

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Technology tools for learning](#)

Understand: [Understanding technology and its impact on learning](#)

Date

30 August 2025

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/technology-tools-for-learning/understanding-technology-and-its-impact-on-learning](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/technology-tools-for-learning/understanding-technology-and-its-impact-on-learning)

---

# Understanding technology and its impact on learning

In the classroom, technology can be an item, a piece of equipment, or a tool that helps with learning. Technology ranges from low-tech to high-tech equipment options.

## Technology allows for personalisation of learning

Technology can be used flexibly to enable learners to customise their learning experience. When matched with the right technology, learners can learn in a way that best suits them.

Technology provides options for engaging learners and it removes barriers to learning. It can also increase a learner's self-reliance and sense of independence.

Not all technology is high-tech. Technology includes many simple adaptive tools, like highlighters, handheld magnifiers, mini whiteboards, and graphic organisers.

---



Students using paper graphic organisers to structure their writing.

**Source:**  
Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

[View full image \(715 KB\)](#)

# Low-tech equipment

Low-tech equipment requires less training, is usually less expensive, and is simple to use, having few complex features. Low-tech options are already in most classrooms and are available to all learners.

Low-tech options can include:

- handheld magnifiers
- book holders for stability
- large-print resources
- handouts and assessment materials printed in specific colours
- coloured overlays
- reachers and grabbers to pick up equipment from hard-to-reach places
- specialised pen or pencil grips to support fine motor control
- timers to support learners to pace themselves through activities
- graphic organisers to support thinking and prompt planning
- a flexible classroom environment to allow greater access.



A learner using coloured Post-it notes to bookmark her work.

**Source:**

Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

[View full image \(2.7 MB\)](#)

## Digital technologies

Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources that generate, store, process, and collect data.

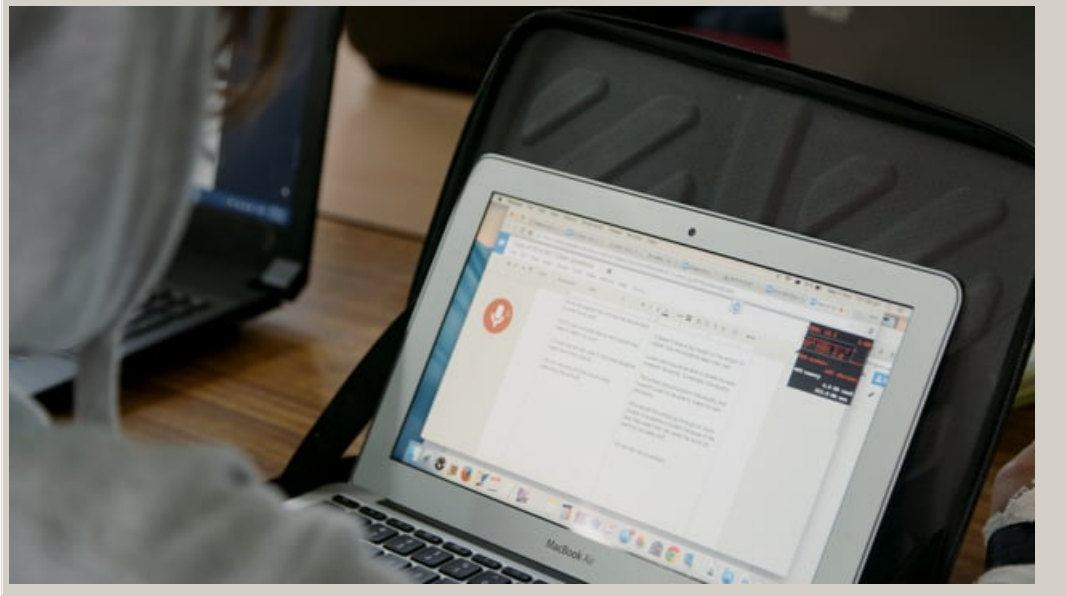
Digital technologies include computer and digital-assisted strategies that support learning – they may have more complex features and may be electronic.

Most digital devices have accessibility features, such as text-to-speech and adjustable contrast and font size.

Effective digital technology is driven by learning and teaching goals, not by a specific technology. Digital technologies enable learners to adapt materials to suit their learning needs and preferences.

Considerations:

- be clear about how the technology will improve teaching and learning and remove barriers
- identify where digital technologies enable learners to access learning more effectively
- select digital technologies based on the needs of learners
- use systems and processes (for example, IEPs, Collaborative Planning Meetings) to ensure you have a consistent school-wide approach to sharing information.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/160672115>

Wellington High School teacher Ben Britton explains how digital technologies support all learners. He describes text-to-speech, which supports learners who have difficulty reading or prefer to learn through listening.

[View transcript](#)

**Source:**

[Enabling e-Learning \(NZ\)](#)

<https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Inclusive-practice/Supporting-English-language-learners/BYOD-supporting-inclusion>

## Funded assistive technology (AT)

Sometimes a student may require specialised support that is not freely available and that is different from the technology used in the classroom. For example, a learner needs additional seating support to access the school's learning spaces.

- **A low-tech solution:** All learners have access to seating that can be moved around and adjusted to different heights.
- **A funded AT solution:** The learner cannot use the classroom furniture. The chair needs armrests, and it needs to be set at a specific height so the learner can access the desktop. A seating system is designed that can be used across all the learner's learning environments. This is a customised solution for an individual learner.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/432307229>

Assistive Technology is the specialised equipment and technology, used in the classroom, that enables students to participate fully and learn. To find out more about Assistive Technology, contact your [local Ministry of Education office](#).

[View transcript](#)

**Source:**

[Ministry of Education, inclusive education videos \(NZ\)](#)  
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/2950799>

Assistive technology (AT) is specialised equipment funded by the Ministry of Education for students with additional learning support needs. However, some equipment is funded through the [Ministry of Disabled People](#).

ACC also provides AT and specialist equipment services when a student's learning needs have arisen from an accident or injury covered by ACC. Furniture will still be applied for through the Ministry of Education.

This information was downloaded/printed from the Ministry of Education's website "Inclusive Education". Except where otherwise noted it is Crown Copyright 2018.

Information on the Inclusive Education website is regularly updated so we recommend you check the website version of this information to ensure it remains current.