Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together

Working Together

Students Participating in their Individual Education Plans (IEP) Module 6 Workbook

Nāku to rourou nāu te rourou ka ora ai te ākonga.

With my basket and your basket the learner will thrive.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Contents

About this resource

Background

Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together is a set of modules that teachers and teacher aides complete together.

Each module in this series is a 'ready-to-use' pack with a presentation, workbook and activities so learning can be put into practice. Some modules include self-paced e-learning. The module materials come in different formats to allow choice about how you learn.

Find out more at Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together.

The modules follow an inquiry cycle. The workbook has a section for each step in the cycle.

If you are leading the learning, refer to the Facilitator Quick Guide and gather any additional materials needed to complete the activities.

Download the learning materials from the Module 6 page of the Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together site.

Note that you have some choices about how you access the module materials. This is the PDF workbook format. It includes links to required resources and printable worksheets for the activities. If you are working with hard copy, you will need to access the online version to activate the links.

For an enhanced online reading experience, access the e-workbook for Module 6. In the e-workbook, activity sheets are Google Docs that you can print, download as Word documents or copy to your own Google Drive for working online.
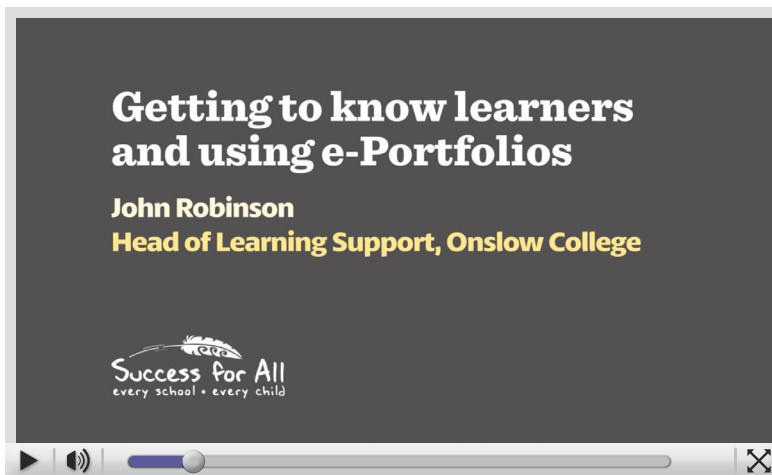
You also have the option to download a PowerPoint or view a narrated presentation.

Next step
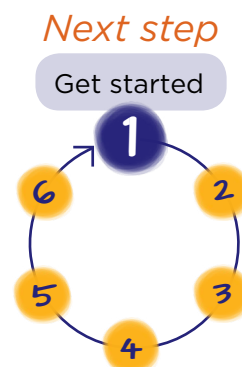
Get started

1. Get started

Start by watching the video. Then read the cartoon, quote and key principles. They introduce the main ideas covered in this module. Discuss these as a group. The learning outcomes describe what you'll achieve once you've completed the six steps.

Getting to know learners and using e-Portfolios

John Robinson
Head of Learning Support, Onslow College

Success for All
every school • every child

Watch the video about getting to know learners and using e-portfolios at the Ministry of Education's inclusive Education Vimeo album.

> When Ben got first involved with his IEPs, he was quite reserved in the meetings, he didn't have much input. But once he got involved with writing his own IEPs and setting his own goals, he had a lot to say. He wanted other adults that were around him to learn the new technologies he was working with, and he's become more outspoken about his goals and what he wants to achieve, in his learning experiences at school … setting his own goals is what he should be doing. It's about him.
>
> *Parent of a year 9 student*

LET ME HELP YOU WITH THAT!

BUT WHEN DO I GET A TURN?

AFTER ONLY TWO MONTHS AS A TEACHER ASSISTANT, GLADYS FINDS HER SPELLING HAS IMPROVED, MATH SKILLS ARE HONED, AND SHE HAS DISCOVERED SHE HAS ARTISTIC ABILITY.

© 1998 MICHAEL GIANGRECO, ILLUSTRATIONS KEVIN RUELLE PEYTRAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. 952-949-8707 www.peytral.com

Key principles

- When the student is at the centre of teaching and learning, their knowledge, contributions, strengths and desires are central to planning.
- For some students, planning is through an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP draws on knowledge from the student and those who know them best. It gives students a say in their learning.
- An IEP is a collaborative learning plan that recognises the student's strengths and achievements and focuses on new learning.
- The IEP is a way of adapting the school programme to the student rather than the other way around. It informs teachers' day-to-day planning, alongside the sources teachers draw on for planning for all their students.
- An IEP is not intended to be a different programme to the rest of the class. It outlines adjustments to the classroom curriculum that will ensure the student learns within the curriculum and alongside their peers.
- Not all students need an IEP. An IEP is used when additional teaching strategies are required to support a student.

Learning outcomes

This module is intended to support teachers and teacher aides to achieve four aims:

1. Recognise the IEP process as a means to support students having a say in their learning.

2. Identify and discuss some of the ways to support students to be actively involved in decision making about their learning.

3. Select one new way to support students as decision makers in their learning and trial a strategy to support the student through the IEP process.

4. Discuss how the trial strategy worked and make any necessary changes as they also consider the needs of the other students they teach and support.

Next step

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2 Watch the presentation

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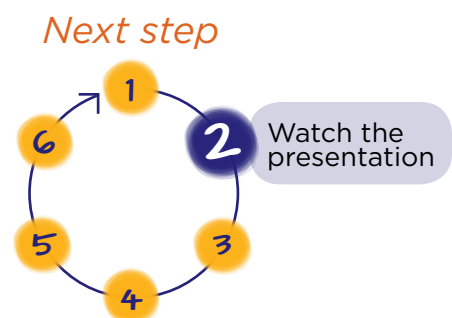
2. Watch the presentation

Watch the presentation about how the IEP process can support students to be actively involved in decision making about their learning. Read the discussion on the next pages for further information.

Visit the Module 6 e-workbook to download or watch the presentation.

Further information

Why this module?

This module supports teachers and teacher aides to provide opportunities for students to participate in their learning.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) process is one way students, families and whānau can express their wishes and preferences for learning. It discovers the strengths and desires of the student and those who know them best and gives students a say. IEP team members find ways to support students to confidently participate in the process and have access to their learning plans.

Learning about your students

An IEP shows how the school programme will be adapted to fit the student and is used when additional teaching strategies are needed to support the student.

A student's IEP informs the teacher's day-to-day planning in the classroom. There will also be other things the teacher plans for that are not in the IEP. An IEP is not intended to be a different programme to the rest of the class. Instead, it outlines how the classroom curriculum may need to be adjusted to ensure the student learns within the curriculum and alongside their peers.

An IEP sets goals that the whole team agree are a priority for the student and their team. It recognises student strengths and achievements and focuses on students' learning pathways. All staff supporting a student should have a copy of the student's current IEP.

The IEP may also include goals for the adults. For example, if Joe needs a talking device to communicate, the IEP has goals for all team members to support use of the device. Some whānau and family members and some staff may need training – this would be included in Joe's IEP, too.

Who does what in the IEP process?

Collaborative decision making is at the heart of the IEP process. It requires all those involved to be part of IEP development and implementation. The specific roles and responsibilities of all the team members, including teachers and teacher aides, need to be discussed, clarified and agreed by the team.

Teachers have full responsibility for the learning and behaviour of all the students in their classes. Their role is central and critical to the IEP process, as they "represent the largest and most knowledgeable resource in programming for the needs of students. The quality of their relationship with parents/carers and community agencies plays a large part in the overall outcomes for students." (Mitchell et al., 2010, page 36)

The teacher aide's work complements and supports the teacher.

Students participating in their IEPs

Effective teaching creates opportunities to involve students directly in decisions relating to their own learning. This means students talk about their goals and the progress they are making. This helps to motivate them and build their confidence and independence. It is the same for all students, whether they have an IEP or not.

Participating in the IEP process will mean different things for different students. Some students attend IEP meetings and take part in conversations, sometimes using assistive technology. Others make a written or recorded contribution. Some students may not be confident enough or able to express their preferences for learning. Their family, whānau and peers can help by contributing their knowledge to the IEP team.

Attending IEP meetings is only part of this, just as the IEP meeting is only one part of the process. It's important for the team to ensure the student has access to their learning plan as it is implemented. The student's plan can be accessible in a variety of ways. For example, it might be in written form, using the everyday language the student uses or visually, using symbols or pictures. The student could access their plan electronically using software that reads the text in the plan.

Students who don't have an IEP

Not all students with additional learning needs require an IEP. Many students' needs can be met using strategies and resources already in place in the school. These students still need to be involved in decisions regarding their learning.

Reference

Mitchell, D. (2010). *Education that fits: Review of international trends in the education of students with special education needs.* University of Canterbury, for the Ministry of Education. http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/special_ education/?result_81590_result_page=1

Next step

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3 Choose an activity
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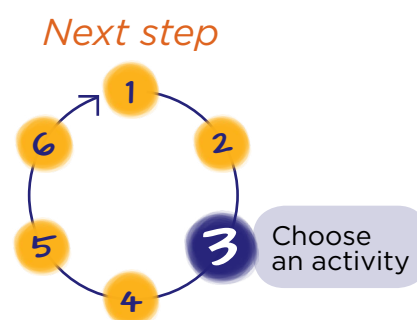
3. Choose an activity

Choose one or two activities to do in pairs or small groups. Go to the back of the workbook for each activity's instructions, worksheets, and resources.

Activity 1

Collaboration in action

In this activity, read about how collaboration in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process is defined in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* and relate this to your own practice. This activity works best when it's done by teachers and teacher aides who regularly work together.

Each participant needs a copy of *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* or access to a laptop or tablet with Internet access. To download a copy of *Collaboration for Success*, go to IEP Online.

Activity 2

Ben's IEP

Read and watch a story about Ben, a year 9 student, who takes an active role in his goal setting and participates in his IEP meetings. Relate Ben's story to your own practice.

Each pair or small group needs a laptop or tablet with Internet access and speakers. Go to Ben's story at IEP Online.

Activity 3

What makes up an IEP?

In this activity, clarify what an IEP is and what it isn't. Refer to information in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* and relate this to your practice.

Each participant needs a copy of *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* or access to a laptop or tablet with Internet access. To download a copy of *Collaboration for Success*, go to IEP Online.

Activity 4

Discussing scenarios about students having a say

In this activity talk about scenarios where schools have supported students to participate in their IEPs and decision making. Relate the examples to your own practice.

Activity 5

Ramona's voice in the IEP process

This activity is designed to generate further discussion about how to support a student's participation in their learning, planning and the IEP process.

Next step
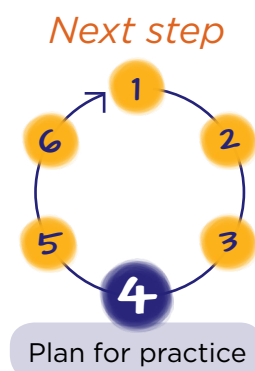
Plan for practice

4. Plan for practice

It's time to plan how you will put your learning into practice. Try one of these suggestions in your work together over the next few weeks.

Working as a teacher-teacher aide team, think of a student you work with who has an IEP, and select one new way to support them to participate as a decision maker in their learning.

Remember, the IEP process is not just about the IEP meeting. Think about how the student could:

- have access to their IEP in a meaningful format
- convey their preferences for the strategies and support used to help them achieve their goals
- participate in discussions about their progress and whether goals are achieved or still relevant
- contribute to future goals.

Read the scenarios in Activity 4 for the ways other schools have involved students in their IEPs.

Make a plan together for implementing this strategy. Consider how to involve the student, their family and whānau, other staff (such as the person at your school responsible for coordinating additional learning support) and wider team members.

Discuss and write down the teacher's role and the teacher aide's role in implementing this strategy. Work out how to negotiate these within the IEP team.

Talk to senior staff and other relevant staff in your school about the strategy you would like to try and your plan.
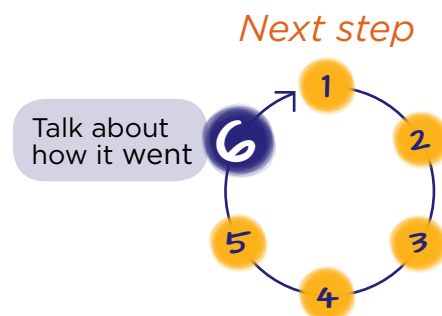
Trial your new strategy.

Next step

Give it a go

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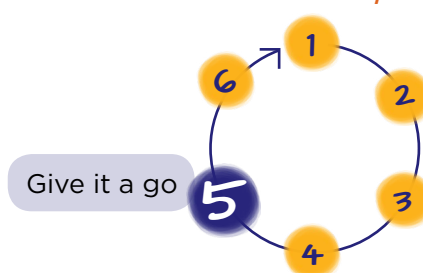
5. Give it a go

Implement the strategy you decided on in Step 4. Use the space below to make notes about what you did and how it went.

Next step

Talk about how it went

6. Talk about how it went

Meet to talk about how the strategy from Step 4 went. Discuss and plan how you might adapt or modify your practice. Use the questions below to guide your reflection.

- What did we try?
- What happened when we did this? How did the students respond to the strategy? How did the adults experience and respond to the strategy?
- How might we change our practice next time?
- What have we learned about the IEP process and how it can help students to have a say in their learning?
- What did we do differently in our trial to encourage a student's participation in their IEP process?
- How did the strategy change our understanding of the student's strengths and preferences?
- •What are we going to do next to support our students to have a say in their learning?

Possible next steps

When thinking about what you might do next, consider the other topics in this series:

- Teachers and Teacher Aides: Who Does What?
- Keeping Our Work Confidential, Professional and Safe
- Supporting Students with Complex Needs
- What Do We Think about Disability and Diversity?
- Identifying Students' Strengths
- Understanding the New Zealand Curriculum
- Fostering Peer Relationships
- Creating Inclusive Classrooms
- Supporting Student Learning in the Whole Class
- Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Visit Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together to access these modules.

Activity options

6 **Students Participating in their Individual Education Plans (IEP)**

Collaboration in action

Activity 1

In this activity, read about how collaboration in the IEP process is defined in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* and relate this to your own practice. This activity works best when done by teachers and teacher aides who regularly work together.

Each participant needs a copy of *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* or access to a laptop or tablet with Internet access. To download a copy of *Collaboration for Success,* go to IEP Online.

Work in pairs or small groups. Refer to *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans*. Read the information on pages 8–10 about collaboration and what it means to support each other in an IEP team.

In pairs, small groups or a large group, discuss the ways your school supports team members to work together. Use these questions to guide discussion:

- Who is in the IEP team for the students you support? Refer to Section 8.1 IEP Team Members in Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans. Are students, families and whānau active members of your IEP teams?

- How big are your IEP teams? Are they big enough to get a range of views but not so big it's impossible for everyone to contribute?

- Refer to the factors for successful collaboration at the bottom right of page 8. Discuss each factor and share examples of when you have seen these in action at your school.

- Refer to the strategies for facilitating collaboration on page 9. Talk about one of the strategies your IEP team or school uses well and one that could be used more effectively.

- How does your school build and show awareness of the tikanga (cultural considerations) around collaboration and help Māori whānau and community members feel safe to participate?

- How does your school build and show awareness of the relevant Pasifika cultures in the school community? How do you help Pasifika families and community members feel safe to participate?

- What are the specific ways that teachers and teacher aides contribute to the IEP process in your school? How are these different?

If you have questions or suggestions about the IEP process in your school, talk to others about this activity, such as a member of the senior leadership team.

Ben's IEP

Activity 2

Read and watch the story about Ben, a year 9 student, who takes an active role in his goal setting and participates in his IEP meetings. Relate Ben's story to your own practice.

Each pair or small group needs a laptop or tablet with Internet access and speakers. Go to Ben's story at IEP Online.

Work in pairs or small groups. Watch the video clips about Ben's IEP.

In pairs, small groups or a large group, discuss the ways that Ben's team support him as a valued member of his community. Use these questions to guide discussion:

• How is Ben included in the development and implementation of his IEP?

• How is Ben's IEP accessible to him?

Review Ben's 'rules' for effective IEP meetings:

• Which of these do you use at IEP meetings at your school?

• If you asked your students with an IEP to develop their own sets of 'rules', what do you think they would come up with?

If you have questions or suggestions about the IEP process in your school, talk to others about this activity, such as a member of the senior leadership team.

What makes up an IEP?

Activity 3

In this activity, clarify what an IEP is and what it isn't. Refer to information in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* and relate this to your practice.

Each participant needs a copy of *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* or access to a laptop or tablet with Internet access. To download a copy of *Collaboration for Success*, go to IEP Online.

In pairs or small groups, cut up the cards over the page and sort them into piles of what an IEP is and what it isn't.

Once you have sorted the list, refer to the table on page 6 in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* to check whether your list agrees.

In pairs, small groups or a large group, discuss how you sorted the features and whether this was the same or different to how the features are sorted in *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans.*

If you have questions or suggestions about the IEP process in your school, talk to others about this activity, such as a member of the senior leadership team.

What makes up an IEP? (continued) Activity 3

A plan that shows how the school programme will be adapted to fit the student.

An exhaustive list of learning goals, activities, teaching strategies, and resources covering all key competencies and learning areas.

A different, separate curriculum.

A plan that brings together knowledge and contributions, from the student and those who best know them, about the student's learning needs, aspirations, personality, and cultural background.

A 'living' document that team members regularly update to reflect the student's changing development and that the team refers to for guidance on their responsibilities and needs.

A document prepared by professionals to be signed off by a student's parents/ caregivers.

A document that lists barriers to learning.

A succinct outline of a few priority learning goals and strategies to meet them within the classroom programme.

A document written for funding or referral purposes.

An individualised supplement to the full-class learning programme that enriches the student's classroom, school and community experiences.

A document that shows how the student will fit the curriculum.

A document that is completed at a meeting and then checked at subsequent meetings.

A forward-looking plan that records student achievements, where they want to go, what supports are needed (including support for team members), and what success might look like.

Discussing scenarios about students having a say

Activity 4

In this activity, talk about scenarios where schools have supported students to participate in their IEPs and decision making. Relate the examples to your own practice.

Read the scenarios about how students have been supported to participate in their IEPs.

In pairs or small groups, discuss each scenario. Use these questions to guide discussion:

- What help did the student get to participate in their IEP?
- How did the student's participation improve the IEP process?
- Thinking about your school, what role would the teacher play in the scenario and what role would the teacher aide play?

If you have questions or suggestions about the IEP process in your school, talk to others about this activity, such as a member of the senior leadership team.

Discussing scenarios about students having a say (continued)

Activity 4

1. Before the meeting, Max and I read the last IEP together. I ask Max if he thinks the goal is still relevant. If yes, we talk about why. If no, we talk about how we know that it is no longer relevant. This is not at just one meeting. We have this discussion over a month. We both have this information to take to the IEP meeting.

2. Between IEP meetings, Inez uses her computer to read her IEP every day. Inez is able to find her IEP on the desktop. She can open the IEP document and push the audio button to hear it being read. Her IEP has pictures next to the text. Inez likes this because it reminds her what the learning is about.

3. Chelsea is nervous about attending her IEP meeting. She would like to tell others what she is doing in her learning, but she thinks it may be too hard. We make a PowerPoint presentation about her learning. When we have the IEP meeting, Chelsea is able to push the spacebar on the keyboard to operate the slide show so that others can watch her presentation.

4. Aroha wants to tell everyone at the IEP meeting what she wants to learn. She thinks it may be hard to remember everything she wants to say. Over a month, as we work together, we make notes about things we have recognised that are going well and things that are challenges. Before the meeting, we use the iPad to video Aroha telling everyone what she has achieved and what she wants to learn.

5. Suni has a communication board. Before the IEP meeting, Suni is asked what is best at school. Suni pulls the symbols off the board and hands them to the teacher. We check that we understand his communication by offering him a symbol we know he dislikes. He returns it to the board. We ask other questions such as, "What do you want to do more of?" We do this a few times over a couple of weeks before the meeting.

6. Amy and I talk about her learning, and I take notes. I type this up into an email to the other IEP team members, and Amy and I send it to the team before the meeting. The email explains Amy's wishes about her schoolwork and the support she gets. At the beginning of the IEP meeting, Amy's dad suggests that he reads the email aloud to start the meeting.

7. Regan says, "I don't want to be in a meeting where people are talking about me." Regan and his specialist teacher choose a date to meet at McDonalds. Together they read Regan's last IEP. Regan says what he wants to work on next and who he wants to help him achieve these goals. We type this up together using WordQ, and we print it off at school. Regan helps distribute it to all the team members. At the IEP meeting, everyone has the document that Regan wrote and that becomes his IEP.

8. Adam's IEP always starts with a home goal. A month before the IEP meeting, the teacher or specialist teacher agrees who will email home to ask if the home goal is still relevant and whether the family wants to set a new goal or extend the progress. Before the email, information about achievement and progress has been shared with the family through email, phone and learning stories. We give the family time to observe and think about the next learning steps for Adam. By the time the meeting takes place, the family will have made a decision about their goal.

Ramona's voice
in the IEP process

Activity 5

This activity is designed to generate further discussion about how to support a student's participation in their learning, planning and the IEP process.

Working individually to begin with, read the scenario about Ramona.

Working in pairs or small groups, discuss the following aspects of the IEP meeting: location, timing, roles of attendees, goal setting, recording and documentation.

Discuss the following questions:

• How could Ramona's voice be heard in the IEP process?

• How could Ramona set her own learning goals?

• How can Ramona's goals be presented in a format that is accessible to her so that she knows what she is learning?

• What does Ramona need to be able to contribute at the meeting?

• How can Ramona and her family and whānau be supported and made to feel comfortable at the meeting?

Additional reading

Students who are blind, deafblind or have low vision may require adaptations to the environment, adaptive methods of teaching and learning, special format materials, the use of technology and teaching in the Expanded Core Curriculum in order to access the curriculum in a meaningful way. The reading *Voices for Our Children: Parent's Perspectives* of the IEP Process http://icevi.org/publications/ICEVI-WC2002/papers/06-topic/06-nagel.htm discusses how the IEP is part of this process.

*Ramona's voice
in the IEP process (continued)*

Activity 5

Ramona is a 13-year-old Braille user with additional needs.

She attends a year 7–13 college and has a number of people involved in her programme. This includes the classroom teacher, two teacher aides, the school learning support coordinator, a physiotherapist, an orientation and mobility instructor, a Family Counselling Service support worker and a Resource Teacher: Vision.

Ramona has definite ideas about what she would like to learn at school. She has a realistic understanding of the barriers she faces in learning, especially in respect to accessing particular environments owing to her physical difficulties. She is not always clear about expected timeframes and finds meeting deadlines a little difficult.

Ramona communicates well verbally but needs to record her ideas, plans and commitments to ensure she manages to meet the goals she sets without being over-committed.

Both her parents and Ramona will be attending the IEP.