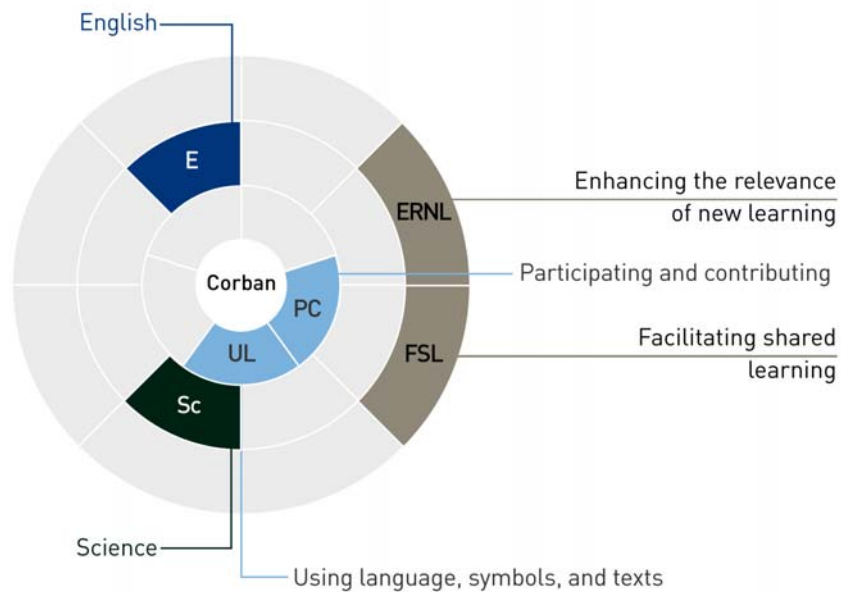


# Corban the bug expert

## Links to the curriculum



## Student background

<b>Name</b>	Corban	Corban loves policemen and trucks. He has several friends and his interests now include soccer. Corban is one of the first children in the class ready for the school day. Corban speaks in three to four-word phrases or sentences and he is short sighted.
<b>Age</b>	6	
<b>Year</b>	1	
<b>School</b>	Primary	

Corban has global developmental delay. Corban is in a class of 21 children and has a supplementary learning support (SLS) teacher three times a week for three quarters of an hour per session to further support his learning. He uses others as a cue for speech and behaviour; for example, if another child laughs, Corban will laugh. He is unaware of body space and the significance people place on their belongings. Corban responds well to clear and close boundaries. There are inconsistencies with his learning and therefore it is difficult to know where to aim things at times.

## Two learning stories

- 1. Bug expert** 3 April 2008
- 2. Writing my own story** 7 April 2008

This string of learning stories shows Corban's enthusiasm for a discovery in the natural world providing the motivation for specific learning in several curriculum areas. The learning he realises he has achieved as a result of this incentive in turn fosters his confidence sufficiently so that he is able to participate in a regular class activity with more contributions than previously.

## Bug expert

<b>Student</b>	Corban	<b>Date</b>	3 April 2008
		<b>Observer</b>	Julie (teacher)

Corban brought a new friend into school this morning. While he was walking to school, Corban spied a six legged insect. He caught the bug and, with Mum's help, found a suitable container for transporting his friend to school. The bug was placed on the "No touch table", and guarded closely by Corban. Corban took great delight and pride when sharing his new friend with the class.

Corban had been finding writing the "b" in his name difficult so to help him continue with his efforts we decided to call the bug "Bobby".

The bug's name was written on a piece of laminated white paper. Corban used a white-board marker to practise writing "Bobby" underneath. This was a real learning experience for Corban, who had a motivating reason for writing a "b".



At story writing time Corban drew a picture of Bobby sitting in his container. Usually when Corban is asked about his picture, his meaning is unclear.

Today, there was no mistaking that his story was about his new friend and that he felt linked to it in some way. Corban dictated a story about the bug, which I wrote underneath the picture. Corban is practising his "b" formation in another context.



I found a picture of a bug that resembled Bobby and photocopied and laminated two copies. I cut one copy into the main body parts. Each part was numbered from one to nine. Corban then matched each piece to the corresponding body part, identifying and stating the number shown.

**WOW!**

Corban not only showed that he knew the numbers one to five but that he is starting to remember the numbers six to nine.

## Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Corban was keen to further his own learning by helping me look in bug books to try and identify the bug.

When I shared the learning that had occurred around the bug with Corban's parents, they were amazed that he was able to finish the drawing of the bug and then relate a story about his drawing. They had not been aware of this happening previously.

## Key competencies

### Participating and contributing

Before finding the bug, Corban had demonstrated that he wanted to take his turn to share news with the class. He had come to school prepared with resources but had been unable to verbalise his ideas in an organised way.

Today, his excitement and avid interest in the bug were obvious and translated into a new confidence in his own abilities. He became the "expert" and was able to tell his peers about finding the bug.

When writing the name "Bobby", Corban was very particular about getting it right. I must ensure that he understands that making mistakes is okay and that it is part of learning.

### Using language, symbols, and texts

Corban was motivated and enthusiastic about writing the name of his bug. It was for an authentic and important purpose and helped him practise writing a letter from his name that he had been having real difficulty with.

## Learning areas

### Levels 1 and 2 science: Living World: evolution

— Recognise that there are lots of different living things in the world and that they can be grouped in different ways.

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

— Writes most letters and number forms legibly when creating texts.

## Where to next?

I will allow Corban to explore the school environment for bugs and wriggly creatures and share them with the class, too.

I will involve Corban with a bug hunting group.

I will give any new bug friends names that help Corban consolidate other letters that he is having difficulty forming.

## Writing my own story

<b>Student</b>	Corban	<b>Date</b>	7 April 2008
		<b>Observer</b>	Julie (teacher)



Today, at story writing time, Corban started off drawing a picture and then came to dictate the accompanying story to me so that I could write it underneath. The bug, Bobby, that he had brought to class a few days ago, was still providing a subject of interest and his drawing was of another bug. We discussed what the bug was doing and Corban told me the bug was eating a chocolate muesli bar.

### Fantastic language Corban!

Corban was thrilled that he had communicated a funny story about the bug and wanted to write it for himself. He took the book to his desk and wrote over and under the letters, independently, without being asked.

Corban was so proud sitting in the sharing circle, reading his story to the other children.

## Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Before this learning story, Corban had been writing under and over in handwriting but had not transferred this to story writing. He really wants to be like the other children and do what they do. His story about Bobby motivated him to write his own story. This was so exciting. The story gave him something that he had done to share with the class.

It allows me to focus on teaching Corban to write the sounds he can hear in the order that he can hear them and on writing some of the high frequency words he can read. Again his interest is a real key for his learning.

## Key competencies

### Participating and contributing

Sharing writing is an important time in our classroom. Before this event, Corban had been showing his picture and the dictated words underneath his story but had not made any attempt to read the story. Today, however, he had communicated a humorous story and copied the letters I had written. He had a real story to share with the other children. A real milestone. WOW.

### Using language, symbols, and texts

A little bug was responsible for motivating Corban to copy the words of his story underneath the ones on the page.

Corban knows that text contains a message that he has linked to the picture. His independent attempts at writing the letters under the story show that he knows how a variety of letters are formed. He is still concentrating on the accuracy of the lower case "b". It also demonstrates strengthening pencil control.

## Learning areas

### Level 1 English: Listening, Reading, and Viewing: processes and strategies

— Has an awareness of the connections between oral, written, and visual language when creating text.

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

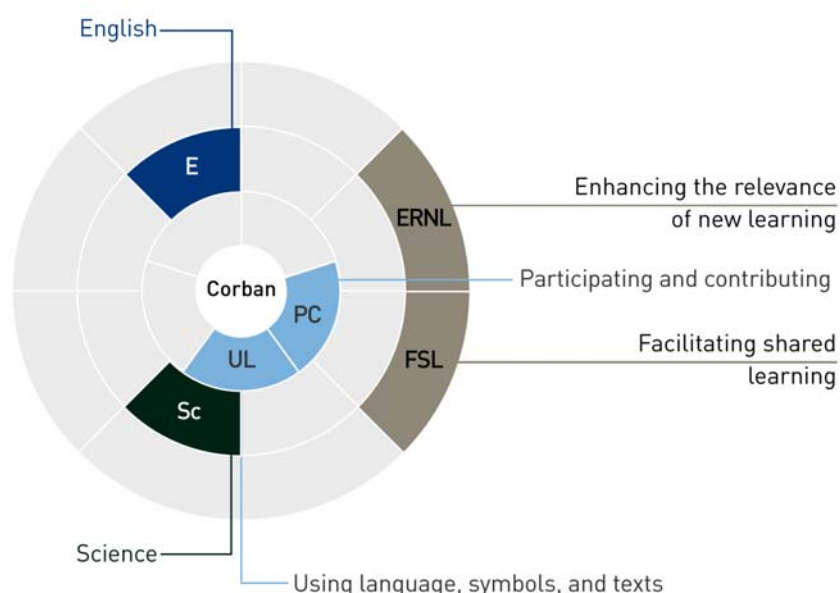
— Writes most letters and number forms legibly when creating texts.

## Where to next?

I will tape some of the stories that Corban tells about things he is interested in and use them as a motivation for drawing and writing.

I will focus on teaching Corban to identify and write the sounds he can hear.

## Reflection — what these stories exemplify



## Key competencies

Finding an interesting bug on the way to school provided Corban with a focus of interest to stimulate his learning. His engagement resulted in an authentic purpose for using language, symbols, and texts – writing the bug’s name – which in turn has much improved his achievement in writing his own name. Corban’s writing gains have provided him with confidence to participate in the routine class sharing session and contribute to a degree he had not been able to previously.

### How might these stories strengthen Corban’s identity as a learner?

Corban was highly motivated by the bug and wanted to share his find. He did so in oral and written forms – forming the letter “b”, independently writing over and under the letters in his story, and reading his story to the class for the first time (agency). The power of the bug brought new learning at school in his handwriting, written language, mathematics, and sharing time, not to mention the encouragement he received from home for his interest and learning success (breadth).

Corban's learning was distributed across a number of mediating resources. He shared his bug with the class in an expert role; did some recording; counting; helped the teacher look for his bug in books; and wrote a humorous story and shared it with his peers (depth). Great learning can come from small things!

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

#### Levels 1 and 2 science

These stories are in the Speaking, Writing, and Presenting strand – Corban is learning to write most letters legibly. In the Listening, Reading, and Viewing: processes and strategies strand he is developing an awareness of the connections between oral, written, and visual language. Corban is also developing an understanding of science at levels 1 and 2, living world, evolution where he is recognising there are lots of different living things in the world and that they can be grouped in different ways.

## Effective pedagogy

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

Corban was so excited at being the expert about the bug he had found. It was delightful to watch him realise that he had something other people wanted to see and know about (facilitating shared learning). Corban's interest allowed me to use the bug to put a variety of deliberate acts of teaching in place to further his learning adventure in different areas of the curriculum (enhancing the relevance of new learning).

### Reflective question for the reader

"Do I make sufficient use of my students' obvious interests from their world to build learning opportunities for both them and their classmates?"

### Useful resources

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

Pollard, S. (2003). *I am an insect*. Auckland [N.Z.]. Reed.

Thompson, S. C. (2005). *Children as illustrators: making meaning through art and language*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.