



# Developing learner profiles

## *What is a learner profile?*

### A LEARNER PROFILE TELLS TEACHERS ABOUT A STUDENT

---

It can take the form of a formal document or process, or can simply be a series of conversations with students. It:

- can include information about a student's skills, strengths, interests
- can highlight potential barriers to learning
- make recommendations about what is needed to support learning.

This information sits alongside assessment data.

Learner profiles can help school staff build relationships with students and understand things from their perspective. This can inform planning, classroom layout, timetabling and supports to enable students to participate and contribute in all classroom learning.

## *Purpose of a learner profile*

Learner profiles can be created for a variety of purposes. The purpose is agreed between the student, parents/whānau, and the teacher. This will inform the discussion, questions and information provided by learners and their families.

It's useful to develop a profile of all of your students and to use this as the basis of a class profile.

### A LEARNER PROFILE CAN SUPPORT:

---

- students in letting their teachers and others get to know and understand their interests and strengths
- families and whānau in conveying important information about their child or young person that may affect learning and inclusion
- teachers in knowing about students and building effective relationships with them
- teachers in understanding what works for students and what tools, technologies, differentiations or adaptations might be needed
- teachers in developing an inclusive classroom learning programme.

## *Benefits for students*

### A LEARNER PROFILE GIVES STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO:

---

- express who they are
- address assumptions people may have about them or their disability
- express their aspirations and passions
- have a say in what goes on for them at school and in their learning.

Learner profiles are created by the student, often with the support of those that know them best. Through creating a learner profile, students develop a deeper understanding of who they are as learners – reflecting on what motivates and challenges them when learning. It also creates an opportunity for self-advocacy: identifying the tools, learning materials and presentation options that will optimise their learning experiences.

Adapted from: UDL – Student profiles  
[www.udlresource.ca/?p=1632](http://www.udlresource.ca/?p=1632)



## *Benefits for all teachers*

### A LEARNER PROFILE WILL ASSIST TEACHERS TO:

---

- build a relationship with students
- recognise and remove potential barriers to learning at the outset
- design learning environments and opportunities that build on student interests and experiences to maximise engagement
- select curriculum materials and content that students will be able to access
- offer a range of options for demonstrating thinking and learning that will work well for students
- support positive transitions to new environments.

Alongside assessment data, a learner profile supports teachers in knowing about the learner, providing information from the student's perspective.

## *Creating a learner profile*

Learner profiles can be created by the student or collaboratively with parents and whānau and teachers. Senior students may prefer to just have a conversation.

Before developing a learner profile, discuss with the student and their parents and whānau:

- the purpose of the profile
- the format, which will influence how easily it can be shared and whether it can be added to over time
- if they would like the learner profile to be linked to the school's student management system or from their school e-portfolio.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE

---

Depending on the purpose, a useful profile (whether an official document or simply inquiry by the teacher) can include:

- things they're good at
- likes and interests
- hopes and dreams
- dislikes and things they avoid
- important people in their lives
- pets
- life experiences (activities, places, kinds of people they like)
- how they like to learn and what helps
- things that make it difficult for them to learn
- what they do when they need help
- how they describe and experience school
- what makes them excited, grumpy or frustrated and how they express this
- about their support team
- examples of supports that have worked in the past.

### TOOLS FOR CREATING A LEARNER PROFILE

---

Offer students a range of tools so they can select what works best for them. Discuss with students how they want to capture the attention of their audience and what will be the most effective communication style to use.

Types of tools could include:

- word document or PowerPoint with images and videos
- video
- letter
- Voicethread
- discussion with a teacher taking notes
- blog
- story
- picture, drawing, or diagram.



## Examples of learner profiles

The following documents provide examples of different ways students have chosen to provide information about themselves.

- Rachel, a Year 10 student – created by student, Rachel for her teacher.
- Laiza's transition to school document – created with Laiza's ECE teacher.
- Stephen's letter for his new teacher – created by student, Stephen as he transitions to College.



My name is Laura  
 My hobby is art  
 My thoughts, feelings and goals are for you to discover through listening  
 Remove the label  
 Untie the box  
 And  
 Stop, look and listen  
 Do you see me  
 Can you hear me  
 Only then can you teach me

Abby de Groot (Carrington et al, 2010 pg 28)