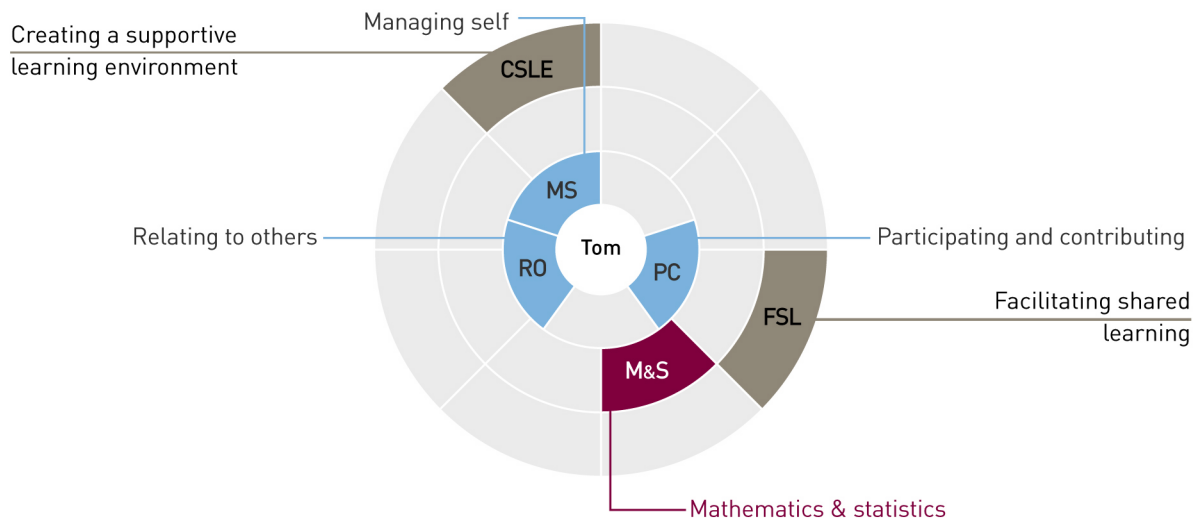


Tom works with his classmate

Links to the curriculum



Student background

Name	Tom
Age	10
Year	5/6
School	Primary

Tom enjoys numbers and the computer. Tom has autism and attends a small Catholic primary school in a rural town. He is in a class of 22 children. Tom would prefer to be on his own and is generally passive, with his face showing little animation when he is learning.

Charlie is another 10-year-old student in Tom's classroom. The two of them work together sometimes, often for mathematics. The class teacher is trying to foster this friendship.

The school receives ongoing and reviewable resourcing schemes (ORRS) funding to support Tom's learning. Tom has 0.1 FTE support from a specialist teacher and 27.66 hours of teacher aide support per week. He is non-verbal and communicates by using sounds, body language, and occasionally, with picture cards.

Three learning stories

- 1. Choosing a game to play together** 13 May 2008
- 2. The truck takes shape** 15 May 2008
- 3. A game of bingo** 24 July 2008

This string of learning stories shows Tom working with a partner to complete an activity. He observes what to do, models actions and choices, perseveres, and is actively involved in the outcome.

Choosing a game to play together

Students	Tom and Charlie	Date	13 May 2008
Topic	Choose a mathematics game with a buddy	Observer	Raewyn (teacher aide)

Intended learning

- The boys will construct a truck together.

The children in the class are given a set period of time to produce a piece of writing for their profiles. Tom and Charlie complete their writing early and are asked to choose a game off the mathematics shelf.



Charlie is keen to try a truck construction set but Tom is initially very reluctant and does not show any interest. Charlie tries to attract his attention by saying, "Look Tom, look". He then starts to experiment with interlocking pieces. Despite his reluctance, Tom sits beside him.



I verbally prompt Tom to put the little black connectors onto the blocks. I encourage him to persist and eventually he can see his success and he wants to do more.



I am really pleased with his perseverance. Tom has everything he needs on his desk to complete his part of the truck and he works side-by-side with Charlie.

Well done Tom – you have started work on a joint project with a classmate.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self, Thinking

Tom, while initially showing signs of great reluctance, watches what Charlie is doing and slowly begins to copy him to construct the truck.

Learning areas

Level 1 mathematics and statistics: Geometry and Measurement: shape

Tom is able to identify how to join the connector correctly to the shape.

Where to next?

Key competencies

Tom will be given the opportunity to see the joint project through and possibly work on others.

Learning areas

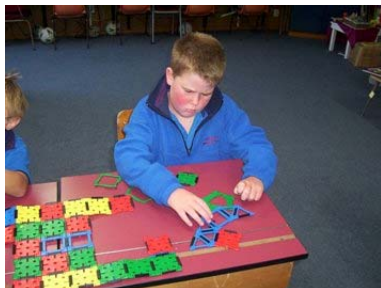
We will provide opportunities where Tom can develop and reinforce his knowledge of shape.

The truck takes shape

Students	Tom and Charlie	Date	15 May 2008
		Observer	Raewyn (teacher aide)

Intended learning

- The boys will complete their truck construction.



The boys have been working together on a joint project. Today, Tom and Charlie continue building their truck and really get into it. Sometimes, Tom looks across at Charlie to see what he is doing. I move away and let them get on with it.

Tom then begins trying to figure out how to join two bits together – this is the first time he has tried to do more than just put black connectors onto pieces.



What a great job Tom!

The truck starts to take shape now with both boys contributing.

Charlie gets very excited about finishing the truck and encourages Tom to do "thumbs up". His enthusiasm is infectious and I am pleased with how they have completed the truck.



Tom lets Charlie hug him when they finish their building.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Relating to others

It is exciting to see how Tom watches what Charlie is building; this is the beginning of sharing ideas. Tom accepts that they can both work on different aspects of the truck to complete a joint project.

Managing self

Tom perseveres to figure things out for himself and he responds to what is going on around him.

Learning areas

Level 1 mathematics and statistics: Geometry and Measurement: shape

Tom easily recognises similar shapes and classifies them together – he works out which ones fit and how they go together. He is experimenting and discards shapes that do not work.

Where to next?

Key competencies

Tom will be given more opportunities to work with a peer on a task where both have to co-operate to complete the job.

Learning areas

We will find activities that have an element of problem-solving in them so Tom can work things out for himself in different situations.

We will encourage Tom to apply shape and colour knowledge to other games. Through the use of games, we will develop and reinforce Tom's ability to sort objects.

A game of bingo

Students	Tom and Charlie	Date	24 July 2008
		Observer	Raewyn (teacher aide)

Intended learning

- The children will recognise shapes and colours.



The boys have some knowledge of shape and colour, so today they are going to play a game of Bingo, which requires them to recognise both a colour and a shape before they can claim a counter.

Charlie is keen to get started and pulls Tom over to sit beside him. I read out the instructions for the boys and they share out the counters they will need for the game. Charlie goes first and recognises a yellow card.



It is now Tom's turn. He does not answer, so I choose another Bingo card for Charlie to have his next turn. I then say, "Tom, your turn, what colour?" Charlie says, "Come on Tom, what colour?" Tom suddenly shows great interest in what is going on and shouts out, "Ohwo (yellow)".

Charlie helps him put the counter on the correct shape and everyone is very excited for Tom.



Next comes "Boo (blue)" and Tom now seems to know what to do. The game continues until Tom finds he has five counters in a row. He counts them and he's the winner!!

Charlie wants a "high five" to finish with – Tom is initially reluctant but Charlie shows him what to do and asks again. They high five and pack the game up together.

As they leave, Charlie takes Tom by the hand to get their lunch boxes and they sit together to eat lunch. This is another first!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Relating to others

After some initial reluctance, Tom watches how the game is played, listens to the caller, and takes his turn at the right time.

Participating and contributing

Tom's confidence grows and he eagerly takes part in the new Bingo game side-by-side with Charlie. The look on his face is worth a thousand words.

Learning areas

Level 1 mathematics and statistics: Geometry and Measurement: shape

Tom can sort shapes by colour and verbalise his choices. He can also match the shape he sees with the correct shape on his card.

Where to next?

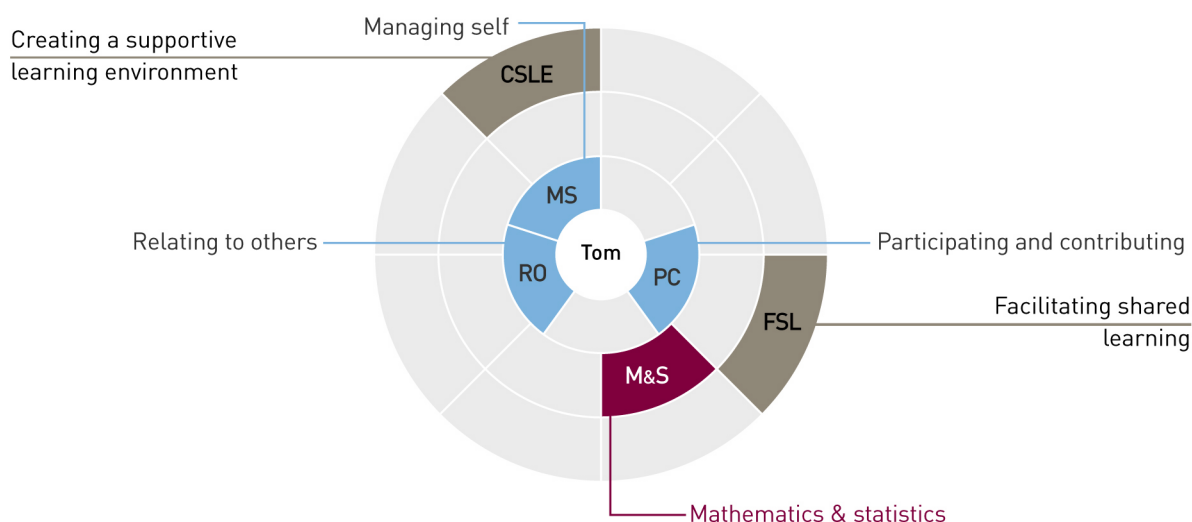
Key competencies

We will celebrate Tom's success in playing a game with another student, and continue to expose Tom to games.

Learning areas

Tom will consolidate his knowledge of colours and start to match the shape names to the shapes.

Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

Tom is beginning to relate to others by sharing ideas and listening actively when working with a partner. He is starting to interact effectively with a growing group of people (relating to others) – see the exemplar “Tom is a buddy reader”. As his confidence grows, Tom starts contributing as a group member to complete tasks (participating and contributing). When faced with a challenge, Tom is beginning to take risks (managing self).

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

Tom learned what was required in both games by using his partner as a model. He joined in with decreasing support over the duration of each activity. He was motivated to complete his part of each project and gained enough confidence to verbally contribute answers for the first time (agency). This learning occurred across two mathematics activities in different locations (breadth). Through these stories, on the truck project and bingo, we begin to gain a view of Tom as someone who is open to being involved with others (depth).

For more information on the four dimensions of agency, breadth, continuity, and depth (ABCDs), refer to *Narrative assessment: a guide for teachers*.

Learning areas

Level 1 mathematics and statistics

This learning is in the geometry and measurement strand, under the shape achievement objective. Tom is developing his ability to sort and match shapes. He has some problem-solving strategies and can verbalise colour names.

Effective pedagogy

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

The consistent routines, clear expectations, and a classroom climate that encourages oral contributions as well as offering appropriate challenges to try new learning, provide a supportive learning environment for Tom. This support is enhanced by Raewyn's thorough knowledge of Tom and his learning needs and by the collaborative approach to the planning and review of his learning taken by all those involved with his programme.

Developing positive relationships with peers is supported and actively encouraged in this learning environment. Tom generally shows he would rather be on his own, so activities are planned where Tom is expected to co-operate with a classmate and he is given the time and space to do so (facilitating shared learning).

Reflective questions for the reader

"What learning activities encourage co-operation in class?"

"In what ways can I encourage communication?"

"How do I encourage problem-solving strategies for my students?"

Useful resources

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Kia tūtangata ai: supporting learning: an introductory resource for teacher-aides/kaiāwhina supporting teachers of students with special education needs.*