

Inclusive Education

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# 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.

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Students using paper graphic organisers to structure their writing.

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

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## 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

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## Digital technologies

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

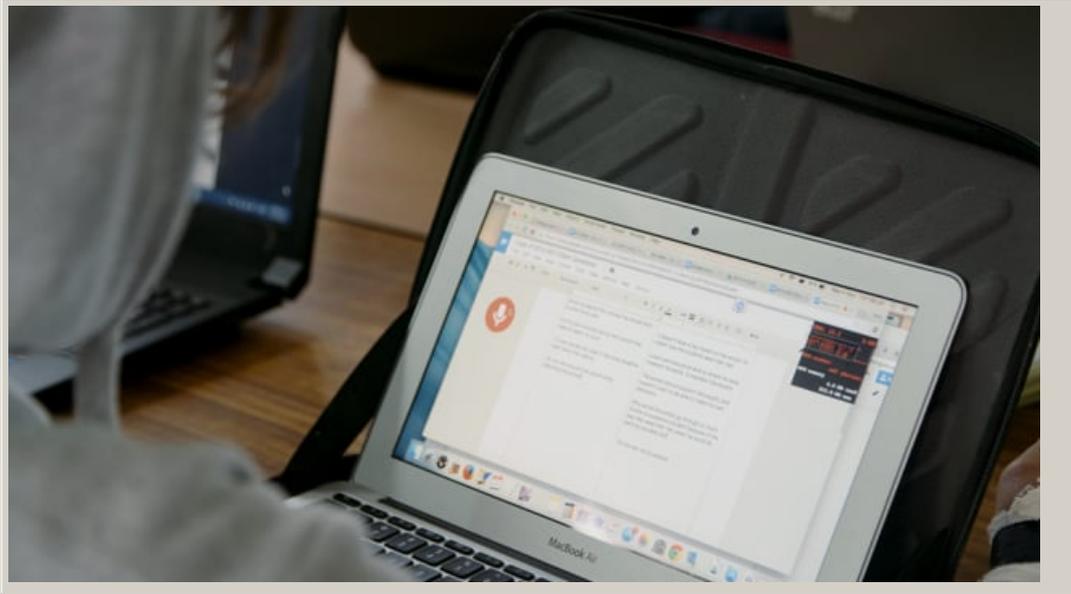
Digital technologies include computer and digital-assisted strategies that support learning – they may have more complex features and may be electronic.

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 Health](#).

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.

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