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- the very dedicated staff of the Educational Assessment Research Unit
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- members of the Project's National Advisory Committee
- members of the Project's Information Skills Advisory Panel
- principals and children of the schools where tasks were trialled
- principals, staff, and Board of Trustee members of the 286 schools included in the 2001 sample
- the 3153 children who participated in the assessments and their parents
- the 108 teachers who administered the assessments to the children
- the 44 senior tertiary students who assisted with the marking process
- the 166 teachers who assisted with the marking of tasks early in 2002

New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project commenced in 1993, with the task of assessing and reporting on the achievement of New Zealand primary school children in all areas of the school curriculum. Children are assessed at two class levels: year 4 (half-way through primary education) and year 8 (at the end of primary education). Different curriculum areas and skills are assessed each year, over a four year cycle. The main goal of national monitoring is to provide detailed information about what children can do so that patterns of performance can be recognised, successes celebrated, and desirable changes to educational practices and resources identified and implemented.

Each year, small random samples of children are selected nationally, then assessed in their own schools by teachers specially seconded and trained for this work. Task instructions are given orally by teachers, through video presentations, on laptop computers, or in writing. Many of the assessment tasks involve the children in the use of equipment and supplies. Their responses are presented orally, by demonstration, in writing, in computer files, or through submission of other physical products. Many of the responses are recorded on videotape for subsequent analysis.

The use of many tasks with both year 4 and year 8 students allows comparisons of the performance of year 4 and 8 students in 2001. Because some tasks have been used twice, in 1997 and again in 2001, trends in performance across the four year period can also be analysed.

In 2001, the third year of the second cycle of national monitoring, three areas were assessed: mathematics, social studies and information skills. This report presents details and results of the assessments of information skills.



ASSESSING INFORMATION SKILLS

Chapter 2 explains the place of information skills in the New Zealand curriculum and presents the framework for information skills. This identified three main content areas or strands: clarifying information needs, finding and gathering information, and analysing and using information. Within each of these areas, various strategies, skills and processes were identified. The importance of attitudes and motivation was also noted.

Fares (\$NZ)		
	One Way	Return
Adult	\$15	\$30
Child	\$5	\$7
Family*	\$24	\$44

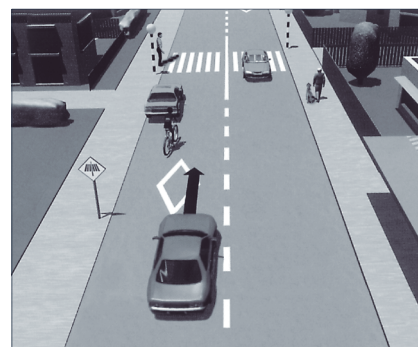
*2 adults and 6 children
Children 5 years and under free



CLARIFYING INFORMATION NEEDS

Chapter 3 presents information about students' skills in clarifying information needs based on six assessment tasks. Year 8 students enjoyed substantially more success than year 4 students. Averaged across 15 task components attempted by both years, 23 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with these components. On most components, 60 to 80 percent of year 8 students performed quite strongly, compared to 35 to 55 percent of year 4 students.

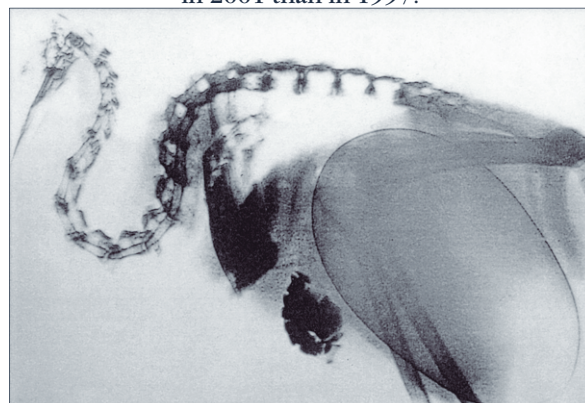
There was little evidence of change between 1997 and 2001. Averaged across 9 task components attempted by year 4 students in both years, 1 percent fewer students succeeded in 2001 than in 1997. At year 8 level, again with 9 components included, 3 percent fewer students succeeded in 2001 than in 1997. These differences are too small to be regarded as important.



FINDING AND GATHERING INFORMATION

Chapter 4 presents results for eighteen tasks that involved finding and gathering information. Year 8 students enjoyed substantially more success than year 4 students. Averaged across 23 task components attempted by both years, 21 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with the components. Most students were quite successful at locating specified information in printed resources, understanding how these resources are structured, and understanding which are most suitable for particular purposes. Fewer had clear understanding of how libraries are organised, were good at notetaking, or explained fully the range of processes involved in project work. Few year 4 students were successful with the two tasks that simulated web searching.

There was evidence of modest improvement between 1997 and 2001 for year 4 students, but little change for year 8 students. Averaged across 29 task components attempted by year 4 students in both years, 5 percent more students succeeded with these components in 2001 than in 1997. At year 8 level, with 48 components included in the analysis, 1 percent fewer students succeeded in 2001 than in 1997.



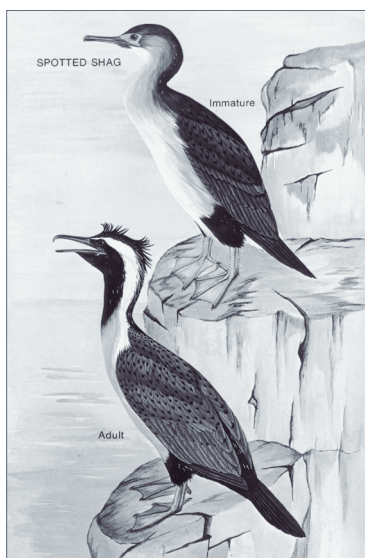
ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION

Chapter 5 presents results for eleven tasks that asked students to analyse and use information. Year 8 students enjoyed substantially more success than year 4 students on two of the three tasks attempted by both years, with little difference on the third. Averaged across the 17 task components of the three tasks, 12 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with these components. Where the analysis required involved higher levels of inference, both year 4 and year 8 students performed much less well than where less judgement was required.



SURVEY

Chapter 6 focuses on the results of a survey that sought information from students about their strategies for, involvement in, and enjoyment of information gathering and interpreting activities. A substantially greater proportion of year 8 than year 4 students reported that they had to find information for a project or topic *beaps* or *quite a lot*. Perhaps as a consequence of being given such tasks more frequently, year 8 students were much less inclined than year 4 students to be enthusiastic about hunting for information and about writing down the information they found. While year 4 students responded similarly to questions 1 and 2, the pattern was quite different for year 8 students, suggesting that many of the information finding projects which year 8 students were asked to attempt were not viewed as “really interesting”. Most students are quite happy to share with others the information they have found. Where comparisons with 1997 responses are possible, the results in 2001 and 1997 are very similar, so that the same conclusions apply.



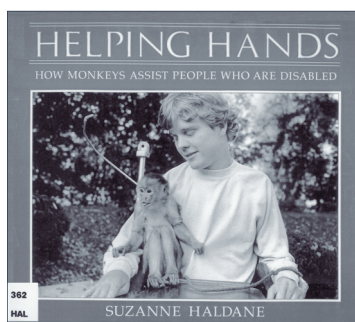
PERFORMANCE OF SUBGROUPS

Chapter 7 details the results of analyses comparing the performance of different demographic subgroups. Statistically significant differences of task performance among the subgroups based on school size, school type, community size or geographic zone occurred for few tasks. There were no differences in task performance for year 4 girls and boys, but girls performed better than boys on 28 percent of the year 8 tasks.

Compared to boys, girls at both levels indicated greater enjoyment of searching for information and also for writing down what they find out. Non-Māori students performed better than Māori students on 31 percent of the year 4 tasks,

increasing to 56 percent for the year 8 tasks. The SES index based on school deciles showed the strongest pattern of differences, with differences on 43 percent of tasks for year 4 students and 71 percent of tasks for year 8 students.

Compared to the previous assessments four years earlier (1997), there are some noteworthy differences. The 1997 year 4 students showed differences in task performance between boys and girls on 30 percent of the tasks and between Māori and non-Māori students on 55 percent of the tasks. These differences are maintained for the same cohort four years later, now at year 8 level, and are also similar to the year 8 results from 1997. The 2001 year 4 students, in contrast, show no differences in task performance for boys and girls, and differences between Māori and non-Māori students on only 31 percent of the tasks. These are substantial reductions in disparities between boys and girls and between Māori and non-Māori students.



PACIFIC SUBGROUPS

Chapter 8 reports the results of analyses of the achievement of Pacific students. Additional sampling of schools with high proportions of Pacific students permitted comparison of the achievement of Pacific, Māori and other children attending schools that have more than 15 percent Pacific students enrolled. The results apply only to such schools.

In schools with more than 15 percent Pacific students, year 4 Pacific students performed similarly to their Māori peers, but a little less well than “other” students. Year 8 Pacific students performed a little better than their Māori peers and close to the levels of “other” students.