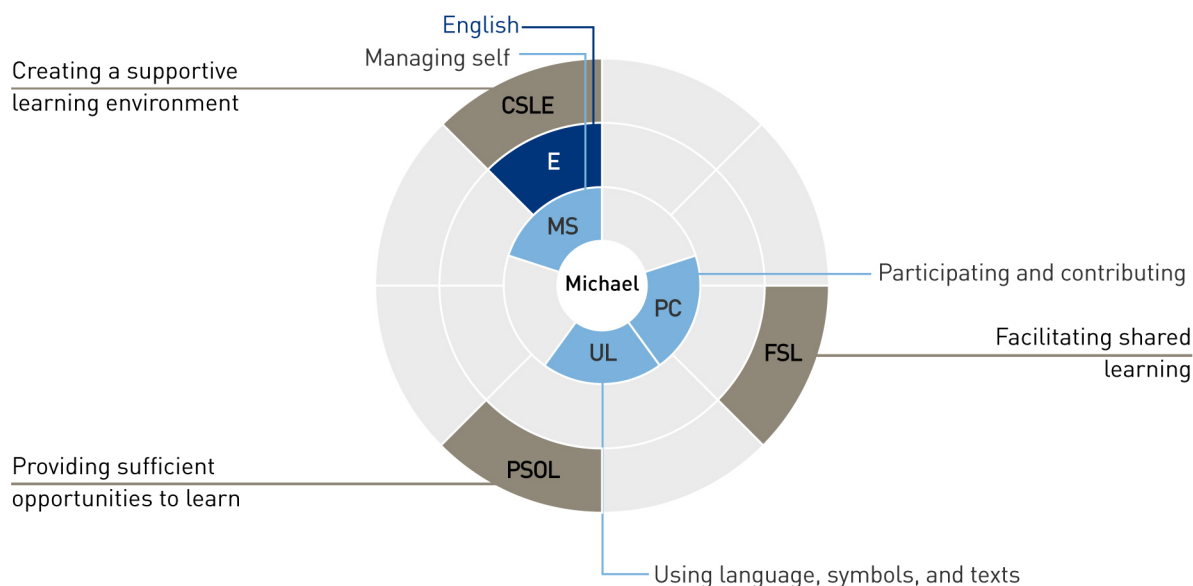


Michael the writer

Links to the curriculum



Student background

Name	Michael
Age	5
Year	1
School	Primary

Michael has a sunny nature and arrives at school each day with a big smile on his face. He always joins in every class activity. He observes what his classmates are doing and then follows suit.

Michael is in a class of 24 children. When the class is handwriting, Michael is also handwriting although his programme is a little different. He has friends and is accepted as an equal by his classmates. Michael has global developmental delay. His teacher has teacher aide support for 11 hours a week as well as 0.1 FTE learning support teacher time for Michael. He can say the words "Mum" and "no" clearly and can indicate "yes".

Three learning stories

- 1. Learning "M"** 10 April 2008
- 2. Writing in my book** 21 May 2008
- 3. I can write** 8 June 2008

This string of learning stories shows Michael's strong sense of belonging in his class (participating and contributing) in the context of developing his writing skills (using language, symbols, and texts). Over time, Michael is showing an increase in focus and independence with his accompanying successes (managing self).

Learning "M"

Student	Michael	Date	10 April 2008
		Observer	Yvonne (teacher)

Intended learning

- Michael will learn to recognise and write some letters starting with the letters in his name.

Michael works in the class with Helen, his teacher aide. The class is involved in handwriting and Michael is practising learning to read and write "M".

Helen has used a variety of ways to encourage him to write, starting with jelly crystals, moving on to a whiteboard and marker, and then to crayon and paper.

Michael was reluctant to try at first but over a month he has come to enjoy the task more. He loves the stickers and encouragement he gets from Helen, Yvonne, and the other children in his class. Michael is always keen to show everyone his work.

He proudly takes it around the room to show it off!



6 March 2008

Michael is now able to copy over large letter shapes with a little help.



10 April 2008

Michael is working with crayon on paper independently on this occasion.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Participating and contributing

We see how Michael loves being part of this class and wants to do what his peers are doing.

Managing self

He is also quietly getting on with his work without any assistance.

Learning areas

Level 1 English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: language features

Michael can now recognise "M" and can almost write it independently. He also knows that "M" is for Michael and, more importantly (to him), Mum.

Where to next?

We will start Michael doing his handwriting in his big scrapbook. With support from Helen, Michael will practise the same letter shapes as the rest of the class.

Writing in my book

Student	Michael	Date	21 May 2008
		Observer	Yvonne (teacher)

Intended learning

- Michael will learn to form the letter shapes correctly.



At class handwriting time, Michael uses his writing scrapbook to practise making the letter shapes. Helen supports him by modelling in his book and drawing dots to show him where to start and where to end. She usually sits alongside him and has to encourage him every step of the way to keep him on task.



Today, Helen noticed that he was working independently (without her needing to remind him to do the next shape as he worked along each line) and so she sat back to watch him.

He kept on working and completing each row before looking for affirmation from Helen.

Helen called me over to see how well Michael was working. He quickly got on with the next line to show off his great work.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Participating and contributing

Once again we see how Michael loves being part of this class and wants to do what his peers are doing.

Managing self

He is also working independently to complete his task.

Learning areas

Level English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: language features

Michael is now able to hold a pencil securely to write. The lines of the letter "M" are stronger and more purposeful. The photo demonstrates how much more control he has over his pencil now.

Where to next?

As this strategy is working well for Michael, we will continue to get Michael to do his handwriting in his big scrapbook, practising the same letter shapes as the rest of the class, with support from Helen. He will need less support over time. Helen is very good at judging this and knows when to step back and allow him space.

I can write

Student	Michael	Date	8 June 2008
		Observer	Yvonne (teacher)

Intended learning

- Michael will write a story.

Each day we share our class news book. I write a short story about one of the children's news or some event that the class has been involved in.

Today, the story was about Michael eating 10 pieces of toast. I had added that it was a monster breakfast and I wondered if Michael was a monster in disguise!

As I read the story to the class, I could see Michael's reaction. He showed pleasure with a beaming smile to hear a story about himself.

When I wondered if Michael was a monster in disguise, he laughed and told us "no".

Later that morning we went on to writing time.

When it came time for me to model writing a story on the whiteboard, I chose to write about Michael's monster breakfast. I drew the picture and began writing.



When I came to write "Michael" in the text, I asked Michael to come and write it for me. He came straight up to the whiteboard and began. He wrote "M" and then did "role play writing" (pretend writing) to represent the rest of his name. This is a first!

Everyone was amazed and children made comments such as, "Wow, Michael that is good writing" and "Good work". He sat back on the mat with the children with a great smile on his face.

But the best is yet to come!



Everyone went off to write their stories and, for the first time, Michael wrote his own story! Usually, he draws a picture and I write for him, but today he drew the picture and then proceeded to "write" his own story using "role play writing". He then "read" it back to me, communicating, in a way that I understand, that it said, "I had 10 pieces of toast". Michael then took his book and shared his story with his friends and other teachers in the school.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Participating and contributing

Once again we see how Michael loves being part of this class and wants to do what his peers are doing.

Managing self

Michael is also taking a risk by having a go at writing his name on the whiteboard and then to decide to write his own story. Great Michael, this is how we learn.

Using language, symbols, and texts

In writing his name and his own story for the first time, Michael is taking a giant leap in his literacy skills.

Learning areas

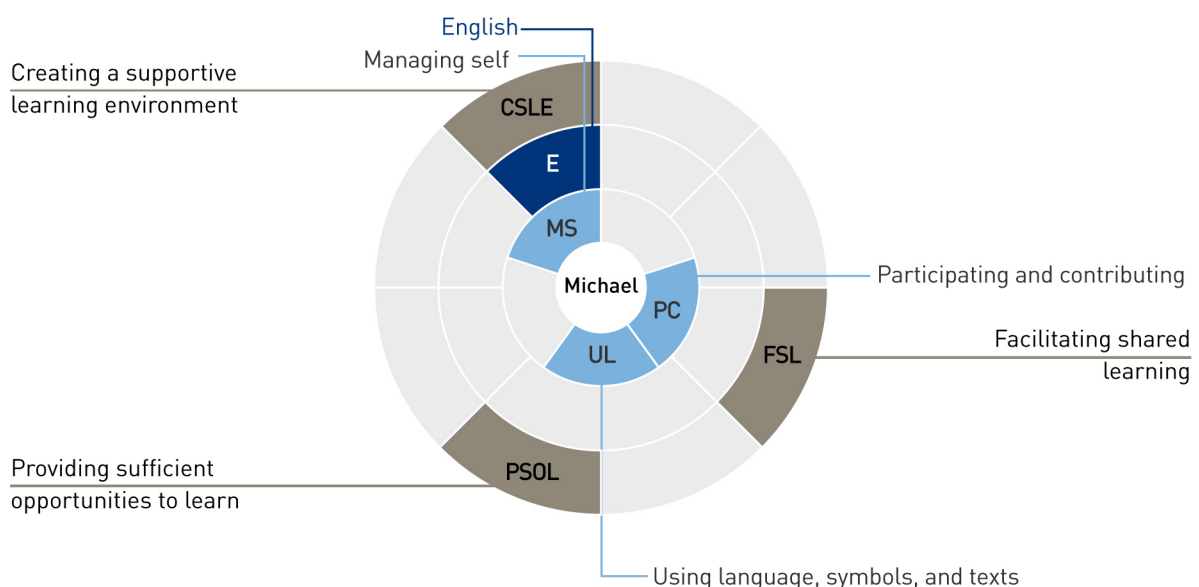
Level English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: language features

Michael wrote from left to right making purposeful marks to represent his story. He understands that you can record your ideas in writing.

Where to next?

We will expect that Michael will attempt to write his own story from now on. We will encourage him to write some of the letters he knows. We will teach him to write the word "I". Many children write about themselves at this stage. This will give him success and a place to start each day.

Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

Michael is developing his handwriting skills and using his knowledge about print to attempt story writing (using language symbols and texts). He feels very much part of the class doing his language work with his classmates at language time (participating and contributing). It is great to see Michael watching and learning and then having a go at the learning activities himself, with increasing focus, success, and independence (managing self).

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

Michael is developing a sense of being a writer. Over time, he has been more prepared to write. Seeing the fruits of his labour and the encouragement he receives from his teacher aide, classroom teacher and fellow students spurs Michael on (agency).

This learning occurred over the course of two months (continuity) in his handwriting and story writing times (breadth). Michael uses various resources – people and materials – to meet his learning goals. In this string of stories, the mediating resources were the teacher aide, his classmates, the teacher, crayon and paper, a scrapbook, and a whiteboard marker (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 English

Michael's key learning is in English. He is developing the fine motor skills he needs to be able to write letters legibly. He is becoming aware that print (letters and symbols) is a meaningful form of communication.

Effective pedagogy

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

Michael's teacher provides him with the security of a supportive learning environment. Activities are modified to allow him to participate in the same learning areas as his classmates. The class climate is such that every member is encouraged to give feedback and assistance or advice to each other, when required (facilitating shared learning). Yvonne (teacher) and Helen (teacher aide) share the same understanding of student independence. Each school day has a similar routine, providing daily opportunities to learn and practise new learning. Yvonne recognises and responds to Michael's changing learning needs by reducing the level of adult support required and setting expectations that foster his growing independence in writing.

Reflective questions for the reader

"In what ways could you adapt your programme to meet the learning goals of all your learners?"

"How do you establish a community of learners where everyone supports each other's learning?"

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*.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *The English Language Learning Progressions: a resource for mainstream and ESOL teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Literacy learning progressions: meeting the reading and writing demands of the curriculum: a professional tool for teachers: draft for consultation*. Wellington: Learning Media.