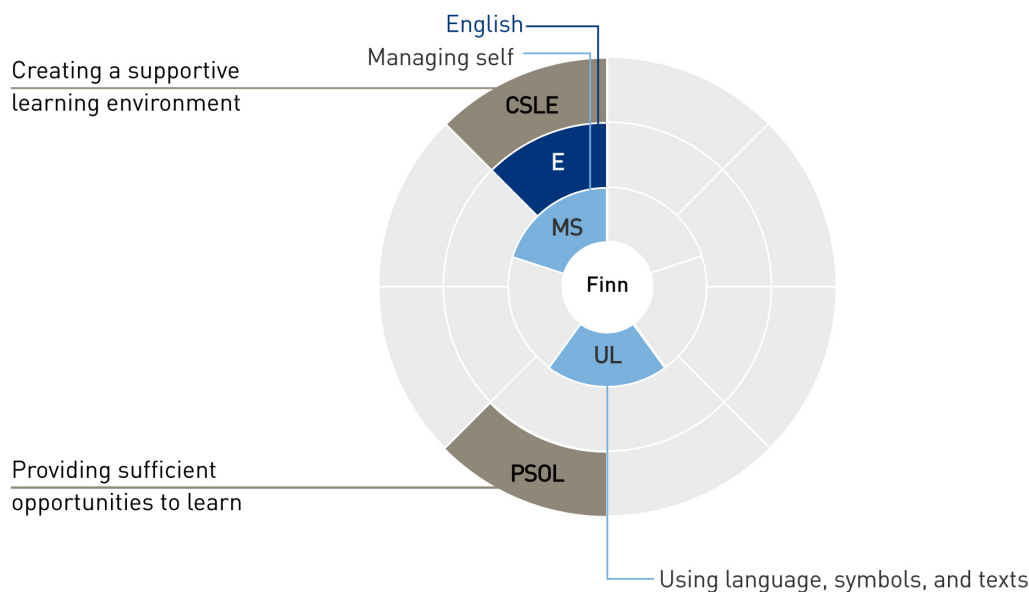


You are a writer Finn!

Links to the curriculum



Student background

Name	Finn
Age	7
Year	3
School	Primary

Finn is interested in books. He loves being read to and will spend time looking at pictures by himself. He finds it difficult to associate letters with sounds and, consequently, it is hard for him to recognise letters and words. He does recognise a number of words but not always consistently.

Finn is able to hold a pencil in a loose grip with his fist. He uses his left or right hand indiscriminately. This compromises his writing's legibility. Finn can be attentive for short periods when something is of high interest to him, but he finds it difficult to concentrate in the classroom for long periods of time. Finn will initiate conversations on a one-to-one basis with the teacher and his friends in the playground, particularly when he wants to talk about his own experiences. Finn is one student in a class of 27. In the larger class situation, he is more unlikely to communicate with others. Finn can follow one instruction at a time. With adult questioning and support, Finn is able to think of ideas for a story and to share these verbally with the teacher.

Five learning stories

- 1. Swimming** 12 February 2008
- 2. Witchy Poo** 27 March 2008
- 3. Swimming again** 3 April 2008
- 4. Sentence maker** 23 July 2008
- 5. I have found it!** 26 August

This string of learning stories, collected over a six-month period, shows Finn as he develops as a writer and participates with the rest of the class in the writing process (using language, symbols, and texts and managing self).

Swimming

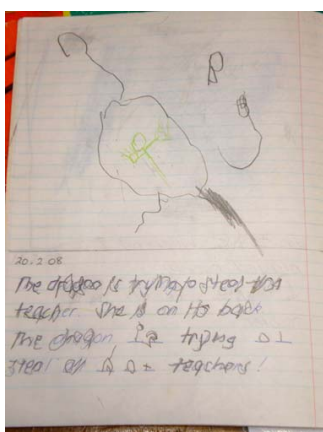
Student	Finn	Date	12 February 2008
Topic	Story writing time	Observer	Kirsty (teacher)

During class writing time, when asked to write about his weekend, Finn was able to draw a picture but without a written description.



This is Finn swimming with his family.

Well done! You did it!



The next step was to find out whether Finn could copy over letters to make a story.

I wrote his story out for him based on a story we had just read. Finn gave little input into the story but he then illustrated the text.

Finn was more than able to copy over the top although his fine motor skills were weak. It was evident that his abilities had not been recognised and he needed to be extended to the next stage.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Using language, symbols, and texts

Finn is recognising that symbols and text carry meaning and can communicate a story. He is able to convey what he has drawn in his picture.

Learning areas

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

Finn learnt he could communicate a story through pictures, symbols, and text. He was also able to participate in the wider class community.

Where to next?

Finn will begin to use initial sounds to write words in his story. We have a letter-sound programme planned during reading and we will be prompting him to think about what sounds he can hear and supporting him to participate in our letter of the week activity during handwriting. We will also identify opportunities during the day to discuss letter sound relationships; for example, shared writing, big book, games, and computer programs.

Witchy Poo

Student	Finn	Date	27 March 2008
Topic	Story writing time	Observer	Kirsty (teacher)



Today, we shared a story about a witch in a fireplace. The book had bright, colourful pictures of fire and the class was enthralled!

Later, during story writing while the class was writing a recount, Finn chose to draw a picture about the story. I noticed that he had finished his picture and then we collaboratively crafted a story to match. He could hear and write the "s" for is and the "n" for in. YAHOO! I then gave him some sight words and he was able to find, "is" and "in" when asked. He chose these two words correctly to copy into his story.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Although Finn was not completing the same task as the rest of the class, he was motivated to write about the story shared earlier.

Learning areas

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

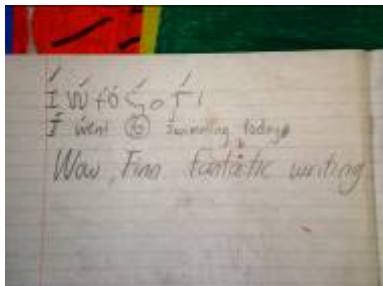
Finn is able to recognise some other sounds and basic sight words with which to write his stories. He is beginning to use other experiences to motivate his writing, other than the experiences of his weekend.

Where to next?

Finn will continue to use initial sounds and increase known sight words to write words in his story. This will be consolidated and extended through letter-sound activities that occur throughout the daily programme (refer to learning story "Swimming").

Swimming again!

Student	Finn	Date	3 April 2008
Topic	Story writing time	Observer	Kirsty (teacher)



This week during story writing, Finn was eager and able to suggest his own story with little prompting from me. I worked with him to hear the initial sounds of his story.

Well done Finn!
You have got all your sounds right!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Finn now shows an enthusiasm to write and knows the class routines for writing time. He understands that he needs his writing book and a pencil, and to come to the mat.

Learning areas

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

Finn is now more able to suggest his own story and continues to use his initial sounds more frequently.

Where to next?

Finn will continue to use initial sounds and increase known sight words to write words in his story. This will be consolidated and extended through letter-sound activities that occur throughout the daily programme (refer to learning story "Swimming").

Sentence maker

Student	Finn	Date	23 July 2008
Topic	Story writing time	Observer	Kirsty (teacher)

Finn is now using his sentence folder to find recognisable sight words to use in his writing. He still draws his picture first. However, today, he knew what he wanted to write without prompting from me and was able to write two sentences.



Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Finn has learnt to bring his sentence folder with him to the mat and uses this to find known sight words to copy into his story.

Learning areas

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

Finn is beginning to recognise more and more initial sounds, but as yet does not hear final or medial sounds. His knowledge of sight words is increasing and he has now successfully maintained five.

Where to next?

Finn will continue to increase his sight-word vocabulary and to use his sentence folder to write his stories. In addition to the many opportunities during the class programme, Finn will have access to more opportunities to play language games to encourage his vocabulary.

I have found it!

Student	Finn	Date	26 August 2008
Topic	Story writing time	Observer	Kirsty (teacher)



Here it is!

While modelling shared writing, I wrote about my hockey game in the weekend. When it came to writing his story, Finn wanted to write about his own hockey game. He remembered I had written the word hockey in our modelling book and he was able to go and find it independently. Well done Finn!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Using language, symbols, and texts, Managing self

Finn was able to recognise a word that was important to him and he knew where to go to find it.

Learning areas

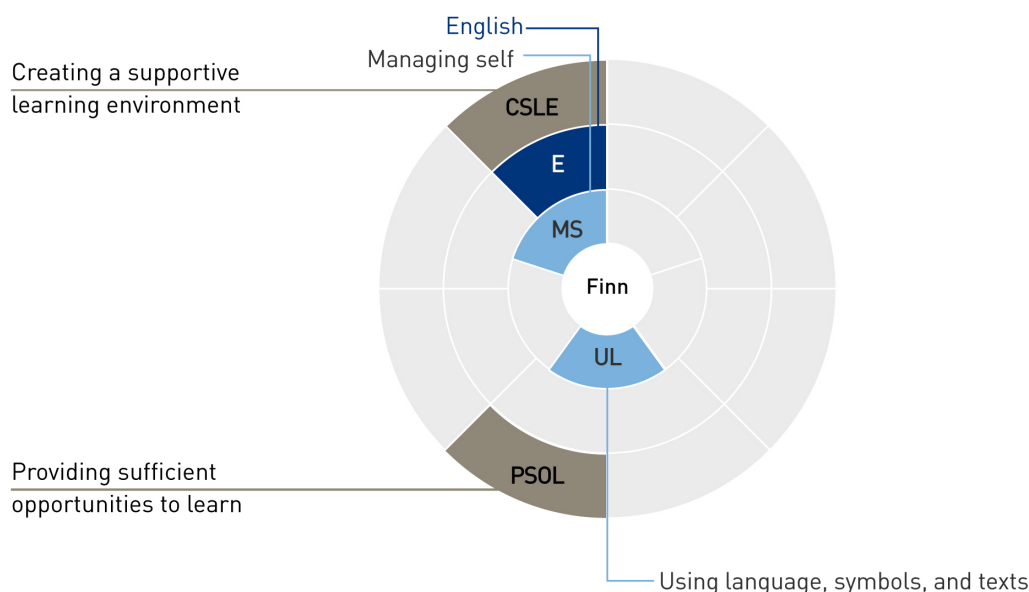
Level 1 English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: language features

The writing topic captured Finn's attention. He was interested and listened during the modelling session. He was able to go to the modelling book to find a high interest word for his own story, and could recognise the shape and initial sound of the word.

Where to next?

Finn will continue to increase his sight-word vocabulary and to use his sentence folder to write his stories. We will encourage Finn to use known resources around the room to help him find vocabulary. We will create a high interest word library with pictures. This is an activity that could be used for the whole class and tailored to their individual interests. We will also do "word of the week" activities.

Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

These stories show Finn communicating his ideas through writing. They also show he understands that words can convey a message (using language, symbols, and texts).

Finn is becoming motivated to write and is able to organise himself to participate in the class writing routines (managing self).

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

This string of learning stories describes how Finn is becoming motivated to write stories more often. He writes about real experiences that are important to him (agency, continuity). Finn is discovering that he can find words in a variety of places around the room to aid his writing (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

Through participating in the daily writing programme, Finn is working within the strand Speaking, Writing, and Presenting. He is developing his written skills to create meaning and is beginning to recognise sounds and high frequency words.

Effective pedagogy

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

The classroom offers a supportive learning environment where Finn's needs have been recognised and catered for. In planning programmes, the teacher has taken into account his personal interests to support and motivate him.

Time has been made available to work with Finn on a one-to-one basis, as well as in small groups. This will ensure that he has sufficient opportunities to learn.

Reflective questions for the reader

"How can I use peer support to assist with Finn's learning?"

"How do I fully use the teacher aide's skills to continue and strengthen Finn's writing programme?"

"Have I fully examined what resources are available to support Finn's learning?"

Useful resources

Janney, R., & Snell, M. E. (c2004). *Modifying schoolwork (2nd ed.)*. Baltimore: P.H. Brookes Pub.

Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective literacy practice in years 1 to 4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Janney, R., & Snell, M. E. (c2006). *Social relationships and peer support* [Part of the set *Teachers' guides to inclusive practices*] (2nd ed.). Baltimore, Md.: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.