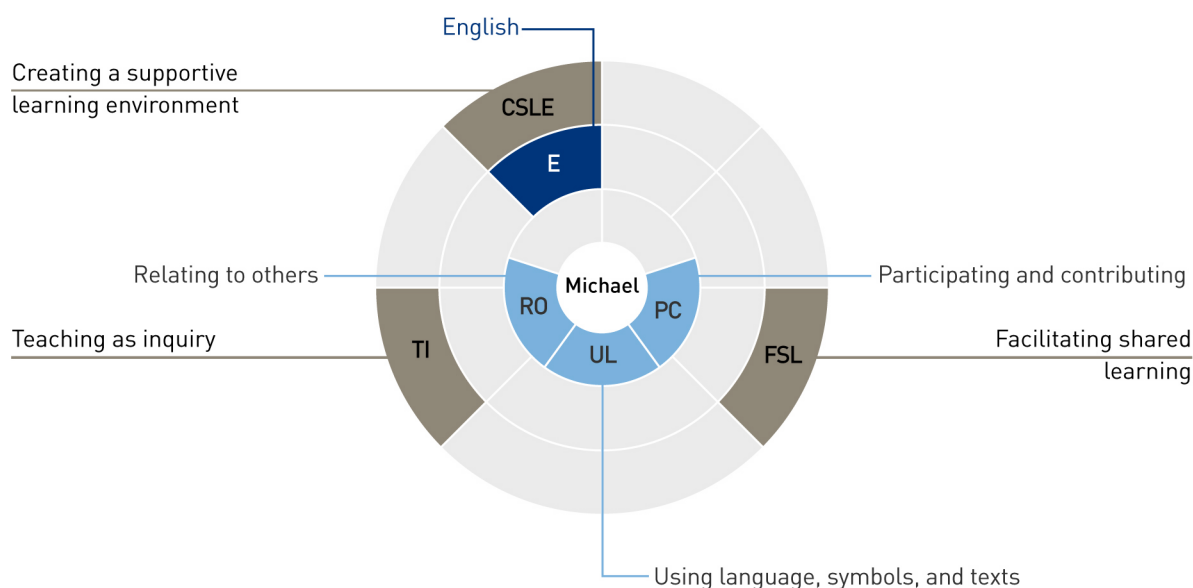


Michael the joker

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, observing what his classmates are doing and then following suit. He has friends and is accepted as an equal by his classmates.

Michael is in a class of 24 children. 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".

Two learning stories

- 1. Michael the news teller** 19 March 2008, 11 April 2008
- 2. Buddy news** 8 June 2008

This string of learning stories shows Michael participating and contributing in class news time over the course of three months. He responds to other students' yes/no questions and relates to his peers.

Michael the news teller

Student	Michael	Date	19 March 2008 11 April 2008
		Observer	Yvonne (teacher)

Intended learning

— The children will tell their news to the class and listen to other children's news.

19 March 2008

Every day the children have a turn to talk to the class and share their news. The children sit in a circle so they can see each other easily, and are therefore able to watch the speaker. Although Michael always comes straight to the mat and joins the news circle willingly, he is reluctant to attempt to talk in a class situation. His Mum had told us that he has a microphone at home and that he loved talking and singing on it.



In fact, her words were, "He loves it so much, you can't stop him". I introduced a microphone to the class at this time, hoping it would encourage Michael to verbalise.

It was not a success for Michael, although the other children enjoyed the experience. Michael looked as though he was about to talk and then would say "no".

We asked his Mum if he could bring something to show the children each day.

This proved to be a better strategy because although Michael was unable to talk, he was able to share. On this day the children, with my help, tried yes/no questions, which Michael was able to answer.

The photo above shows Michael waiting for his turn to share.



11 April 2008

Today, Michael is showing a card with a picture of a cat on the front. The other children ask questions to gain information. He is able to answer yes/no questions about his item.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Participating and contributing

Michael loves being part of this class and wants to do what his peers are doing. He shows this by always following class routines and by his cheerful manner.

Learning areas

Level 1 English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: purposes and audiences

Michael demonstrates his understanding of language by responding to yes/no questions.

Where to next?

We will continue with this system for Michael for now, as it gives him success, and we will gradually move on to encouraging him to share news without a prop and see what happens. In topic discussions, Michael will be encouraged to tell his ideas using the yes/no question system. We could try using the microphone next term and see if it encourages him to talk then.

Buddy News

Student	Michael	Date	8 June 2008
		Observer	Yvonne (teacher)

Intended learning

- The children will tell their news to the class and listen to other children's news.

Every day the children have a turn to talk with their "Talking Buddy" to share their news. The children are assigned a buddy for a week.

This week Michael was buddied with Cameron. I heard Cameron asking Michael what he had had for breakfast. He asked questions like "Did you have..." Michael kept saying "No" until Cameron asked, "Did you have toast?" "Yes!" said Michael.



I made the comment, "I wonder how many pieces of toast Michael ate", which gave Cameron the idea of finding that out. There was a lot of hilarity from both, such as when Cameron asked "Did you have 10?" and Michael said laughingly, and with a cheeky look "Yes!" When the buddies have finished talking, the class come together and I invite children to share any interesting news they heard that day.

Cameron came to the front and said, "Michael told me he had 10 pieces of toast for breakfast!"

Everyone thought this was very funny and many comments were added as well as yes/no questions that elicited the information that he had had marmite on every slice!

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Participating and contributing

Michael is fully involved during news time.

Relating to others

Michael is great at working with a buddy.

Using language, symbols, and texts

But that is not all – creating a joke shows Michael's understanding and interpretation of language.

Learning areas

Level English: Speaking, Writing, and Presenting: purposes and audiences

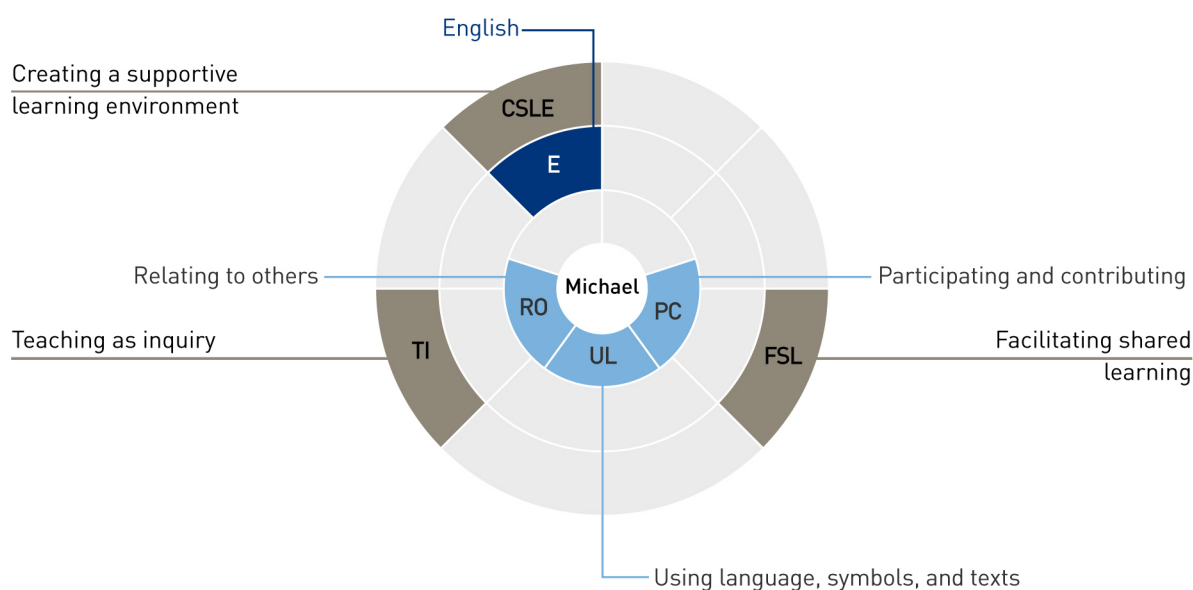
Michael again shows his receptive language skills by responding to yes/no questions. He also demonstrates his increasing awareness of purpose and audience through his cheeky response to the question, "Did you have 10?"

Where to next?

We will write about this in our "Room 2 News" book and share it with the class.

We will continue with the buddy system at news time and extend it to topic time.

Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

Michael enjoys participating and contributing in his class and will take risks with his learning when he is ready. He relates well to his classmates and knows they will support his learning. In the second learning story about news sharing, Michael shows his recognition that language can be manipulated beyond straightforward meaning, by joking with his buddy and then the class. This illustrates an important step in developing competency in using language, symbols, and text.

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

Michael is leading his learning by participating in news sharing time when he is ready, willing, and able (agency). This learning happened over the course of three months (continuity) and both in a class and paired situation (breadth). With support from his mother, Michael has brought different things to share from home for news with a buddy and the class (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 area in this collation of stories is in English. Michael is able to communicate with his peers by verbalising responses to questions they ask.

Effective pedagogy

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

Michael's teacher provides a supportive learning environment where every student's contributions are expected and respected. The teacher found a way for Michael to share his news, which he has warmed to over time. The use of humour is encouraged and shared in this classroom and it is great to see Michael share a joke during news time.

Michael's confidence to share his news has grown with the help of his classmates and in helping him their questioning abilities have sharpened as they glean more information from Michael (facilitating shared learning).

The teacher is prepared to try different ways to help with Michael's communication (teaching as inquiry). The next steps in promoting Michael's learning will involve using teaching inquiry to find other aspects of pedagogy, such as making connections to prior learning and experience and facilitating shared learning, which might support his further achievements.

Reflective questions for the reader

"How do you encourage your students to share in your classroom?"

"Does humour blossom in your classroom?"

"How do you facilitate paired, as well as class and individual learning opportunities, in your classroom?"

Useful resources

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