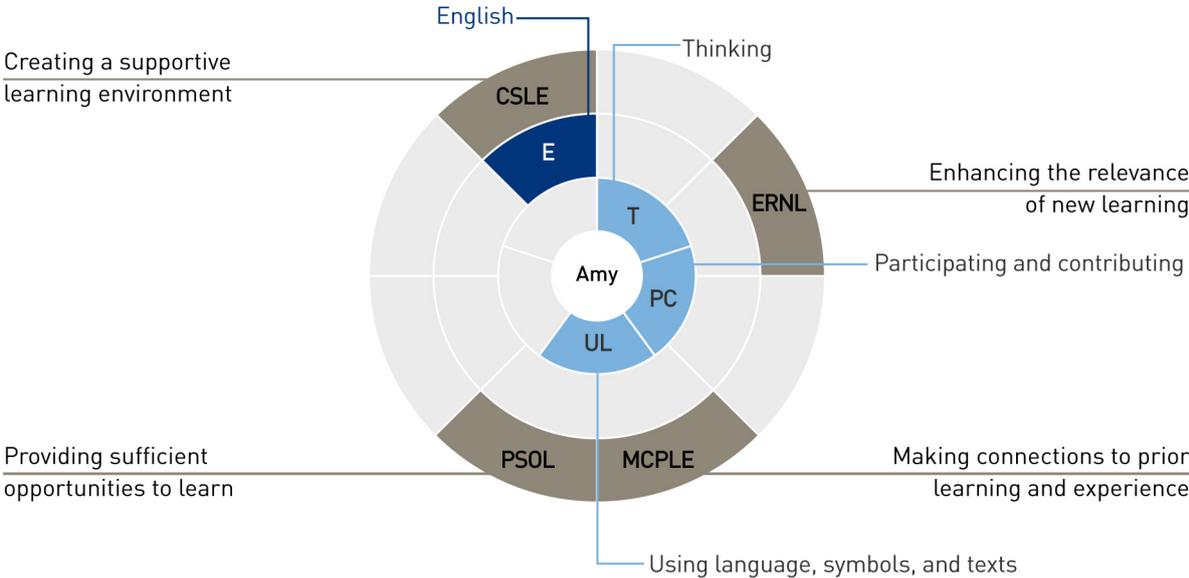


# Amy writes her name

## Links to the curriculum



## Student background

<b>Name</b>	Amy
<b>Age</b>	5
<b>Year</b>	1
<b>School</b>	Primary

Amy’s family places great value on her social and academic inclusion. Amy has Down Syndrome. Her rural school receives ongoing and reviewable resourcing schemes (ORRS) funding, which provides teacher aide support for some mornings, and a specialist teacher for half a day a week.

Her family want her to access a quality education alongside her peers in the classroom, to fully participate in class activities, and to have friends at school. This means that planning and teaching needs to focus on Amy’s learning in both the classroom and the playground.

## One string of learning stories

This string of learning stories from February to June 2008 shows Amy as a full participant in all class lessons where she is learning to read and write her name. The teacher’s plan for teaching writing includes a range of activities that help Amy to develop the control she needs to hold her pencil, write legibly, and be an independent writer.

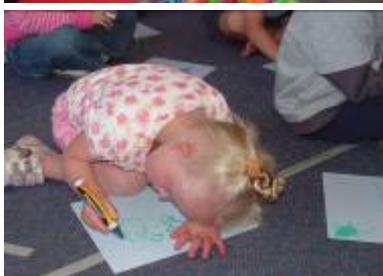
## Amy writes her name

<b>Student</b>	Amy	<b>Date</b>	February to June 2008
<b>Topic</b>	For Amy to write her name independently	<b>Observer</b>	Anne-Marie (ORRS specialist teacher)



### 14 February 2008

Amy is writing her name, matching the example given. Nine letters, including the three she requires, are removed to the whiteboard (left of photo) to make selection easier. Amy successfully locates each letter in the correct order and writes her name.



### 28 February 2008

The class is all working on a written phonics exercise. Amy is with her peers, practising forming letter shapes. She is consistently right-handed. She supports her work with her left hand. Amy finds it easier at this stage to write with a whiteboard marker.



### 28 February 2008

Amy says, "A" when I trace the letter in the sand. Amy traces over the shape with a stick. She enjoys tracing over all the letters of her name and is able to identify the word as "Amy" when asked.



### 28 February 2008

Amy is painting her name with water on an outside table. She is joined by an older student who practises writing his name and Amy's name. They talk about what they are doing using sign language, which is the other student's method of communication. Amy adapts spontaneously and signs also.



### 27 March 2008

The story says, "Amy is eating". Amy chose the photograph and contributed to the text saying, "Amy eat". Amy glues words underneath to match the sentence. She recognises her name in print. She reads the story back carefully with correct one-to-one matching. She reads her story to the teacher.



### **27 March 2008**

Amy is practising handwriting skills in her printing book. She traces over her name with a soft lead pencil. She consistently recognises her name in print. She is keen to share her work and appropriately seeks feedback.



### **10 April 2008**

Amy has carefully and accurately traced over her name. Amy is calling to the teacher to look at what she has done, saying "Look Mac". She is proud of her work. The teacher shares her wonderful printing with the class.



### **22 May 2008**

I assist Amy to make an "A" shape. Together, we make "sausage" shapes from playdough. Amy independently forms an "m" and a "y" shape. She is proud of what she has achieved and asks me, "Photo?" A copy of the photo is sent home to share.



### **19 June 2008**

Amy is painting her name. The letter shapes are clear. Amy is able to read what she has painted. After painting the "y" she paints a fullstop and says, "Finish". She changes her grip from the one used for writing, to holding the end of the brush as she begins to draw a picture of herself under her name.



### **29 June 2008**

Amy is writing a story. After generating language and matching cut-up text, Amy independently and legibly writes her name at the end of the story. She then reads her story carefully and accurately back to the teacher. Amy is proud of her work and initiates a "high five".

## **Analysis – what learning is happening here?**

### **Individual education programme goal**

— Amy will write her name independently.

Amy is now learning to be an independent printer. She demonstrates an ability to focus both when working as part of a group or on an independent task. Amy demonstrates consistent right-handedness. She has clearly made the link between reading and writing. With small amounts of text, she consistently matches one-to-one by pointing to each word as she reads.

### **Amy's perspective**

"Look, look, Mac." Amy wants the class teacher to see her successful printing and holds her work up for the class teacher to see.

I ask Amy to show me her printing. She looks at me with a big smile and says "Good!" Amy shows pride in her work and is beginning to develop self-assessment skills.

**Teacher’s perspective**

Amy’s teacher discusses her progress with me, and expresses her pleasure in Amy’s progress, saying, "I’m very pleased with her. She’s so much better at following the routines," and "She’s doing beautiful printing with the class now".

**Learning areas**

**Level 1 English**

These successes show Amy’s achievement. She initiates writing her name on completed tasks and realises this written work reflects part of her identity. She appropriately seeks and receives praise for her printing from the teacher. Amy is motivated to participate with her peers and enjoys completing other writing tasks.

**Where to next?**

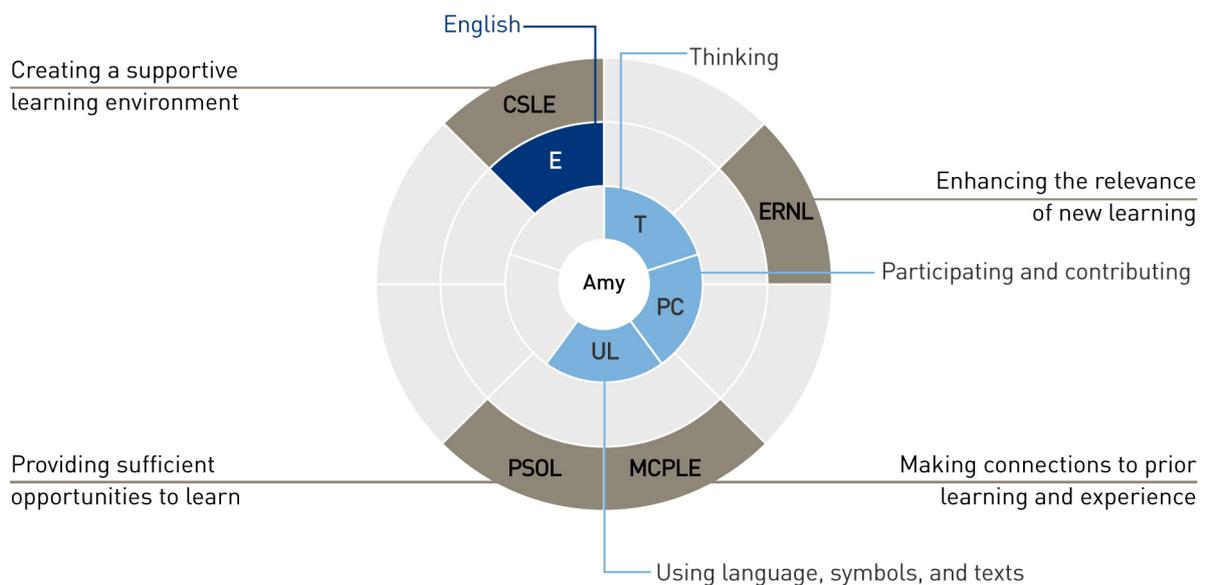
The next steps will be to continue to provide Amy with a range of activities that promote the development of fine motor skills that will help her to hold and control her pencil (playdough, knob jigsaws, mazes, painting, whiteboard, and pens). We will use these opportunities to facilitate peer interaction by sharing the activities with other class members.

Amy will practise typing and printing her name on the computer using the keyboard. Initially, we will place bold stickers on the keys she needs to use. When she is successful, we will extend this to include printing and typing other words that Amy recognises; for example, "Mum" and "Dad" and other high-frequency words that support her learning in English.

**Future individual education programme goal**

A future individual education programme (IEP) goal will be for Amy to consistently and independently print three words accurately and legibly (Amy, Mum, Dad).

**Reflection – what the stories exemplify**



## Key competencies

There is clear evidence of Amy's thinking as she develops the links between reading and writing. She initiates language, which is extended by the teacher into a simple sentence. Amy is able to read the sentence back, correctly matching one-to-one (thinking).

These stories show that Amy is making sense of written language. She understands the communicative effect of the written word and is keen to master skills in the areas of reading and writing (using language, symbols, and texts).

These stories demonstrate Amy's active involvement in her class with her peers and class teacher. She seeks feedback and is beginning to self-evaluate (participating and contributing).

### **How might this sting of stories strengthen Amy's identity as a learner?**

Amy is actively involved in her learning. She values her achievement and independence as she becomes a reader and a writer. Amy understands that the written form of her name represents her and is a part of her identity (agency).

This skill of writing is practised with a range of materials across settings. Amy is now able to identify items as belonging to her by reading her name (breadth).

Once she has mastered the task, Amy is keen to repeat it. The first thing she now does when given a piece of paper is to write her name on it. Legibility and neatness continue to improve with practise (continuity).

As Amy's skill and confidence improves, she is attempting to write other words. She likes to practise writing letters on the whiteboard with the class. She is also practising writing at home and is keen to share this learning with her family. She is able to write her name in a variety of situations (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**

Amy is aware of the links between reading and writing and she is learning to use a personal content word (her name) to create meaning. Amy's success in writing her name is highly motivating and she is a keen participant in these foundation literacy activities.

## Effective pedagogy

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

Amy's inclusion is highly valued. Supportive relationships between peers are encouraged by the teacher. The environment is organised to provide opportunities for positive interaction, with meaningful tasks for all students. The teacher, supported by the teacher aide, encourages a culture where Amy and the other children are independent learners within the social context of the classroom (creating a supportive learning environment).

Teaching is carefully scaffolded. The challenge now is to physically form letters. As Amy develops the skills to print her name independently, she uses her prior knowledge of the letter sequence of her name (making connections to prior learning and experience).

Printing her name is a meaningful and relevant skill for Amy, which can be applied across a range of different settings. She enjoys sharing her successes with peers, teachers, and family. In doing so, she is enhancing her verbal communication skills (enhancing the relevance of new learning).

Amy is a motivated learner who always completes printing lessons with the class. Assessment shows Amy understands the meaning of basic print concepts. The IEP goal of writing her name remains meaningful, as there is still the need to improve legibility. The variety of tasks is motivating for Amy and other students also requiring additional support in this area are encouraged by the class teacher to join her. While Amy is fully included within the class programme, her teacher provides additional specific activities to help Amy achieve her learning goals (providing sufficient opportunities to learn).

**Reflective questions for the reader**

“Have I offered my students as wide a variety of appropriate formats for practising their new learning as is possible?”

“Do I provide many opportunities for my students to present and share their new learning with all the members of their learning community? Does the sharing include the stories, art work, constructions, and so on?”

**Useful resources**

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