

Reflective questions

He pātai hei whakaaro iho

How do documented assessments contribute to the way children in this early childhood setting explore things and ideas?

Whose knowledge is valued in assessments? Do the assessments represent funds of knowledge¹⁹ from home and local communities?

Do documented assessments provide staff and children with topics that the children want to explore? Are these assessments followed up? Do collections of assessments provide a picture of continuity of exploration?

Do families and whānau contribute to assessments to give teachers information about the knowledge that they value?

Do assessments demonstrate exploration with the body as well as with the mind?

Do documented assessments record perseverance in spite of failure?

Endnotes

Kōrero tāpiri

- ¹ Media statement from New Zealand-born winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, Professor Alan MacDiarmid, Foundation for Research Science and Technology, New Zealand, 18 May 2005.
- ² Early Childhood Learning and Assessment Exemplar Project Advisory Committee and Co-ordinators, 2002.
- ³ Dorothy Singer and Jerome Singer (1990). *The House of Make-Believe: Children's Play and the Developing Imagination*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 19. Vivian Gussin Paley's books also offer some wonderful examples of children developing ideas about "what might be" and "what might happen".
- ⁴ Guy Claxton writes about perseverance in the same way, as part of a discussion about learning power. He describes learning power in terms of "the four Rs": resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, and reciprocity. Perseverance is a feature of resilience. See Guy Claxton (2002). *Building Learning Power*. Bristol: TLO Limited, p. 23.
- ⁵ P. Black, C. Harrison, C. Lee, B. Marshall, and D. Wiliam (2003). *Assessment for Learning: Putting It into Practice*. Maidenhead, Berks.: Open University Press, p. 46. See also the reference to this text in Book 10 of this series.
- ⁶ Ministry of Education (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/ Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media, p. 37.
- ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 82.
- ⁸ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: HarperCollins, p. 361. Earlier in the same book, Csikszentmihalyi, writing about the early years of creative adults, says that "while these people may not have been precocious in their achievements, they seem to have become committed early to the exploration and discovery of some part of their world" (p. 158).
- ⁹ Brian Sutton-Smith (1997). *The Ambiguity of Play*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 148. In the final pages of this book, Sutton-Smith suggests that three key characteristics of the very young are also features of play and that "play may be ... the best carrier of them and of flexibility" (p. 227), contributing to a capacity for persistence in the face of adversity. The three characteristics he refers to are: persistence in the face of negative feedback, persistence with their own concerns, and reactivity to whatever comes their way (a wide and flexible view about what is relevant) (p. 226).

“It is also very interesting to think of play as a lifelong simulation of the key neonatal characteristics of unrealistic optimism, egocentricity, and reactivity, all of which are guarantors of persistence in the face of adversity” (p. 231). Following this viewpoint, our assessment documentation might work to protect optimism and improvisation, given that an early childhood curriculum will introduce alternative relationships and responsibilities within a community (tempering egocentricity) and may narrow the range of relevant resources and ideas for problem solving.

- ¹⁰ Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998). *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment*. London: School of Education, King’s College, p. 12. (See also Book 10.)
- ¹¹ Jane Gilbert (2005). *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The Knowledge Society and the Future of Education*. Wellington: NZCER.
- ¹² *ibid.*, p. 67.
- ¹³ *ibid.*, p. 77.
- ¹⁴ Ministry of Research Science and Technology (1995). *The Interface between Mātauranga Māori and Mainstream Science*. Wellington: Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, p. 5.
- ¹⁵ Elizabeth McKinley (1996). “Towards an Indigenous Science Curriculum”. *Research in Science Education*, vol. 26 no. 2, p. 155.
- ¹⁶ Geoff Fairfield (1992). *Pigeon Mountain O Huiarangi: The Birth and Death of a Volcano*. Tamaki: Tamaki Estuary Protection Society Inc.
- ¹⁷ Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999). *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, p. 148.
- ¹⁸ Barbara Rogoff (2003). *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 285–301.
- ¹⁹ Norma González, Luis Moll, and Cathy Amanti (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 280–281.