

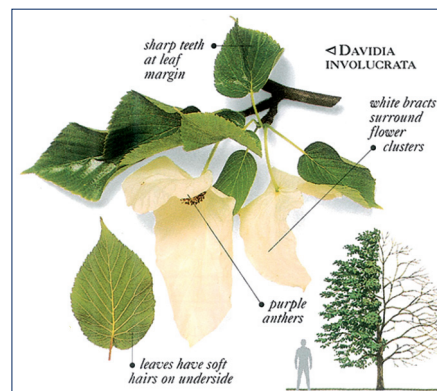
S Summary

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 (halfway 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 2005. Because some tasks have been used twice, in 2001 and again in 2005, trends in performance across the four-year period can also be analysed.

In 2005, the third year of the third 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.

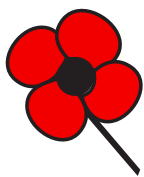


ASSESSING TECHNOLOGY

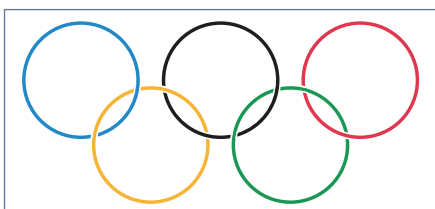
Chapter 2 explains the place of information skills in the New Zealand curriculum and presents the framework for information skills. This identified three main content areas or strands: clarifying information needs, finding and gathering information, and analysing and using information. Within each of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

CLARIFYING INFORMATION NEEDS

Chapter 3 presents information about students' skills in clarifying information needs based on 11 assessment tasks. Year 8 students enjoyed more success than year 4 students. Averaged across 43 task components attempted by both years, 14 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with these components.



Averaged across nine trend task components attempted by year 4 students in both 2001 and 2005, three percent fewer students succeeded in 2005 than in 2001. This is a small decrease. At year 8 level, again with nine components included, on average there was no change between 2001 and 2005. Both of these trend results should be interpreted cautiously because they are based on just nine components of two trend tasks.



FINDING AND GATHERING INFORMATION

Chapter 4 presents results for 24 tasks that involved finding and gathering information. Year 8 students enjoyed substantially more success than year 4 students. Averaged across 52 components of eight tasks attempted by both years, 23 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with these components. Year 8 students scored higher on all 52 components.

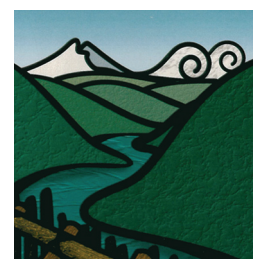


Averaged across 25 components of two trend tasks attempted by year 4 students in both 2001 and 2005, one percent fewer students succeeded in 2005 than in 2001. This is a negligible decrease. At year 8 level, with 68 components of four trend tasks included, on average three percent more students succeeded in 2005. This is a small increase.

ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION

Chapter 5 presents results for 16 tasks that asked students to analyse and use information. Year 8 students enjoyed substantially more success than year 4 students. Averaged across 84 components of 11 tasks attempted by both years, 17 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded well with these components.

Averaged across seven components of two trend tasks attempted by year 4 students in both 2001 and 2005, one percent fewer students succeeded in 2005 than in 2001. This is a negligible decrease, based on a small sample of tasks and components. At year 8 level, with 25 components of four tasks included, on average two percent fewer students succeeded in 2005. This decrease is also too small to be regarded as meaningful.



OVERALL TRENDS

Overall trends can be assessed by considering all 12 trend tasks from Chapters 3 to 5. For year 4 students, based on 41 components of six trend tasks, on average one percent fewer students than in 2001 succeeded with the task components in 2005. For year 8 students, based on 101 components of 10 trend tasks, one percent more students than in 2001 succeeded with the task components in 2005. Both of these trends are too small to be meaningful.



INFORMATION SKILLS 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. For both year 4 and year 8 students in 2005, the internet was by a substantial margin the most popular source of information, with a significant increase since 2001 both overall and relative to other sources such as libraries. A substantially greater proportion of year 8 than year 4 students reported that they had to find information for a project or topic heaps 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. Only about 40 percent of students at both year levels report having used a library catalogue heaps or quite a lot. Where comparisons with 1997 and 2001 responses are possible, the results in 2005 appear to be very similar.



PERFORMANCE OF SUBGROUPS

Chapter 7 details the results of analyses comparing the performance of different demographic subgroups. School type (full primary, intermediate, or year 7 to 13 high school), school size, community size and geographic zone did not seem to be important factors predicting achievement on the information skills tasks. The same was true for the 2001 and 1997 assessments. However, there were statistically significant differences in the performance of students from low, medium and high decile schools on 57 percent of the tasks at year 4 level (compared to 43 percent in 2001 and 81 percent in 1997) and 54 percent of the tasks at year 8 level (compared to 71 percent in 2001 and 56 percent in 1997).

For the comparisons of boys with girls, Pakeha with Māori, Pakeha with Pasifika students, and students for whom the predominant language at home was English with those for whom it was not, effect sizes were used. Effect

size is the difference in mean (average) performance of the two groups, divided by the pooled standard deviation of the scores on the particular task. For this summary, these effect sizes were averaged across all tasks.

Year 4 girls averaged slightly higher than boys, with a mean effect size of 0.14 (compared to 0.06 in 2001). Year 8 girls averaged moderately higher than boys, with a mean effect size of 0.27 (compared to 0.15 in 2001). As was also true in 2001, the information skills survey results at both year levels showed some evidence that girls were more positive than boys about information skills activities.

Pakeha students averaged moderately higher than Māori students, with mean

effect sizes of 0.36 for year 4 students and 0.27 for year 8 students (the corresponding figures in 2001 were 0.25 and 0.39).

Year 4 Pakeha students averaged moderately higher than Pasifika students, with a mean effect size of 0.37 (compared to 0.40 in 2001). Year 8 Pakeha students averaged substantially higher than Pasifika students, with a mean effect size of 0.48 (compared to 0.46 in 2001). The information skills survey results showed that Pasifika students were more involved in and enthusiastic about some aspects of information skills.

Compared to students for whom the predominant language at home was English, students from homes where other languages predominated averaged slightly lower, with mean effect sizes of 0.16 for year 4 students and 0.18 for year 8 students. Comparative figures are not available for the assessments in 2001.

