

Flopsy and Mopsy

Child: Aimee

Teacher: Chrissy

Aimee brought her “Peter Rabbit” book to kindergarten. I began reading the first page and the names Flopsy and Mopsy caught Aimee’s attention.

“Those rhyme!” she exclaimed.

I wrote the words “Flopsy” and “Mopsy” on a piece of paper.

“Which one do you think says “Flopsy?” I asked.



Aimee thought for a moment and pointed to the word and then she said, “And that must be Mopsy!”

I asked her to think of other words that could rhyme with these names. Aimee took great delight in rattling off a list of rhyming names. I added “Lopsy”, “Copsy”, “Nopsy”, “Popsy”, and “Bopsy” to the list.

“How about the Peter one?” she asked.

“Sure,” I said. “I’ll write them down.” Aimee suggested “Deter”, “Beter”, “Keter”.

“Mmmm, what about ‘Weter’?”

“Can you write that one?” I asked.

Aimee looked at the list carefully and then wrote “weter”.

“Well done, Aimee!” I said. “You wrote that beautifully.”

“I’m going to show Dale,” said Aimee and she did.

Review

Aimee and I spent a few minutes together looking at her book and in that short space of time, so much learning took place. Literacy involves, among other things, the ability to understand the relationship between sounds and letters. When Aimee wrote the word “weter”, she was using great code-breaking skills – the initial sound is “w”, but the rest of the word stays the same, so comparing it to “Deter”, “Beter”, and “Keter”, “Weter” will look like this ...

Aimee has an obvious delight in words and sounds, and this enhances her enjoyment of books and stories. She can hear the phonemes in words and is able to make up a list of rhyming words.

What's happening here?

Aimee and her teacher discuss words and rhyme while looking at a book that Aimee has brought from home. Before this assessment was recorded, Aimee's teacher attended a workshop on literacy at which she learned of Luke and Freebody's four roles of a literate person (see Book 16). This framework has enabled her to comment very specifically on children's literacy learning (see also the exemplar "A sticky end", by the same teacher, in this book).

What aspects of noticing, recognising, and responding to literacy learning does this assessment exemplify?

By *noticing* Aimee's cue ("Those rhyme!") that she was perhaps more interested in the words themselves than the story and then *recognising* the potential of this interest to become an enjoyable literacy experience, Aimee's teacher encourages her playfulness with words. Part of the *responding* was recording Aimee's alternative words, which gave Aimee an artefact to return to and discuss with another of her teachers.

What does this assessment tell us about literacy learning (using a *Te Whāriki* lens)?

This is a nice example where, for Aimee, "words and books can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform, and excite"¹⁶, an outcome in the Communication/Mana Reo strand of *Te Whāriki*. Knowing the value of early literacy experiences, the teachers are keen to make

literacy events as visible as possible to families as well as to the children themselves. The teacher provides an explicit account to Aimee's family of the literacy learning Aimee has been engaged in. This documented assessment is likely to assure them that literacy is indeed valued at the centre and may lead to Aimee's family seeing possibilities for building on Aimee's interest in words and rhyme at home.

How does this assessment exemplify developing competence in literacy?

As the teacher comments, Aimee's code-breaking skills and her delight in words and sounds enhance her pleasure in books and stories and her literacy skills.

Aimee has a playful interest in the way words work, and she is keen to think about and discuss these ideas with her teacher, which indicates that she has metalinguistic awareness.

Aimee has a phonological awareness of aspects of the sound structure of English. For example, she knows what it means for words to rhyme and she is aware that spoken words are made up of smaller parts that can be manipulated to create new words. In this assessment, she manipulates the onset (the sound at the beginning of the word) to create the new names, "Lopsy", "Copsy" ...

When Aimee identifies the word "Flopsy" and then later spells "weter" correctly, she draws on her knowledge of the relationship between the letters of the alphabet (specifically "f" and "w") and their respective sounds.