

The Snipe and the Clam

Child: Samuel

26 March

Daphne has been helping us at kindergarten today. We are getting much better at singing our Chinese song. Samuel has drawn a picture. Daphne tells me it is about one of his favourite Chinese stories. I wrote the story down as she told it to me and we discussed ways in which we could use the story in our programme.

What next?

I think we could look for more opportunities for Samuel to represent and tell his favourite story.

24 April

Daphne told me some more details of the traditional Chinese story.

Today Samuel drew some pictures that I made into a book. I read the book to the group at the end of the morning.

Daphne told me about the pictures Samuel had drawn and we had an interesting conversation about Samuel at home. He is interested in traditional Chinese stories. He listens to them on audio-tape and remembers many details afterwards. He draws pictures about the stories from his imagination. He likes to listen to traditional Chinese poetry and can recite some of it. He likes traditional Chinese paintings with mountains, mist, birds and flowers - brush paintings. Samuel is learning to play the violin.

The Snipe and the Clam (As told to me by Daphne, Samuel's mother)

鵝蚌相爭(山急无芝)
yú pang xiāng chéng'

'成語故事"
chéng yǔ kù shì'

The fight between the snipe and the clam

A quarrel that benefits only a third party

Once upon a time there was a big bird called Oo. He had a big, strong beak. One day he was hunting for food when he found a big shellfish. It was very big and heavy.

The bird tried to eat the shellfish but the shellfish closed up its shells. The bird's beak got stuck between the shells.

The bird said, "If you don't open your shell, you will not be able to drink. You will be thirsty and then you will die."

The shellfish said, "I will not let you eat me."

The shellfish was very heavy - too heavy for the bird to fly with it in its beak.

"You will die as well," said the shellfish, "because you can't eat with your beak stuck in my shells. You will die of hunger." They argued and argued.

Finally a fisherman found them locked together and caught both of them so they were both losers.



22 May

Because Samuel was so excited about acting out The Snipe and the Clam with the dough models yesterday I asked him if he would help me tell the story to the whole group at mat time. He agreed with enthusiasm and stood out the front holding the pictures. I told the story with Samuel adding some words in Mandarin and also showing us with facial expressions how the clam and bird felt. Everybody clapped Samuel afterwards.

Short-term review

This was a great boost to Samuel's self esteem.
A good opportunity for Samuel to teach us some words in Mandarin.
Samuel also took the opportunity to teach us how to say some English words correctly.

What next?

Encourage Samuel to make simple puppets of the characters in the story.



Samuel showed us how the snipe was feeling.

What's happening here?

When the teachers enlist the help of Samuel's mum, Daphne, to learn a Chinese song, they also find out about Samuel's many literacy interests. In particular, he has a favourite story that is a traditional Chinese tale called The Fight between the Snipe and the Clam. Samuel draws the pictures for the story, and Daphne writes the words in both English and Mandarin. This work is then made into a book that a teacher reads at mat time. On another occasion, the teachers invite Samuel to share his story with all the children at mat time. He provides the Mandarin words and the gestures.

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

Through this series of assessments, Samuel and his mother have come to see that their language and literature are valued and welcomed at the centre. There is a sense of building interest and complexity over time, not only for Samuel but also for his family and teachers, who support his interest in the story. In the first assessment, the teacher learns of Samuel's favourite story but it is nearly a month later when she writes, "Daphne told me some more details of the traditional Chinese story." Over a two-month period, Samuel goes from drawing a single picture based on the story, to making a book, to presenting his story to an audience with enthusiasm. Together, these experiences give him opportunities to practise oral, visual, and written language.

Samuel also acts out the story using dough models. The teachers suggest another way for Samuel to perform his story by creating puppets of the characters.

Samuel's mother contributes to the assessment by sharing specific details of Samuel's interests

and activities at home. Her initial contribution of recognising the story that Samuel was illustrating proves invaluable to setting in train the literacy experiences that follow. The teacher recognises Daphne's contribution by discussing with her how the story might be used.

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

The family have taken on a valued role in the curriculum by contributing their knowledge and expertise. The use of Samuel's home language contributes to his well-being and sense of belonging. The teacher comments that these experiences provide "a good opportunity for Samuel to teach us some words in Mandarin", thereby combining learning outcomes of the Communication/Mana Reo and Contribution/Mana Tangata strands with outcomes of the Belonging/Mana Whenua and Well-being/Mana Atua strands.

How does this assessment exemplify developing competence in literacy?

Samuel's interest and participation in traditional Chinese literature and art is illustrated in this exemplar. (His mother mentions that he also likes Chinese painting and can recite traditional poetry.)

Samuel's knowledge and use of his home language (Mandarin) is valued at the early childhood centre as are his enjoyment and confidence in telling traditional stories and his sense of performance (facial expressions are a part of this).

Samuel and his family are competent at using the spoken and written word as well as at performing drama and painting illustrations to tell a story. The family use this competence to participate in the centre's curriculum.