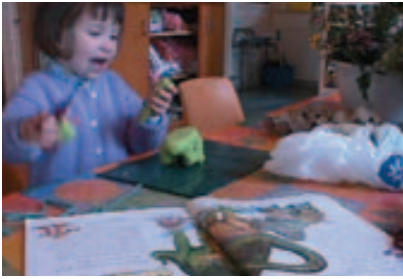


# Dinosaur exploration



## Green play dough dinosaurs

Neeve came to me early in the day and said that she would like to make another dinosaur from play dough. Out came the play dough and a firm base to put it on, and she was onto it.

Today she wanted to make a stegosaurus. She found the favourite dinosaur book, and she was right onto it. When the head kept drooping, she asked for sticks and began to strengthen it so that it was free-standing. I have not seen Neeve use tools to stabilise her work before, and I was impressed. The moment she finished, she decided that one was not enough and sat down to make an ankylosaurus. Neeve makes this dinosaur at home quite a lot, and she made it quickly and accurately and then began the third dinosaur, a magnificent green and orange one. Now, for Neeve, three in one day is not enough! She came to me at the end of the day and said, "Robyn, I made another dinosaur, and Maya put him in the sun to dry." I went with her and, sure enough, there was the most beautiful little clay triceratops drying in the sun. Four magnificent dinosaurs in one day!



## Soundtrack for the dinosaur movie show

I brought a dictaphone to work this morning with Neeve's Dinosaur Movie in mind. I talked to Neeve and Damien about making a soundtrack to accompany each of their movies. I thought that a practice run might be the best way to start, so Neeve, Damien, and I sat together and took turns to speak into the dictaphone. Neeve didn't hesitate to say her name after Damien, and then she made a longneck sound. We repeated this several times. The three of us then took over the sleep room. Neeve and Damien's scrolls were stretched from one side of the room to the other.

I gave Neeve three pieces of her art work I had saved to attach to her scroll. She was delighted to see them and went to work immediately and independently.

Both Neeve and Damien had a small amount of space to add more to their scrolls, so after both of them had finished attaching their pictures, we went to the computer to print some more dinosaur pictures. Neeve decided that she wanted the same two pictures as Damien. I enlarged and printed them. They shared the same chair and enjoyed watching them coming out of the printer. Neeve went straight back to work cutting and taping her dinosaur pictures onto the scroll until it was all completed.



### Short-term review

Neeve has shown great dedication and independence in bringing this Dinosaur Movie production to its final closing stages.

### 12 June

Neeve, Damien, and Helen had a wonderful time today putting a soundtrack together for each of their movies. When we had finished, Neeve and Damien ran around the centre pretending to be dinosaurs themselves for a short time. Sound effects and all!

### What's happening here?

Neeve and Damien have a passion for dinosaurs. Neeve's assessment portfolio indicates that, for about a year, she has represented dinosaurs using a range of media: painting, drawing, and sculpting with clay, play dough, modelling clay, and sand. Her teacher wrote one of the learning stories in this exemplar when Neeve and Damien collaborated to put on two movie shows.

### What aspects of competence does this assessment exemplify?

This project includes sustained focus, persistence when difficulty arises, and collaboration, illustrating the children's developing participation strategies and dispositions. When they make the scrolls for the movie show, Neeve contributes her painting ability and Damien contributes pictures that (with assistance from a teacher) he has downloaded from the Internet.

In pursuing this interest, Neeve and Damien acquire a wealth of knowledge about dinosaurs and their habits and habitats. A number of writers (for example, Csikszentmihalyi) have suggested that being deeply involved in a topic

or interest over time is a source of creativity. Neeve and Damien's experience provides an example of this.

### How might this documented assessment contribute to developing competence?

Neeve and Damien's interest in dinosaurs and the strategies and dispositions that they develop over time have been documented. These assessments provide examples for the children and their families of the learning that is valued, of the way in which competence is being defined, and of how the programme is enhancing that competence.

The process the children go through to represent and develop their ideas has been carefully documented. (See the process photographs of Neeve making a stegosaurus out of green play dough.) The teachers can refer back to this when discussing possible learning pathways with Neeve and Damien.

### What might this tell us about informal noticing, recognising, and responding in this place?

The teachers at this childcare centre have had to keep up with Neeve and Damien. They consult the library and the Internet and encourage the children to find information from a wide range of sources.

A range of media is readily available for the children to represent their ideas about dinosaurs.