

Self in the mirror



Matthew is becoming aware of his physical presence. He found a mirror and seemed intrigued by what he could see in it – himself! He spent many moments looking intently at the reflection before jiggling up and down and from side to side, his eyes gazing at the image and looking at it from all the different angles. He revisited the mirror throughout the afternoon, showing great interest in his new discovery.



Shelly
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What's happening here?

Matthew is intrigued by his reflection in a mirror that he finds at the early childhood centre.

What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using an Exploration/Mana Aotūroa lens)?

This is an exploration of self, or at least a working theory for making sense of one's own reflection in the mirror. Matthew is finding out what happens to the reflection when he jiggles, moves from side to side, and looks at the mirror from different angles. He is intently focused on this new discovery and returns to the mirror several times during the afternoon.

How might this documented assessment contribute to Exploration/Mana Aotūroa?

Matthew will be able to revisit the documentation, mostly photographic, as his learning progresses. Barbara Rogoff, in *The Cultural Nature of Human Development* (2003), writes about two basic processes of guided participation and communication: bridging and structuring. Bridging is when the participants bridge different perspectives. Structuring is when adults structure shared activities to make them meaningful and accessible to children.¹⁸ Many such items collected in a portfolio become mutual structuring devices for participating in conversation and therefore developing language.

What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

This exemplar demonstrates the importance of being aware of the value of resources that stimulate interest and learning. Having a mirror available at the right height allows the baby to explore more easily. This is an activity where the researcher (the baby) is absolutely in charge of the research. This kind of agency is implicit in the Well-being/Mana Atua strand.