

Exemplars

Ngā tauaromahi

Belonging to wider learning communities beyond the early childhood setting

Te Tuhi a Manawatere

Group learning story

On the foreshore to the east of Howick grows a large pōhutukawa tree known by the Ngāi Tai people as “Te Tuhi a Manawatere” – the mark of Manawatere.

It is said that this ancestor came from Hawaiki. Tradition states that he did not come by canoe, but that he glided on the ripples of the waves on the back of a taniwha. He came by way of Thames and Maraetai and then to what is now known as Cockle Bay. There he landed by the large pōhutukawa tree and made his tuhi (mark) thereupon using a red ochre substance known to the Māori as karamaea. The mark he made was a sign to those following that he had come that way. Hence the proverb in respect to things or persons being lost and being searched for by Ngāi Tai: “Ma te tuhi rapa a Manawatere ka kitea” (by the vivid mark of Manawatere it will be found). The pōhutukawa on this spot maintains the rich red ochre when in flower.

I copied this from *The History of Howick and Pakuranga*, a Howick and Districts Historical Society publication. The story was told by Anaru Makiwhara of Ngāi Tai.

This story is the one Helen told the children when sitting under the old pōhutukawa tree on one of the trips to Cockle Bay beach. When the story was finished, the children climbed onto the tree and began to search for the mark. Micah was convinced he had found the mark and to this day will insist that it is so. Helen continued with the story of the two giant lizards and the death of Manawatere that shows up in Amy's story. The children returned to the centre and began to draw the mark.



Amy's learning story

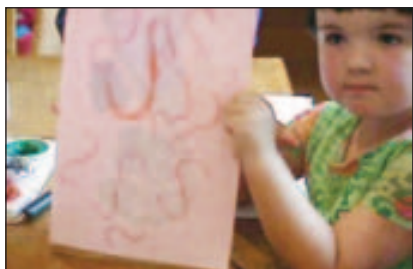
5 February

Teacher: Helen

On today's beach trip to Cockle Bay, I told the children the story of Te Tuhi a Manawatere, underneath the actual pōhutukawa tree.

When we returned to the centre, Amy came up to me outside and said, “Do you know what happened to that little mark?” I replied, “No, what?” Amy proclaimed, “Someone cut it off.”

We then went inside because Amy decided that she wanted to draw the mark and stick it on a tree in the centre and search around for it. We had all become involved in looking for Manawatere's mark or tuhi at the beach, but we didn't find it.



What's happening here?

The teachers have researched stories about the history of the land around the early childhood centre. One of these stories of place is told to the children as they explore the local environment.

What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using a Belonging/Mana Whenua lens)?

These children are learning about the history of the local area where the early childhood centre is sited. Te Tuhi a Manawatere is a story about place that has been handed down from one generation to another and was finally recorded in a local historical society publication. It is part of an ongoing project at this centre, in which the children explore places of interest and significance to the local community and especially, in this case, to the tangata whenua of Ngāi Tai. Amy knows this story and can represent it in her own way by drawing her version of the tuhi and re-enacting its placement on a tree at the centre.

How might this documented assessment contribute to Belonging/Mana Whenua?

There are many stories of the local area that are documented at this centre. They form a layering of documented learning – for the centre community as a whole, as group learning stories that are included in a number of children's portfolios, and as individualised stories (like this one in Amy's portfolio). This excerpt from Amy's portfolio is not analysed, but it is included with other stories about Amy's growing sense of belonging (in this case, becoming interested) in the local environment beyond the boundaries of the early childhood centre. Revisiting the documentation at all levels with the teachers and her family and whānau enriches Amy's understanding of the place she knows as the early childhood centre. It also provides her with a tool for developing a sense of belonging: finding out the local history from the stories passed down from those who have gone before.

What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

As well as being a story of belonging, this exemplar is typical of stories of exploration. Exploring the history of a place in a vivid way, by hearing the story in the exact place that it relates to, integrates the strands of Belonging/Mana Whenua, Exploration/Mana Aotūroa, and Communication/Mana Reo. Amy has represented the tuhi described in the story for herself in order to re-enact the story and communicate it in another way back at the centre.