

Example of Practice I - Secondary School: Jane's Year 10 Science Class

I have been working my way through a unit on Earth Science with my year 10 class. I am keen to get some student voice to assist me in choosing teaching strategies for my lessons and for the assessments of my students' learning. I made the following planning decisions:

- Before beginning this unit I had each student write on a post-it-note how they felt they best learned in science. I used this to guide my choice of approaches for teaching and assessment in this unit.
- I began the unit with a series of 40 True/False statements. Each student wrote down what they thought the answers were. I also had the whole class work through these together. I am going to revisit these statements with them again at the end of the unit. I will mark these with the class, so that each student will be able to see their new thinking and understandings.
- I used creative writing as part of the mid unit assessment – it was focussed on earthquakes. The genre/text form choice was wide and I had discussed this approach with John, who teaches this class for English.
- I have decided to use a jigsaw for the section on New Zealand volcanoes. To introduce the topic the class are going to watch the DVD *Ruaumoko's Heritage*. Within it there is an explanation of the Māori worldview on earth science and volcanic activity.
- Immediately after using these two approaches I am going to ask the students to each provide me with a written comment on how they found learning through the DVD and the jigsaw approach. I hope this student feedback will give me insights into how the students found these two approaches.
- At the end of the unit I am going to ask the students to:
 1. mark on two continua;
 - (a) from 'I really enjoyed this unit' to 'I did not enjoy this unit at all'
 - (b) from 'I found it very useful and it helped my learning' to 'This was not useful at all and it did not help my learning'.
 2. comment on how they found each of different learning strategies used in the unit and the use of creative writing as an assessment tool, as I am keen to find out what they thought about the different ways they can learn. I will disaggregate the responses by students' ethnicity.
- I also intend to disaggregate the data for the assessments in this unit by the students' ethnicity.

Example of Practice II- Secondary School: Kelvin's Year 9 Technology Class

Kelvin explained, "I have been thinking about the PPTA report which stated that of boys nationally who attempted NCEA level 1 only a third achieved NCEA level 3. I know our own school's data are only slightly better. I am pleased we've decided to analyse our data further and review our targets in relation to increasing our boys' NCEA success.

I think that there could be a link between boys' writing and their NCEA achievement; writing is an element of most NCEA tasks. I've read research that says writing fluency and skills for subject areas must be actively built through teaching and learning opportunities in secondary school. I've also read that the act of writing can prompt the writer to think/conceptualise and learn.

In my year 9 class the students have been writing their evaluations and I've noticed that they:

- do not use the specific language of technology
- are having difficulty explaining the concepts, even those they understand really well

I've decided to use an approach I've heard about at a PLD session called **Everyday Writing**. I've described this approach to others at our department meeting-they agree it might be good. Now I want to use it for my inquiry."

Kelvin shows you the notes he made on Everyday Writing during the PLD session that he attended.

Everyday Writing Notes

Everyday writing is a form of writing that helps students to think about their knowledge, reflect on their new learning, and to reconsider what they know and understand.

The key to making it work for students is for the teacher to decide **on a question or prompt** that students will respond to. It is best to start with something that is easy for them to answer and based on the teaching and learning that is underway. Later the prompts and questions can become more challenging as appropriate. However, it is important to remember it is not intended to 'test' but rather to promote engagement with the ideas.

Everyday writing supports students to:

- focus on their subject area learning (they make a great lesson warm up)
- build their fluency in writing, which is important for writing answers in assessments
- think about and formulate their ideas according to the subject
- learn and use the vocabulary required for their subject
- think about and develop ideas before taking part in class or group discussions.

Everyday writing can also provide on-going information about the students' developing understanding of subject concepts and use of specific vocabulary.

Example of practice III - Middle School: Simon's Year 7 Social Studies Unit

Simon has taken a teaching position at a school in a different town from where he had lived in the past. He was keen to get onto some planning for his new class and had been to a school planning meeting where he heard that the classes would all be focusing on social inquiry, with each class undertaking their own inquiry.

He decided to visit the TKI website and found a really helpful unit plan called *A Taste of Town Planning* (<http://education-for-enterprise.tki.org.nz/Resources-tools-templates/Primary-school-resources/A-Taste-of-Town-Planning>).

He wanted to emphasise a historical perspective in this topic and so went to the local library. There he sorted through photo archives to prepare resources about the older existing amenities and those that had previously existed. He organised a time for the class to visit the library so that the students could gather their own material. He was sure they would identify this as an important place for gathering their information and he would be prepared to act on this suggestion.

He looked at the students' assessment information for the whole class and the target students that the previous teacher had identified. He noted that most of the students seemed to be quite skilled at setting up their inquiries, developing questions, and planning their approach, but they seemed to be less successful when it came to gathering and presenting information. He wasn't sure how to address these aspects, but he thought the unit would help him with ideas, and that he would talk to his colleagues.

When he met with his professional leader, Simon told him about this preparation and explained that he began the unit by talking to the students about what the concept of town planning might mean. He got the students to work in groups to discuss and record what they already knew about both the older and newer amenities in this area. Simon felt his preparation had been very good as he seemed to know about much of what they talked about. Then one of the students talked about a Pa site that was on the headland and Simon was shocked to think that he had never thought about town planning in pre European times. Not only had he not thought about what had been in the area, but he had not thought about how the students could learn about those aspects.

Simon listened carefully to the students as they talked. He recorded their ideas and understandings, and he then asked for others to add to this information. When the class began to plan how they would gather information for their inquiry, Simon asked the students how they could all find out more about the Pa site, who they should speak with, and what the inquiry questions might be. He was pleased to have the students' help in the planning this part of the inquiry and noticed that they seemed keen to get started.

Example of Practice IV- Primary School: Meriana and the Six Year Net

Meriana teaches a year one class. She is responsible for doing the six year net testing for her class as well as for Tara's class. Tara is a first year Provisionally Certificated Teacher (PCT). Meriana is released monthly from teaching her class to do this task.

Once a term, Meriana analyses the data for both classes. She works with Tara to show her how she:

- makes comparisons between data for all of the children from this term with those from previous terms for the three years that she holds data
- analyses each child's score on each component of the net
- disaggregates the data for children who are Pakeha, Māori, Pasifika and other ethnicities
- identifies patterns of learning strengths and needs in order to inform next steps teaching for each of the two classes
- identifies a target group of children for whom precise expectations can be set. These children will be monitored more closely. It includes some of the Māori learners
- prepares some notes that she and Tara can use to report to the parents of all the children she tested last term to make sure the parents have this updated information.

At their last meeting Meriana and Tara talked about the next steps teaching for a few children who seemed to be decoding, but not making meaning at the sentence and whole-text level. However, Meriana realised that Tara was not clear what the instruction should look like. Meriana shared aspects of the planning that she had developed for the children in her class with the same needs as some of the children in Tara's class. She also offered to talk to Tara's mentor about Tara coming into her class to undertake an observation of her teaching with children who have the same next steps needs as those in Tara's class.

After this meeting Meriana made some notes that were linked to her planning for Tara to use, if Tara's mentor was happy for Tara to come and observe her teach. The notes would help Tara know what she was looking for when she was observing Meriana teach. Meriana also made an entry in her journal about the way she had worked with Tara. She wondered if this is what it would be like to mentor a PRT or to have a student teacher. She noted that she was not only thinking about the learning of the children in her own class, but she was also thinking about those in Tara's class, and indeed thinking about Tara's learning.

Example of Practice VI - ECE: Bronwen and Jack's Giraffes

(With grateful thanks to Bronwen of Tots' Corner, Northcote, Auckland)

I believe that clay can be a great language for exploring and communicating ideas, so I often have it available for the children to use. One morning I observed that Jack had created a story that stretched along the clay table. I asked him if he would like to explain his story to me. Jack's response was:

This is the mother giraffe and this is the tree.

As he spoke, he used his finger to demonstrate that the height of the tree matched the height of his mother giraffe. He articulated his thinking in greater detail by adding that:

She needs a tall tree because she has a long neck.

Now I'm going to make a baby giraffe he will need a small tree, because his neck is not as long as the mother.

After completing his baby giraffe, he again measured its height against the second tree. Being assured that the height was just right, he then explained to me his decision to add a dinosaur to his story, saying that:

The dinosaur needs to be the biggest, taller than the mother giraffe and the trees.

Once his story-board was complete he carefully used his finger to demonstrate the differing heights of all his animals.

I wrote about this interaction and described Jack's exploration and knowledge of mathematical ideas in a learning story for him. I explained that Jack's interest in comparative measurement is an indication of his understanding and ability in mathematics, and that this understanding shines through in many of the experiences he engages in each day.

When Jack's mother came to collect him Jack showed her his clay story. I also talked to her about the learning story and his explanation.

The following week I was thrilled to see the photos taken by Jack's mother of the giraffes that he had made from blocks while he was away on holiday.



Example of Practice VII - ECE: Erika writing learning stories

Erika has been writing learning stories about the children at her Early Childhood Education centre for three years. She finds this to be really rewarding. She particularly enjoys seeing the children sharing them with their families. She always takes pride in passing on her skills and enthusiasm in writing learning stories to her Provisionally Certificated Teachers (PCTs).

Erika has found that the way she is writing the learning stories (including many photos and quotes from the children's talk) takes a long time. Consequently, she finds she cannot write them for as many children as she would like, or write them as frequently as she would like. She is wondering if it would be beneficial to make them more succinct, and with a greater focus on the teaching and learning. Yet, she worries that the children and their families will be disappointed with the stories because they will find them less interesting.

Recently she attended a PLD session on writing learning stories. At this PLD session the facilitator emphasised the importance of highlighting children's learning in the learning stories, in particular the learning dispositions children are exhibiting. The facilitator said that if the learning stories were to be really useful as assessments, the presentation was less important than the content. Erika is not convinced. She thinks the parents and the children will be disappointed if they are not so beautiful to look at. On the other hand she feels she should try to change the focus of the learning stories, so that they show learning over time and identify the next steps for teaching.

She decides to refocus her learning stories and sets this as a goal to focus on this year.

Example of Practice VIII : BLENNZ Resource Teacher Vision

Andrea, the Resource Teacher Vision, was aware that Kere was not able to fully access the curriculum. Kere's new teacher frequently used the white board to record his instructions and information from learners' discussions for their on-going reference. Kere was not able to read this information, so he was often confused and frustrated. Accessing the curriculum became a key goal in Kere's IEP. When Andrea talked to her professional leader about this example of practice she explained:

"I have worked with magnification solution for learners who have low vision and have attended workshops around iPad/tablet use and appropriate apps. I wondered if using the iPad to photograph the whiteboard would enable Kere to capture information and enlarge it.

I checked that I could access an iPad for a short-term trial. Once I had confirmed this, I planned how I would introduce the idea to Kere's teacher.

I knew that Kere's teacher was not really keen on "fancy technology or gimmicks", as I had heard him speak about that in the staffroom. I knew that a carefully planned approach was necessary. I decided that:

- an after-school demonstration of how the iPad could be used would be best, as there would be no distractions
- linking the plan to the IEP would make it purposeful and indicate my thinking
- a discussion with Kere's teacher about possible barriers to the technology's success would be necessary
- working with Kere's teacher to create a protocol for how the iPad would be used was important
- working with Kere's teacher to decide how we will assess the effectiveness of the iPad for this purpose would also be necessary. This would involve collecting data before and after the equipment was in place, so comparisons could be made.

I sent the partially completed technology application form to the national BLENNZ peer review panel. The panel indicated that this could potentially be a good solution for Kere and to go ahead with the trial.

I had the meeting with Kere's teacher, which went well. We decided to trial the approach for two weeks. I suggested we would need to monitor the manner in which the iPad was used within the lessons and assess the degree to which it made a difference to Kere's learning in relation to the goals in the IEP. Kere's teacher was uncertain how to go about this, so I offered to help plan for that component of the trial. I have since written up some ideas for Kere's teacher to consider around assessing the trial. I want to include Kere's voice in this assessment and I also intend talking to Kere's teacher about how we could get feedback from Kere's parents.

I brought the iPad to the class the next day and helped Kere and his teacher to implement the protocol. This involved allowing Kere to leave his seat if he needed to move closer to the board to photograph the information that he needed. This protocol was aimed at encouraging Kere to take responsibility for accessing the curriculum using the iPad.

By the end of the first week I felt excited because it already looked like it was going to make a positive difference for Kere. From day one he used the iPad to access the information on the whiteboard and to enlarge it so that he could easily see it. He was also starting to use the iPad to enlarge print on work sheets and in books so he could see the print more easily. His teacher was starting to understand how this would help Kere and was investigating apps that would enable the iPad to be linked to the interactive whiteboard as well."