

Learning New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) during the Novice and Emergent sequences supports students to communicate visually, connect with Deaf culture, and contribute to a more inclusive society. As an official language and valued taonga of New Zealand, NZSL affirms the identity of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Māori Turi communities and fosters respectful engagement amongst diverse learners.

Novice 1 and 2

In Novice 1 and 2, teachers introduce essential knowledge to establish etiquette for NZSL classrooms, where students use their face, hands, and body to convey meaning rather than voice.

Teachers support students to use the five foundational parameters to correctly form each sign, including Māori concept signs for Māori Turi.

These parameters underpin signed greetings, basic introductions, politeness conventions appropriate to Deaf culture, and one-to-one signed conversations.

Teachers create a safe and respectful learning environment where students begin to understand NZSL as a visual language shaped by culture and community.

Emergent 1 and 2

In Emergent 1 and 2, students enhance their understanding of Deaf culture as signed interactions develop from one-to-one and small group conversations to larger group presentations.

This allows them to develop confidence and fluency in their use of more complex NZSL signs and Māori concept signs across a wider range of contexts.

Students develop further understanding of politeness conventions, such as turn-taking and pacing. Students also become more aware of sign variations that exist across regions.

The Learning Languages area prepares students with the knowledge and practices to access related Curriculum Subjects for Years 11–13, such as New Zealand Sign Language.