

Tegan plays for the birds

Child: Tegan

Teacher: Jane

A learning story

Tegan sat down on the couch in the book area, bringing the guitar with her. She began to play the guitar and said, “It’s working, it’s working.”

I asked Tegan, “What’s working?”

“My playing – it’s working.”

“How do you know that it’s working?” I asked.

“The birds are moving. I played the guitar so they could dance.”



Short-term review

Tegan displayed a genuine interest in the new birds. She demonstrated this by wanting to play the guitar for them so that they would dance. “They are moving.”

Tegan was also interested in using a musical instrument to accomplish what she wanted to do.

This can be linked to *Te Whāriki*, Communication, Goal 4: “Children develop skills with media that can be used for expressing a mood or a feeling or for representing information, such as crayons, pencils, paint, blocks, wood, musical instruments, and movement skills”.

What next?

Encourage Tegan to help care for the birds and to communicate with them.

What’s happening here?

The kindergarten has just received some budgies in a cage. Tegan is aware of the new birds and also has an interest in the guitar. She plays it and observes the birds moving. This generates opportunities for dialogue with her teacher and for her musical development. It identifies her perception of the power of music in her world.

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

This short dialogue between Tegan and her teacher illustrates the importance of using conversation and questioning to illuminate what children are thinking. Without the interest and questioning from the teacher, no one would be aware of the purposeful task that Tegan had set herself in encouraging the birds to dance.

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

As with other forms of language, music grows and develops in meaningful contexts when children have a reason to communicate. Here we have an example of Tegan using the guitar to create music to express her feelings and her desire to communicate with the birds. She is discovering a different way to be creative and expressive.

How does this assessment exemplify developing competence in the arts?

Tegan is both exploring and producing music through playing the guitar. She recognises that music can serve different purposes and wants to provide music for the birds to dance to. As she plays the guitar, she is experiencing a range of musical elements, including beat, rhythm, and tempo, and drawing on her own imagination and creativity. Her belief that the birds also hear the music and dance to it “critiques and transforms” conventional purposes for playing the guitar.