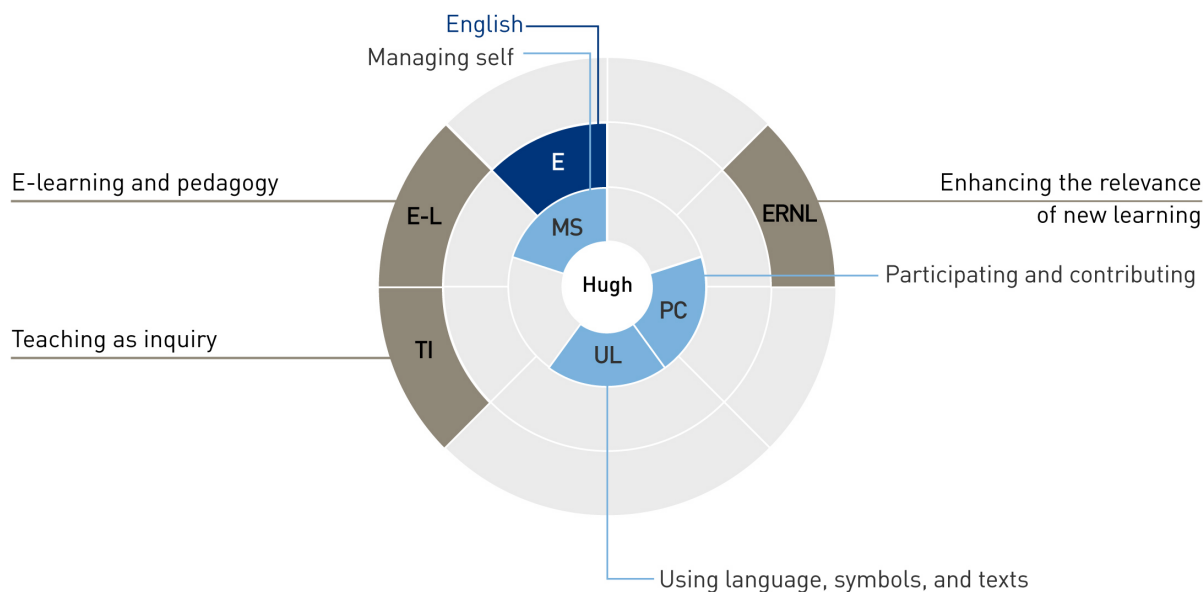


Hugh's literacy leaps

Links to the curriculum



Student background

Name	Hugh
School	Intermediate

When Hugh arrived at intermediate school, we found that it was difficult to adapt the curriculum for literacy and numeracy as we could not understand his speech and Hugh could not read and write.

Our speech-language therapist helped us with communication issues, and we also organised dual enrolment for Hugh in The Correspondence School. Both of these things helped us to access resources for Hugh, based on his individual education programme (IEP). In addition, his family provided a laptop and a software program that helped Hugh with phonological awareness.

(Refer to the exemplar "Sign language helps Hugh" for details of the speech-language intervention with Makaton.) Hugh did not recognise words or letters, except for his name, but once he began to sign words and became a more confident communicator, we were surprised by the progress in his learning.

These stories have been written by two teacher aides, with the help of Chris who is one of Hugh's teachers.

Three learning stories

- 1. Hugh learns whole words** 19 May 2008
- 2. Hugh helps to write a story!** June 2008
- 3. Mouse motivation** 28 July 2008

This string of learning stories shows Hugh making big gains in oral, written, and visual language. His enthusiasm for sharing his learning spurs him on to participate and contribute in classes.

Hugh learns whole words

Student	Hugh	Date	19 May 2008
		Observer	Sharon (teacher aide)

Background

Hugh's speech was difficult for us to understand. An initial focus from our speech-language therapist was for Hugh to practise signing and also to practise five high interest words every day so that he could pronounce the words more clearly.

Hugh got tired of this repetition. So to make it more interesting, I made a flashcard for each word we were to practise. I asked Hugh to choose a card to start and to decide the order we practised.



What a surprise I got today when Hugh not only picked a card randomly, but clearly told me the word written on it! He quickly went on to recognise and say all five of the words we had targeted for him to pronounce clearly. ([Click here](#) to view the video clip online)

Footnote: As at September, Hugh had a sight vocabulary of 22 words, which he still enjoyed practising and sharing with his peers and adults. Hugh has tried very hard to improve his enunciation of these words as well. It is interesting to note that Hugh does seem to be recognising the words as a whole, when we change the first letter of a word – Hugh is not able to rhyme, for example, top and hop.

Hugh is currently putting flashcards together to write sentences with his ongoing and reviewable resourcing schemes (ORRS) teacher; for example, "Look at the...".

Hugh's reading is taking off!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Learning areas

Level 1 English: Listening, Reading, and Viewing

We realised Hugh could learn whole words by sight. We had been trying to teach him letter sounds unsuccessfully. Hugh is obviously a highly visual learner. Maybe this explains his ability to find his way around computers, which had always surprised us; for example, he appeared to be able to follow commands on the computer, such as "OK, file, enter".

Where to next?

We will introduce a further five words using this approach.

Hugh helps to write a story!

Student	Hugh	Date	June 2008
		Observer	Shelley (teacher aide)

Background

We were working on prepositions related to position. Hugh's Correspondence School work had suggested some ideas. Hugh understood what "up" and "down" meant, but "between", "around", "under", "through", and "over" were difficult concepts for him.

The English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher recommended a book she used and I knew straight away this would be of interest to Hugh. It was about a child riding a bike and it had the positional language on which we were focusing.

We read the book over a two-week period, and decided to make a book about Hugh riding his bike to reinforce the learning.



2 – 13 June 2008

We went to the playground and found the places that Hugh could ride between, around, under, and so on. Hugh had such fun because normally students are not allowed to ride bikes in the playground! We spent a week collecting the photos and writing the book, "My bike". It consisted of pictures of Hugh riding his bike with the Makaton signs and text for the prepositional language he was learning.

Hugh rides **under** the branches to collect the photos for his story.

Hugh is practising reading his book. He wants to read it to a small group and then to his class. He is saying the words as he signs them. Hugh rides "over" the netball court and "under" the branches.



16 June 2008

Today, Hugh shared his book with a small group of his peers as a practice run to sharing with the class! Initially, he was nervous and reluctant to begin. I prompted him and he was away, saying and signing the nouns and prepositions as I read the story with him.



20 June 2008

Today, Hugh shared his book with his whole class. They all clapped his effort.

Hugh then challenged his peers to read his book aloud, using sign language of course. He had taught them Makaton with his teacher aides (refer to the learning story "Sign language Helps Hugh").

The class rose to the occasion and begged for turns!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Learning areas

Level 1 English: Listening, Reading, and Viewing

Level 1 English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting

Hugh has learnt to read five new prepositions and understands the concepts. He can also sign these words. It is becoming obvious to us that Hugh is highly visual and tactile. Riding his bike, making the book, and signing the words have all aided Hugh's learning and speech development.

Where to next?

We will revisit the bike book regularly to reinforce Hugh's achievements.

We will make a similar book on Hugh learning to shop at the school canteen (refer to the exemplar "Hugh's Makaton with Mathematics"), using vocabulary related to good manners, money, and items in the shop.

Another book idea would be on making the transition to secondary school.

We will continue to develop Makaton and encourage its everyday use.

Mouse motivation

Student	Hugh	Date	28 July 2008
		Observer	Sharon (teacher aide)

Background

One of the goals of Hugh's IEP when he came to intermediate was to learn his phone number and street name. Over 18 months we had tried a variety of strategies but he could get so far but no further!

We tried starting with three numbers and then increasing slowly but could still never get all seven numbers consistently. We tried for several months for Hugh to pronounce his street name but it ended up with only two syllables instead of three and the street name was not very clear.

Hugh loves computers and we had all been amazed at how he could find his way into programs after being signed in, even to downloading games and teaching other students how to find games. We thought using his phone number to sign in might be a good motivator.



Today, we told Hugh that he had to sign in on his own using his home phone number. Hugh remembered his password (his phone number) without prompting 24 hours after we initiated the idea!

Hugh was through into his programmes without any teacher aide assistance! Why had we not thought of this before!

Footnote: Hugh can now say his street name and write it in as his password on the computer; this is reinforced with his sight word flashcards. He also uses computer software programmes for literacy and numeracy. A calculator aids his addition – what a long way Hugh's number sense has come from 2007 (refer to the 2007 learning story "Hugh – Numbers have a purpose").

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Using language, symbols, and texts, Managing self

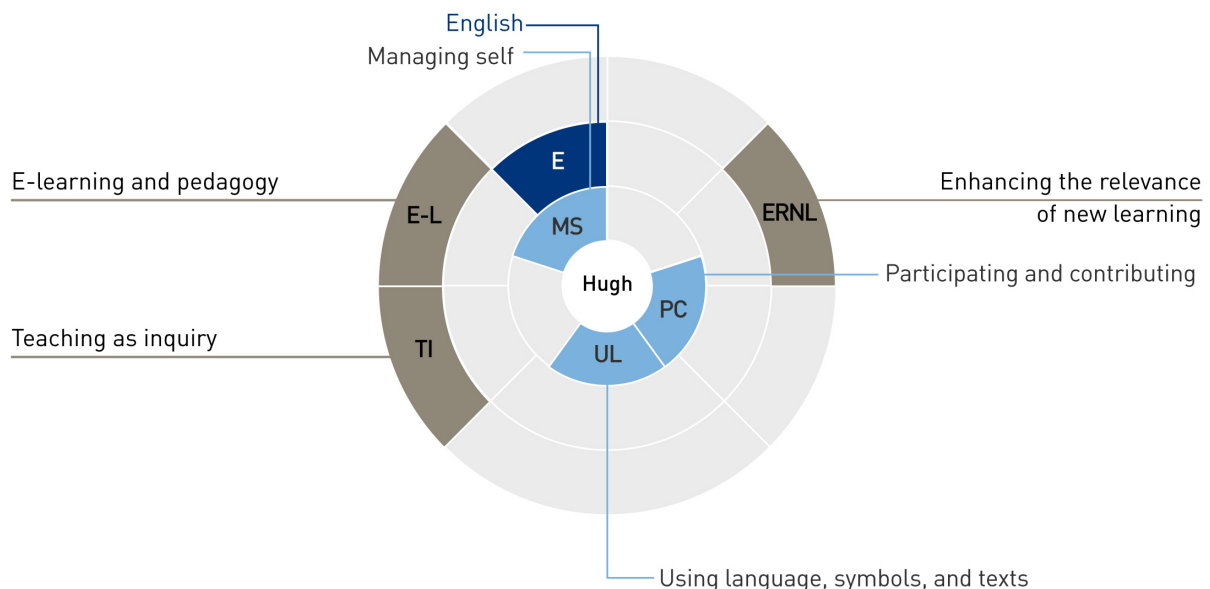
Hugh has a fantastic memory when he is motivated by the mouse; that is, the computer. Being able to remember his seven digit number is an amazing feat. What else can he do?

Where to next?

We will ensure that Hugh says the numbers out loud while he is entering them on the computer.

We will try another important name or number for Hugh to learn.

Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

Hugh's skill in literacy leaps! He is able to read words and numbers, knows the meanings of words, and signs, navigates on the computer, and speaks more clearly (using language, symbols, and texts). Hugh's confidence has grown (managing self) as he feels better understood and therefore is able to participate more readily.

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

Hugh is demonstrating to his peers he is a speaker, reader, and writer. He is proud of his achievements and is eager to share these with others – adults and peers (agency). This learning occurred in various classes and in the playground (breadth). Hugh's literacy learning was in one-to-one situations, in small groups, and with his class. It was distributed across a variety of people and resources – cards, signs, books, and the computer (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

Hugh's learning is in the learning area of English. He is beginning to recognise some text forms and their differences, as well as to use the ideas in some texts. Increasingly, Hugh shows his awareness of text purpose and audience and expects to be understood, responded to, and appreciated by others. He is in the early stages of drawing on personal experience to express simple ideas and information.

Effective pedagogy

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

All of the staff who support Hugh are prepared to try new approaches, to seek help, and be surprised by what Hugh is able to show them and respond accordingly (teaching as inquiry).

By using Hugh's interest in the computer, we have been able to help him learn some of his more challenging goals, like his phone number and street name (e-learning).

The staff has involved Hugh directly in decisions about his learning and have encouraged him to share his learning with others in ways that build on what he knows and can do (enhancing the relevance of new learning).

Reflective questions for the reader

"How does my literacy programme connect oral, written, and visual language?"

"How do I notice and encourage students to be teachers too?"

Useful resources

Hodgdon, L.A. (1998) . *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication – Volume I: Practical Supports for School and Home*. Troy, MI: QuirkRoberts Publishing.

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

Butterfield, N., Arthur, M., & Sigafoos, J. (c1995). *Partners in everyday communicative exchanges: a guide to promoting interaction involving people with severe intellectual disability*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.

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.

Green. V., & Sigafoos, J. (2007). *Technology and teaching: A casebook for educators*. Nova Science Publishers, Inc, New York.