

Emily's song

A learning story**Child: Emily****Teacher: Jane**

Emily came up to every one of us this morning proudly holding something she had written. I said, "What is it, Emily?" She answered, "It is a song." I could clearly see the musical notes she had written. A little later Rosie made a suggestion that maybe Emily would like to sing her song at mat-time. I wondered if she would be brave enough to stand in front of everyone and sing a song, especially one that she had just written, without practising it. Well, she did and it was fantastic. It was all about princesses with little bits of familiar kindergarten songs in the middle. We all clapped and cheered when she had finished. I asked her if she would like to tape it so that we could learn it and then sing it, but she said, "I have to take it home to teach it to my brother"!!

**Short-term review and What next?**

I kept thinking about Emily and her song all weekend. It was amazing for her to write musical notes and make up a song and then to perform it. What confidence she has to do this. I am in the process of acquiring a tape recorder and then I will encourage her to record her song. Maybe she is going to be a songwriter when she grows up? This is a wonderful example of Emily's literacy learning and her total involvement in something she loves to do.

What's happening here?

Emily has surprised Jane by showing her a song she has written, complete with musical notes. Not only has she "written" music, she has also composed the song and happily sings it for the whole class at mat time. The song is a composite of new material about princesses, woven together with snippets of kindergarten songs. The performance is met with considerable enthusiasm from the children, who clap and cheer when she has finished.

What aspects of noticing, recognising, and responding to learning in the arts does this assessment exemplify?

When Emily shares her new music with Jane (the teacher), Jane responds by inviting her to sing her song to the other children. This is a considerable challenge, but it is confidently taken up by Emily, and she is delighted and inspired by the children's response to her impromptu performance. After this event, Jane plans to invite her to record her song on tape so that they can all learn it.

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

Emily demonstrates several learning dispositions throughout this assessment. She expresses herself through writing the music and then by performing her song for the children. Although the teacher wonders if she will be able to stand in front of the class and sing the song that she has just written, Emily has no difficulty in responding to this challenge. This experience generates confidence and competence in performing in front of an audience as well as in entertaining others.

How does this assessment exemplify developing competence in the arts?

In this exemplar, Emily draws her own symbols, which are similar to Western symbols of musical notation. Emily is able to draw on her previous musical experiences (observing and noticing musical notation and singing songs at kindergarten) for this activity, and she uses these experiences to improvise her own music. She has learned a lot about some of the symbols and conventions of music, including writing it, singing it, and performing it for others. She is also planning to teach the song she has written to her brother.