paper, ED659.
- Nietupski, J., Hamre-Nietupski, S., Curtin, S., and Shrikanth, K. (1997). "A Review of Curricular Research in Severe Disabilities from 1976 to 1995 in Six Selected Journals". *Journal of Special Education*, vol. 31, pp. 36–55.
- Patton, J. R. and Cronin, M. E. (1997). "Curriculum Implications of Transition". *Remedial and Special Education*, vol. 18 no. 5, pp. 294–307.
- Perrenoud, P. (1998). "From Formative Evaluation to a Controlled Regulation of Learning Processes: Towards a Wider Conceptual Field". *Assessment in Education*, vol. 5 no. 1, pp. 85–102.
- Rogoff, B. (1994). "Developing Understanding of the Idea of Communities of Learners". *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, vol. 1, pp. 209–229.
- Rogoff, B., Turkkanis, C. G., and Bartlett, L., eds (2001). *Learning Together: Children and Adults in a School Community*. New York: University Press.
- Rossiter, M. (2005). "Narrative". In L. M. English (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Adult Education* (pp. 418–422). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sadler, R. (1989). "Formative Assessment in the Design of Instructional Systems". *Instructional Science*, no. 18, pp. 119–144.
- Sadler, R. (1998). "Formative Assessment: Revisiting the Territory". *Assessment in Education*, no. 5, pp. 77–84.
- Sadler, R. (2002). "Learning Dispositions: Can We Really Assess Them?" *Assessment in Education*, vol. 9 no. 1, pp. 45–51.
- Shriner, J. G., Ysseldyke, J. E., Thurlow, M. L., and Honetschlager, D. (1994). "'All' Means 'All': Including Students with Disabilities". *Educational Leadership*, March, pp. 38–42.
- Turnbull, H. R. III, Turnbull, A. P., Wehmeyer, M. L., and Park, J. (2003). "A Quality of Life Framework for Special Education Outcomes". *Remedial and Special Education*, vol. 24 no. 2, 07419325. Retrieved 1 August 2003 from Database: Professional Development Collection.
- Watkins, C. (2000). "Feedback between Teachers". In S. Askew (ed.), *Feedback for Learning* (pp. 65–81). London: Routledge/Falmer.

Notes:

Looking back and looking forwards: a conversation about learning stories

In February 2009, Keryn Davis from the project team talked with Bridget, mother of Nathan, one of the students whose learning is profiled in the exemplars. Bridget also contributed to the exemplars as a parent writer. The following extracts from the discussion reflect Bridget's feelings about what learning stories have meant for Nathan's learning, his family, and his educators in both early childhood and primary school settings.

The full transcript can be read at www.throughdifferenteyes.org.nz

Keryn: You've shared what you value about learning stories as a parent, so what would your message be to teachers if they are interested in giving learning stories a go?

Bridget: I would first and foremost say to the teachers – get to know the child and the family too! *Noticing, recognising, responding* are great reflection words to remember. Think about: What have I noticed? What does this story tell me? What is important to the student? How can I involve the student? Where to from here? Consulting and sharing with families strengthens stories! My advice would be to try to capture something you have observed that you know is magic! Share the story to get the student's voice and see what comes from there. Remember: get excited about what your student finds interesting and about how you can make it more interesting for them! Involving the community strengthens learning, too.

... As part of this project, it was great having the opportunity to learn alongside passionate teachers, seeing them get excited about children's learning.

Keryn: ... What do you think has been the single most important outcome for Nathan as a result of those around him using learning stories?

Bridget: ... He's in a mainstream school. He is fully included in his school. He is seen as a capable, competent learner by his peers and his teachers. That to me is absolutely wonderful, to see that he is identified for his strengths in the school. First of all, that he's a boy, a boy with all these wonderful things that come with him – that he's valued, that he belongs in the school community – and that's a great outcome. It shows in the progress in the last six months of his school year through support from his educators and peers. He's learnt to talk from a zero vocab. He's in a reading group with his peers ...

He's actually above and beyond his peers in lots of things. Which is great again, because his peers are saying, "Wow! Wow, Nathan's really good at that!"

He's learnt to ride a bike ...

He's done so many things in such a short space of time. And I think that is a reflection of this wonderful journey with learning stories ... people can finally see *my* Nathan.



New Zealand Government

