

A rationale for the seven aspects in the writing framework

How the aspects were selected

The writing framework describes students' developing expertise as they respond to the increasingly challenging writing demands that are integral to most rich learning tasks throughout the curriculum. Although the framework incorporates knowledge and skills, its main focus is on supporting teachers to consider how students are using these purposefully to complete literacy-dependent curriculum tasks.

The Ministry of Education convened workshops with literacy experts (academics, researchers, and teachers) to discuss the ways in which both reading and writing should be organised for the PaCT frameworks. The experts advised that, like the reading framework, the writing framework should describe the different aspects of students' writing for a range of different purposes across the New Zealand Curriculum. They recommended that the aspects should include a focus on the knowledge and skills that students use in order to write meaningful texts as well as on their ability to draw on these as they use their writing for specific learning purposes.

A key point the experts made was that the reading and writing frameworks needed to be developed together, reflecting the reciprocity between these, to the extent that the possibility of developing aspects shared by both frameworks should be also explored. They advised that students needed to be able to write meaningful texts both in print and using digital devices, and that these texts included a range of text types comprising different features and structures, with a focus on students' ability to write for a number of different curriculum-related purposes. They also supported the approach that was taken in the *Literacy Learning Progressions*, which was to consider writing as a tool for thinking as well as a means for students to record and communicate their knowledge and understanding, experiences, and ideas.

From the outset, the PaCT development team recognised that a key risk for the writing framework was that many teachers would make decisions about their students' writing that were mostly based on the structure and vocabulary of the texts they produce, instead of also noticing the way in which the students create those texts as part of a curriculum learning activity. Accordingly, a major challenge was to find a way to focus teachers on how well students use their writing to meet the literacy-related demands of their task, in terms of the relevance and appropriateness of the texts they create. The decision was made to use the same writing tasks in different aspects to encourage teachers to focus on a particular aspect of a student's response: for example, their encoding skills, their ability to select and use an appropriate text structure, or the precision of the words and phrases they use. The team also decided that where student responses comprised a text the student had written by hand, these would sometimes be typed up so that the quality of the student's handwriting did not distract from the particular aspect under consideration.

Students in years 9 and 10 need to further develop literacy-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are specific to subject areas. These sets of knowledge and skills are shaped by the kinds of texts and tasks that the curriculum requires them to engage with in order to research, think, and communicate in ways that are appropriate to a particular subject. Such differentiation is described in the literature as "disciplinary literacy"¹. The implications for teaching are significant: the literacy expertise that students need to develop in order to meet, for example, objectives at level 5 in the science curriculum is best taught within the science programme, rather than relying on students being able to apply generalisable skills they've learned in English. Accordingly, the writing

framework, like the reading framework, includes exemplars that are set in the context of three different learning areas: English, science, and the social sciences. These three areas were selected because together they represent a broad coverage of the curriculum, so most teachers will be able to find areas that are relevant to their work.

The seven aspects in the writing framework

The writing framework comprises seven aspects. The first three focus on the knowledge and skills that students use in order to write meaningful texts. The next four look at how well students are using their writing to create different texts for different curriculum-related purposes.

Writing Aspects

Writing meaningful text: encoding

Beginning writers put a lot of their focus on encoding (or spelling) the words they want to use. As they develop their expertise in using the code fluently, they are able to use more of their cognitive resources to convey meaning. This expertise includes applying their knowledge of how words work as well as being able to draw on an expanding memory bank of high-frequency words.

Writing meaningful text: using knowledge of text structure and features

This aspect focuses more closely on how students develop and use their knowledge of language features, syntax, and the structure of written text. Students develop their expertise in selecting text structure, layout, visual language features such as headings and diagrams, and language features such as cohesive devices, to meet different purposes for writing.

Writing meaningful text: vocabulary knowledge

Students initially use words that are in their oral language or that have been generated in a classroom activity specifically for the writing purpose. At a midpoint in their development, students develop their ability to use vocabulary encountered in their reading as well as the academic language of learning. Expert students become more precise in their use of language as well as being able to select and use vocabulary that is specific to particular areas of the curriculum, including words and phrases that express abstract concepts.

Using writing to think and organise for learning

Students use their reading and writing to organise their ideas and information for different learning purposes. They develop their ability to use their writing to clarify and develop their ideas as well as to reflect on their learning. They develop their expertise in selecting, noting down, and organising ideas and information, using appropriate formats. They collate, analyse, and classify the content they need for a variety of curriculum tasks.

Creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding

From the start of schooling, students use their writing to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about topics and themes from across the curriculum. As they develop their writing expertise, they become more adept at revealing what they know, selecting and using text features including text structure and language features that are increasingly topic- or subject-specific.

Creating texts for literary purposes

Students use their writing for literary purposes. They develop their expertise in creating different types of texts that express their experiences, ideas, and imagination, evoking a response in their audience with increasing effectiveness.

Creating texts to influence others

Even when they are novice writers, students create texts in order to challenge their audience to do something or think about something differently. They write to argue a point or persuade someone to change their mind.

Expert writers know how to effectively achieve these purposes. They choose appropriate structures and features, controlling the language they use in order to make the maximum impact on their audience.

¹Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). *Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(1), 40–61.