



# The Wilkie Way

## Newsletter May 2026

[www.wilkieway.co.nz](http://www.wilkieway.co.nz)

### Making sense of Curriculum, Progress Markers & The Reporting Rubric

There has been a lot of “chatter” about how these three documents do not align, that the curriculum is seen as a forest of trees while the progress markers are just a small stand of trees and the reporting rubric isn't anything to do with the knowledge content of the curriculum.

My initial reaction was to go along with this rhetoric and wonder how teachers can possibly reconcile all three documents, but on reflection I am beginning to see a slightly different story emerging.

Firstly the curriculum - it is very content heavy, and the Minister of Education has been emphasising the need to expose students to all the content allocated to their year group.

To expose every student to **all** the content is an ideal scenario - assuming a student misses no day of school, nothing ever interrupts the hour a day of mathematics, the teacher is never off sick and no time is spent on the necessary scaffolding for actual learning to occur as opposed to coverage.

The reality of the classroom (and life in general) means the ideal is never actually met, but it is a goal to aspire to.

I remember a new entrant entering school in term one with no counting words in her vocabulary - she was exposed to counting to 100. It took until term four before she mastered counting to ten independently but she didn't stop at ten, she continued to 44. What if I had only exposed her to the numbers to ten?

What happens to those students who are mathematically gifted? Do we not allow them to be exposed to knowledge from subsequent years? I think of a year 2 student who could explain the whole number and decimal number system and work with them in multi digit calculations. Do we continue to restrict him to broadening activities working with numbers up to 120? How bored and disenchanted would he become?

**The classroom programme MUST meet the LEARNING needs of the students in the class and the curriculum must not become a checklist of coverage items ticked off.**

The progress markers are a reality check - while exposed to the wider curriculum the progress markers narrow down the essential learning required to make progress. The wording of the progress markers emphasises that mathematics is the study of patterns and relationships rather than a series of facts to be memorised. (An improvement on the wording found in the curriculum)

The biggest danger of this is to prioritise and focus on what is assessed to the detriment of exposure to the rest of the curriculum and can lead teachers to fall into the trap of a narrow focus, especially for struggling learners. This requires a change of mindset on the part of the teacher in not protecting students from what they perceive as too advanced for them.

I have always said we should be teaching far more than we assess and certainly should not be getting bogged down in assessing every curriculum outcome.

A statement from the 2007 curriculum document:

**“The long view is taken - a student's ultimate learning success is more important than the achievement of a single outcome.”**

**Teachers MUST NOT use the progress markers as the curriculum.**

The reporting rubric (which is the same for every year group) only begins to make sense when considered in terms of the progress markers.

However I fail to see that reporting a child as emerging, developing, consolidating, proficient or exceeding each year gives parents any idea of progress. It only states how they have managed the curriculum content of a particular year.

My year 2 student would be assessed as 'exceeding' every year without giving any indication of just how gifted he was. My new entrant student would be 'emerging' every year without giving parents any real idea of the actual progress she was making.

NZCER have produced tables to align the PAT score to the rubric descriptors, BUT the wording of the progress markers and the reporting rubrics imply assessment decisions must also come from rich tasks (application of mathematics).

I would really like to see some exemplars for teachers to use to moderate students work.

Taken at it's simplest level a child proficient in year 1 should ideally stay at proficient throughout their learning journey from year 1 - 8.

However the demands of the curriculum, and a student's personal learning journey is just as likely to NOT proceed in a perfectly linear fashion. Life happens!

Looking just at the curriculum I am predicting that we will see a dip in student profiles at the end of year 4.

Many students profiles, using just the given descriptors, will move at least one step down at the end of year 4. My reasoning for this prediction is there are more progress markers at year 4 than any other year group, and to be proficient, students are required to demonstrate mostly multiplicative thinking. This move to more advanced thinking develops over time (and is not measured by recall of facts) and at the end of year 4 I would expect many students to be requiring some guidance (developing) or with increasing confidence (consolidating). The number of students (and adults) who think multiplicatively, confidently, accurately and independently (proficient) is small.

With National Standards we consistently saw this dip at year 5. What we have now are National Standards wearing a different coat.

I have a growing frustration with the mistakes in the online documents, the continual changes and the lack of a date on any document to know if you are working with the most recent version.

Mistakes on the documents shows a lack of diligent proof reading - imagine if we sent home reports with the spelling mistakes and wrong information. The media would have a field day on the incompetence of teachers.

I picked up that the reporting rubric for year 7 has/had the geometry and measurement progress markers for year 8.

Working in a school earlier this week the principal had printed off the reporting rubrics for us to work with the evening before and printed further copies the following morning - and they were different! A date on the bottom of the document would have alerted us to the fact a change/update had been made.

The idea that we will be working with the documents online is completely impractical, and that is if you can find them on line. By the end of a working session my paper copies normally have notes written all over them. Like most teachers, I am not a passive reader - I like to THINK about what I am reading.

## *Tales from the classroom*

### **Setting Achievable Objectives: Part 2**

continued .....

Yes Zane, it is fourteen, fifteen sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and nineteen and not forty, fifty, sixty, seventy eighty and ninety.

Brendon was saying it wrong was he?

Well it is quite difficult and Brendan was trying really hard, he has only just started school, so I think he is pretty awesome.

Okay you can give him a clap if you have to!

I'll see if I can find you a sticker later Brendan.

What's the matter Elsie?

Tiana dropped her dry pair down the toilet.

An accident was it?

Well take the last dry pair out of my cupboard and tell her to put both wet pairs in her plastic bag.

Yes, she will have to fish them out herself, and maybe she won't drop them down the toilet "by accident" again.

Now children we are going to count to ten, but in a very special way.

We are going to count in Te Reo Maori

Yes Jordan, you can come and be my special helper.

James, I can have two special helpers and Jordan is going to help us count in te reo Maori.

Well if you are going to sulk, you had better give me back my koosh ball and go and sulk quietly in the corner.

You'd rather hold the koosh ball and sulk later!

Fine by me.

Well Jordan, how do we start?

Tahi, rua, toru whā.....

Anthony, can you hear a t sound at the end of wha?

No nor can I and that's because there isn't one.

It's not funny children!

Now let's try again properly.

Tahi, rua, toru, whā, rimu, ono, whitu, waru, iwa tekau

Oh, there's the bell. Morning tea children, we've achieved our objectives, count to twenty in English and ten in Maori!



## **Wilkie Way Membership - annual subscriptions**

### **School membership - via invoice**

Under 30 students \$65 + GST

31 to 100 students \$180+GST

101 - 300 students \$290 + GST

301- 500 students \$400 +GST

501 - 700 students \$520 + GST

701+ students \$630 + GST

### **Individual Membership**

\$60.00

payable via Paypal

Non NZ School \$750 - paid via paypal

I am delighted to welcome a new school to the Wilkie Way membership in term two of this year. School subscriptions allow everyone with a school email address to create a membership account.

Support New Zealand publishing - because MOE is assisting the demise of NZ produced resources. Once gone NZ educational publishing will never return.

