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Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Assessment and Learning: Community

Te Aromatawai me te Ako: Hapori

5

Kei Tua o te Pae
Assessment for Learning:
Early Childhood Exemplars

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Kei Tua o te Pae
Assessment for Learning:
Early Childhood Exemplars

**What difference does assessment
 make to children's learning?**
Community

**He aha ngā hua o te aromatawai mō
 te ako tamariki? Hapori**

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Introduction

Exemplars are examples of assessments that make visible learning that is valued so that the *learning community (children, families, whānau, teachers, and beyond)* can foster ongoing and diverse learning pathways.

Early Childhood Learning and Assessment Exemplar Project Advisory Committee and Co-ordinators, 2002 (emphasis added)

Exemplar books 5, 6, and 7 ask the question: “What difference does assessment make to children’s learning?” These exemplar books are about the purposes and consequences of documented assessment in early childhood.¹ We know that feedback to children makes a difference to their learning. What difference does documented assessment make? The exemplars collected for the Exemplar Project suggest that documented assessments can make a difference to:

- community: inviting the participation of children, families, whānau, teachers, and beyond;
- competence: making visible the learning that is valued;
- continuity: fostering ongoing and diverse pathways.

This book is about the first of these: community. Documented assessments can invite people to participate in a particular learning community designed to foster children’s learning.

He kupu whakataki

Developing learning communities

He whakatipu hāpori akoranga

Etienne Wenger (1998) explains that:

Students need:

1. places of engagement
2. materials and experiences with which to build an image of the world and themselves
3. ways of having an effect on the world and making their actions matter.

From this perspective the purpose of educational design is not to appropriate learning and institutionalize it into an engineered process, but to support the formation of learning communities ...

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Teaching and learning events can be designed around learning communities, and learning communities can be connected to the world in meaningful ways.

There are four main aspects to the development of learning communities, each of which is discussed below:

- developing relationships;
- making some of the work public;
- making connections between the early childhood setting and home;
- making connections between the learning community and the world in meaningful ways.

¹ Exemplar books 5, 6, and 7 owe much to a position paper written for the Exemplar Project (Carr and Cowie, 2003). They also draw from a paper presented to the NZCER Annual Conference (Carr et al., 2001).

Developing relationships

The idea of a learning community is introduced in Book 2. It is helpful to think of the early childhood setting as a learning community constructed through the everyday responsive and reciprocal relationships that develop between those who belong to it.

Research indicates that responsive and reciprocal relationships between teachers and children are rich contexts for learning. Siraj-Blatchford et al.'s (2002) report on the Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (EPEY) study (2002), a large-scale research project in the United Kingdom, concludes that:

adult-child interactions that involve some element of “sustained shared thinking” or what Bruner has termed “joint involvement episodes” may be especially valuable in terms of children’s learning.

page 10

Sheridan McKinley (2000) designed a study to identify the aspirations and concerns of Māori parents and whānau regarding their children’s education. She asked parents to describe their best teacher at either primary or secondary school and asked children to describe the characteristics of their teacher that they liked most. For the parents, the most desirable characteristics were that teachers:

- were caring and friendly, recognised the potential in children, and were comfortable;
- were respectful;
- were upfront, direct, honest, and fair.

For the children, the characteristics of their teacher that they most liked were that they:

- were kind;
- had a close relationship with the children;
- provided help when it was needed;
- provided interesting activities.

McKinley’s findings emphasise the importance Māori parents and children place on belonging to learning communities in which their relationships with teachers are warm, friendly, honest, and respectful.

Huhana Rokx (2000) outlines some relevant concepts as they relate to Māori traditions.

Let me break down the concepts of collectivism and interdependency as I see them relating to Māori traditions. These are the concepts of manaakitanga, aroha, awhi, tuakana-teina, kōrero, waiata etc. These concepts are all based on face-to-face, in-your-face, physical persona interactions and relationships. Or in other words, people. He aha te mea nui i te ao? He tangata. What is the most important thing in the world? People. People interacting with people.

page 16

One way in which teachers can build responsive and reciprocal relationships with children is by sharing their own home experiences.

Vivian Gussin Paley (2001) demonstrates how sharing personal experiences can be a key feature of teaching in *In Mrs Tully's Room*. Mrs Tully, the supervisor of a childcare centre, tells numerous stories about her grandfather in order to assist the children to understand their own learning experiences.

Making some of the work public

Learning communities are also constructed by writing down or recording some of the work of the community. A learning community is a place of collective participation. One of the ways the participants are connected together as a “community” engaged in learning is through the community’s practice being made public or documented. If the practice is made public (to even a limited audience) or documented, then it is available and visible, not only for the teachers but also for the children, families, whānau, and beyond to “read” in some way.

Etienne Wenger (1998) writes about the need for a balance in education between participation and what he calls “reification” (making something public, making it “concrete”, realising or documenting it). He suggests that designing an educational programme requires two kinds of opportunities for negotiating meaning in a learning community:

1. One can make sure that some artifacts are in place – tools, plans, procedures, schedules, curriculums – so that the future will have to be organised around them.
2. One can also make sure that the right people are at the right place in the right kind of relationship to make something happen.

pages 231–232

The artefacts in place will include documented assessments, and these will influence parents’ aspirations and expectations. There is a considerable body of research that suggests that parents’ aspirations and expectations (as well as their beliefs about whether achievement is associated with effort or innate ability) influence children’s achievement in a range of ways (for example, Biddulph et al., 2003, and Frome and Eccles, 1998). Some further New Zealand studies of family aspirations for their children are also outlined in Sarah Farquhar’s research synthesis (2003; page 14).

Some of the parents in Sheridan McKinley’s (2000) study believed:

that their children entered wharekura [Māori-immersion secondary schools], from kura kaupapa Māori [Māori-immersion primary schools], with a confidence and an eagerness to learn because the teachers had instilled the belief that the child could achieve anything they wanted to. There was no such phrase as “I can’t”.

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Documented assessments can contribute to and construct such beliefs.

Making connections between the early childhood setting and home

Including families and whānau in the early childhood centre's curriculum and assessment enhances children's learning. Families enrich the record of learning, reduce some of the uncertainty and ambiguity, and provide a bridge for connecting experiences. Early childhood settings can include families in their assessment and curriculum in many ways. Documented assessments that are sent home regularly invite and encourage families to take part in the learning community. As many settings have found, narratives of achievements are a particularly successful way of doing this. In some settings, families write "parent" or "whānau" stories to add to their children's portfolios. Children contribute as well (see Book 4). A wider community of people and places can be part of the curriculum and become part of the assessments as well, for example, local whānau can provide guidelines for definitions of competence in a number of domains.

In parent and whānau-based programmes, family and centre are closely aligned.

If we visit Bronfenbrenner's ecology model, he talked about the home and the centre as being two distinctive microsystems of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Both were separate. In kōhanga reo the two microsystems must overlap. The overlap is brought about by the commitment to the kaupapa and the entire whānau ownership of *Te Whāriki*.

Arapera Royal Tangaere, 2000, page 28

Biddulph et al. (2003) include a chapter on centre or school partnerships with family and community in their best evidence synthesis of research in *The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand*. They conclude:

There are various forms of partnership, but not all are effective. Those which are poorly designed, based on deficit views, and not responsive to the needs of families can be ineffective, and even counterproductive.

page 172

They cite as an example of a successful overseas initiative the partnership between the Pen Green Centre and the community in Corby, England (pages 166–167).

Making connections between the learning community and the world in meaningful ways

Book 6 outlines three aspects of competence. Two of these are "learning strategies and dispositions" and "social roles and culturally valued literacies". Children explore and develop these aspects by engaging with people, places, and things and through the involvement of the early childhood learning community in the outside world. For example, visiting artists can help the learning community set reference points for competence in art. Exemplars throughout the books provide examples of the documentation of these connections. The documentation itself then contributes to the resources of the community.

Biddulph et al. (2003) report that in:

a small study of Tongan parents living in Auckland, Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998) found that a significant motivating force behind the desire of these parents for their children to be successful in school was their hope that their children would be fie'aonga (useful) to their own community.

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What to look for

- Assessments that are accessible and detailed enough to invite children and families to suggest developments and alternatives and to bring knowledge and expectations from home. They can be revisited at home with family, whānau, and the wider community of friends and neighbours. They also clarify teachers' interpretations and expectations.
- Assessments that include contributions from home that can be revisited in the early childhood setting. Teachers and children can make connections with the knowledge and expectations at home.
- Assessments that reflect manaakitanga and include in the early childhood setting some of the socially and culturally valued roles in the community, including tuakana-teina roles and the role of carer for the environment.
- Assessments that reflect two-way conversations between the early childhood setting and the wider community.
- Assessments that record ongoing explorations of the local landscape and valued people, places, things, and times.
- Assessments that document literacies and ongoing relationships with people from a diversity of cultures in the community.

Links to Te Whāriki

Ngā hononga ki Te Whāriki

The exemplars in this book supplement those in Book 2 where the four principles of *Te Whāriki* are discussed and exemplified separately. Learning communities that are empowering take a holistic approach to learning. They are constructed through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things as well as through involving whānau and community. All the principles are integrated in the development of a community that will foster ongoing and diverse pathways of learning.

Assessments will contribute to the development of bicultural learning communities committed to kotahitanga, ngā hononga, and whakawhanaungatanga. The development of communities of learners will be reflected in concepts such as manaakitanga, aroha, awhi, tuakana-teina, kōrero, and waiata (see page 3).

Exemplars

Children's names: Matiu and Heremaia
Date: 23 July

Nanny's Story

A LEARNING STORY		
belonging mana whenua	TAKING AN INTEREST	Nanny came into Kindergarten today with Matiu and Heremaia. They were both proudly holding the pūrerehua they made with nanny at home. "Hoatu ki a whaea," says Nan. Matiu gives me his pūrerehua.
well-being mana atua	BEING INVOLVED	"You know what it's made of?" he asks, smiling at me. "I'm not too sure, Matiu, can you tell me?" "I made it from fish heads, me and Nanny, see?" "Were the fish heads nice?" I ask.
exploration mana aotūroa	PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY	"Mmm, yeah" he replies. Nanny told me that they did a karakia and gave the first fish back to Tangaroa (Guardian of the Sea), then they caught some more. Those ones they took home and ate them for kai.
communication mana reo	EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING	Then Matiu, Heremaia and Nan made the purerehua from the fish heads. I asked Matiu and Heremaia if they would like to put their pūrerehua into the office so they were kept safe.
contribution mana tangata	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY	Matiu asked if he could have news today at the mat. "I think that is a good idea, Matiu". We leave the wonderful purerehua in the office ready for mat-time.

Short-term review

What a wonderful learning experience for the family to share with the other children. Nanny felt comfortable to share her knowledge and this wonderful activity she did with her mokopuna and with the teachers. Nanny's knowledge of Te Ao Māori is reflected in the conversation and is shared with teachers (e.g. Karakia).

Thanks for the wonderful idea, nanny, all we need to do now is catch a fish!!!!

What's happening here?

Matiu and Heremaia proudly bring pūrerehua they made at home with their nanny. Nanny's story about fishing and the cultural traditions associated with fishing is added (with her permission) to her mokopuna's portfolio. Matiu repeats the story at mat time, and it is later incorporated in the children's play.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

Matiu's nanny contributes a story and cultural knowledge to the early childhood centre, and the teacher writes it down for Matiu's portfolio. Matiu repeats the story at mat time. The children later incorporate it in their play.

Ngā tauaromahi

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

At this kindergarten, the head teacher's first language is Māori, and many family members speak te reo Māori while they are at the centre. Families frequently share kai moana with the children, and photographs of a community event in which the families opened and ate mussels became part of the documentation on the wall of the kindergarten.

Cultural themes and community events and knowledge are an integral part of this early childhood programme. Community participation is enhanced through the use of te reo Māori and the support of tikanga Māori, as is evident in this assessment.

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

Both Nanny and Matiu told this story. The teachers recognise its importance and may well tell it again when other stories are told to remind the children of culturally valued traditions.

The teachers frequently include photographs of similar episodes in documentation displayed on the wall.

A gift of fluffy slippers

Child's name: Vini

Date November

Teacher: Rosie

Learning Story

A LEARNING STORY

belonging
mana whenua

"My Mother's slippers are broken," Vini explained to me. "I would like to make her new slippers," he continued.

"Great, Vini – what a thoughtful idea ... What do you think you need to make them?" I asked.

"Hmmm ... cardboard ... brown cardboard," he decided.

well-being
mana atua

I suggested that he draw around the shape of my feet – he agreed my feet were approximately the same size as his mother's. These were skilfully cut out.

"Next I would like some material," Vini decided as he fossicked through the fabric container. He produced the yellow fluff and together we negotiated our way around the shape of the soles. (Cutting sheepskin requires quite some effort!)

exploration
mana aotūroa

With the aid of the glue gun, the soles were attached along with the top of the slippers. Vini liked the way I slipped my foot into my shoes – his slipper design followed along the same theme.

communication
mana reo

"These are superb slippers, Vini! – have you finished them?" I enquired.

"No ... not yet ... they need a ribbon," he answered.

It was to be the pink boa – a feathered strand tied in a bow with a blue pompom to top them off!

The wrapping process began ... great thought went into the colour of the paper and of the bow around the top of the parcel. Glitter and glue were used in the final finishing touches of his gift.

contribution
mana tangata

Vini presented his most precious gift to his mother after mat time ...

Shalu held the beautiful slippers to her heart and, overwhelmed, she sighed and said ...

"A gift to be treasured for a lifetime."





Short-term review

What can I say, Vini? Words really cannot describe the thoughtfulness, caring and love you demonstrated today. Mummy was so right when she talked about a 'gift for a lifetime' ... You are a wonderful example to us all ... we are so incredibly proud of the person you are ... may you continue weaving your magic forever.

QUOTE FROM PART OF THE PARENT'S VOICE:

Vini has been a very affectionate son from the beginning. But now here I have proof. The slippers he made for me were unbelievable in terms of thoughtfulness and technical perfection for a little child. I am also very very thankful to all the teachers for helping him to be what he is today and what he will be tomorrow ... Many thanks for spending all that time (and so patiently).

What's happening here?

Vini, aged four, tells the teachers that his mother needs new slippers. He makes a pair for her (with much measuring, gluing, and decorating). The teacher writes this up for his portfolio, and Vini's mother adds a comment.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

This exemplar is an example of an assessment that is accessible and detailed enough to invite the family to suggest developments and alternatives and to contribute knowledge and expectations from home. It invites their participation.

Vini's mother adds to the assessment of Vini's work. Her contribution includes a reference to the technical expertise that this work illustrates. She writes that the slippers were "unbelievable in terms of thoughtfulness and technical perfection for a little child".

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

The teachers' ongoing comments in Vini's portfolio indicate that they value comments from his parents.

Vini's mother provides an in-depth comment on her son's early childhood education. The teachers include it in the assessment, encouraging further contributions.

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

In writing about this episode, the teacher emphasises Vini's developing identity as a caring and thoughtful person. The commentary is written to Vini. The assumption is that this story will be read back to him.

A range of materials and tools (such as the scissors and a glue gun) are available for the children to use in their constructions so that the teachers can readily respond to the children's plans. In this case, the teacher recognises a learning opportunity and appears to provide just the right amount of assistance at the right time, helping Vini to make a pattern and assisting with the cutting.

Exploring local history

Group learning story

October

After reading the story about Hinemoa and Tūtānekai, we talked about the carvings in the whare of Tūtānekai and what each part of the wharenui was called in te reo Māori. We talked about how they could have been made.

Grayson said, "Special carvers made them with hammers and knives." The other children agreed.

Azia asked if she could make a whare. I said, "Sure. What do you think you could use to make it?"

Grayson said, "You could use the ice block sticks like I did, see?" She was pointing to the pictures that she, Joel, and Tessa had made of the wall of Tūtānekai's whare.

Azia said, "Okay, but I want to make my own whare."

Grayson, Joel, and Tessa had created their own whare and talked about how they should look while referring to the pictures that we found and the storybook.

What next?

Organise a trip to the local museum to see more Māori art and craft and also the maihi of a wharenui, because that really interested the children. The upcoming marae trip will also stimulate lots of discussion and interest.

Talk more with the children about the different parts of the wharenui and what they are called. This will provide an excellent lead-in to our trip to the marae, as the children will have an understanding of the physical aspects of the marae before we go.

Grayson's learning story

Lately, we have been focusing on sharing New Zealand legends with the children. Their interest is continuing each day, with them asking for the stories to be repeated. We have displayed some kōwhaiwhai patterns in the art area to create an awareness of the beauty of these designs. Today, we made "te whare a Tūtānekai" after reading the local story about Tūtānekai and Hinemoa.

What wonderful interest and concentration Grayson showed in doing her work! She used natural materials and ice cream sticks to make her whare.

She came to me when her work was finished and said with a smile, "These are the Māori people inside."



Grayson making her whare.



Grayson's whare completed.

Grayson is developing an expectation that books can inform and excite and is also developing familiarity with stories valued as part of our New Zealand heritage.

Group learning story

November: Ihenga marae visit

Today, we went on a trip to visit Ihenga's marae at Waiariki Institute. We travelled there on the bus in the rain. When we arrived, we waited in the gateway to be invited in by the tangata whenua of the marae.

Whaea welcomed us on with a karanga.

We then went inside and had a kōrero with Whaea about the whakairo (carvings) inside the building.

It was interesting to hear Whaea talk about the history and stories behind the whakairo, who carved them, and why the designs and stories were chosen. We heard of Ihenga and his travels around Aotearoa and how he named many places in this area and throughout Te Ika a Māui. She told us about Captain Cook and Abel Tasman.

We discovered that Ihenga named Ngongotahā after climbing the mountain and meeting the

patupaiarehe, who gave him a drink out of a calabash. “Ngongotahā” means “to drink water out of a calabash”.

The children enjoyed going around the wharehau and looking closely at and feeling the whakairo.

What next?

Revisit the children’s memories from the trip and talk a bit more about the history.

Talk with the children about designing their own whakairo and creating stories about them that relate to their lives.

Programme evaluation

Over the past few months, we have been exploring many stories about the history of our city.

Through our project on Lake Rotorua, the children have developed an understanding of its physical shape and the placement of Mokoia Island. Through the story about Hinemoa and Tūtānekai, the children developed their knowledge of the island’s history.

The rock warriors story provided a vivid story to explain the rocks that we see as we drive out of Rotorua on State Highway 5. The children really enjoyed this story. They asked for it frequently and created their own rocks.

Reading all these stories created another interest in Māori art and crafts. We explored this by creating new resources for the children to use and view, such as koru and kōwhaiwhai in the art area. A student teacher got involved in this interest by working with the children to create a cloak for the kindergarten.

The trip to the museum provided the children with information about the eruption at Mount Tarawera and the history of the Bath House. The museum also gave the children a chance to see a lot of Māori art and craft up close and to hear the history behind some of the pieces that relate to the iwi of this area.

The marae trip to Ihenga at Waiariki Institute helped to develop a link between the marae and our learning community and provided the children with the chance to experience pōwhiri and hear stories about the whakairo.

This has been a rewarding interest for all. All the children became involved and increased their understanding of our local history and culture, in particular, of Māori art and craft.

What’s happening here?

This documentation is part of this centre’s ongoing record of their experiences exploring significant people, places, and things in the local area.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

The learning community functions both within and outside the early childhood centre, reading stories, constructing representations, and visiting the museum and local marae.

The local community are represented in te reo, whakairo, pōwhiri, and story. Peers suggest ideas to each other, and experts teach the children the area’s history.

Exploration and reflection are ongoing. The knowledge the children gain about people from the past contributes to their sense of community.

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

The record here is part of the centre’s careful preparation for the visit to the marae. The record will be revisited in the same way as the stories from local history are revisited again and again. Valuing records in this way encourages others to continue to participate in the learning community.

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

The teachers are encouraging the children’s interest in a number of ways: through stories, construction activities, projects, trips, and input from local experts. They value the links with the community and carefully craft a diverse programme to strengthen these understandings and links. The teachers have included in their planned learning outcomes for the children: “That the children develop knowledge about the features of our area, Rotorua, particularly areas of physical and/or spiritual significance, such as our local lakes and mountains.”

Sharing portfolios with the wider community



This was Anna's idea. She decided what she wanted to say and only needed help with spelling some words.



Emma and Mr Shanks

Parent's voice

Emma got very excited one evening as I put her to bed. She told me she was visiting Warrengate Hospital the following day. I told her there probably wasn't a visit, as I had not received a notice about it. When we arrived at Kindergarten the next day, I spoke to the teacher, who told us the Warrengate residents were visiting the Kindergarten a few days later. We counted down the days, and Emma awaited the visit with great anticipation. She told me she particularly wanted to see a resident called Mr Shanks, who she had met on a previous visit.

What's happening here?

Photographs on display and items in the children's portfolios record visits between children and residents from a local hospital for the elderly. This exemplar includes two samples of the documentation of these visits, which have been ongoing over four years.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

The children's portfolios serve as bridges for developing ongoing whanaungatanga or reciprocal relationships between the children and elderly residents in the local community. A photo records Emma showing her portfolio to Mr Shanks during a visit by the residents to the early childhood centre.

Entries in the children's portfolios by teachers and parents record the children's participation in these developing relationships.

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

The head teacher notes (see below) that the visits have developed warm relationships between the children and the elderly. She also comments on the positive contribution this has made to the children's (and the parent's) attitudes towards the elderly. Photographs on display, together with photos and comments in the children's portfolios, reinforce these developing positive attitudes.

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

Intergenerational relationships are highly valued in this early childhood centre. The head teacher writes:

Children and the elderly sharing their mutual delight in each other are a powerful mix. Opportunities for this exchange of interest and joy have been encouraged in our kindergarten since our first visit to a local hospital for the elderly four years ago.

We have organised our centre to be more welcoming for our elderly whānau and have actively encouraged grandparents to stay with us as parent help or just for part of a session.

We had a grandparents/special friends' morning and afternoon tea and checked that our range of storybooks reflected these special relationships.

Our relationship with the residents of the hospital for the elderly is now ongoing and developing. We have had issues to sort out, for example, ensuring we have parent help, buying a teapot, wearing name tags, and so on. The children have really enjoyed sharing and showing their portfolios with their older friends. We have visited the hospital as a large group. (The children were fascinated touring the hospital and looking at the walking frames and equipment.) We are now looking at ways to visit in small groups. Parents are kept informed about the visits through displays of photographs and the head teacher's report. (For example, May: "The residents were delighted with the children's friendly interest and warm response and were quite fascinated watching the children making scones and planting bulbs. It was very touching, noting as they sat in their wheelchairs, their pleasure in watching our children being so physically active.")

(A full discussion of this kindergarten's experience is available in McKenzie [2003].)

Rangiātea

Rangiātea, the 146 year-old historic church in Ōtaki, burned down in October 1995. The community was devastated. The rebuilding has been a major undertaking that has touched the lives of many of the kindergarten children.



We took the children in small groups to visit Rangiātea. Whānau came with us. Many stories were told that we would not otherwise have heard.

One child's great-grandfather's carpentry tools were used – the planes were just like the ones used in the original.

Another child had gone with his dad to help dig the drains before the construction started: *He didn't build the church. He just dug the holes.*

Another child said *I know about it. Someone went with a torch and matches and burned it down. The police chased him but couldn't catch him. My mum told me.*

We walked through the town to get to the church and saw many familiar people.

The children recognised many of the workers: *There's Uncle Skinny. Smile, we're taking your photo!*

There was lots of kōrero about scaffolding and pulleys and how the workers could stay on the roof. There was also kōrero to uncles and grandads in the urupā and karakia when we left.

One group met up with the priest who told them lots about how the old church had been built without nails. He promised to come and visit us at kindergarten.

The photos we took will become historic artefacts – these children saw history in the making. We have made a formal connection with the church that acknowledges our respect and the value we have for this building and what it stands for.

The next time we visit, we wonder what we will see. A roof? Windows? Children who pass by or visit it regularly keep us updated.



The learning that happened

- Kaiako made new connections with individual children's whānau.
- Spiritual aspects about the urupā and the rebuilding became big conversation topics.
- Back at kindergarten, the children re-enacted the rebuilding in their block play.
- The children made deeper social, cultural, and whānau connections with each other.

Our assessment

The visit to Rangiātea fostered strong links to the community:

- inside the kindergarten with whānau;
- outside the kindergarten with community and whānau, too.

The experience allowed conversations to emerge, and we learned about different dimensions of our community.

The story continues ...

As the children get out the term books or their own kindergarten books and look at the photos and the newspaper cuttings, they remember and reflect. They update us on the progress they notice as they drive past the church.

Informing curriculum

At kindergarten, they build churches with blocks, including the scaffolding and often the urupā. There have been many conversations about deaths and burials.

The shared knowledge of the group consolidates their adventures and strengthens the connecting links between kindergarten and home.

What's happening here?

This exemplar tells the story of visits to a historic church, Rangiātea. It gathers together a selection of comments and photographs from a range of documentation sites in the early childhood centre: term books (including newspaper cuttings), wall displays, and the children's "kindergarten books".

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

This community story records aspects of the children's engagement with people, places, and things over time.

People in the community include the children, whānau (including whānau from the past), construction workers on the building site, familiar people in the town, and the priest.

Places in this community story include the kindergarten, the historic church, the building site, the town, and the urupā.

Things or artefacts in this exemplar include one child's great-grandfather's carpentry tools, models of the church constructed with blocks, the technological machines used in the construction (scaffolding, pulleys, the original building built without nails), and the photos taken by the children.

Aspects of community that are shared include kōrero, karakia, and spiritual aspects of the urupā.

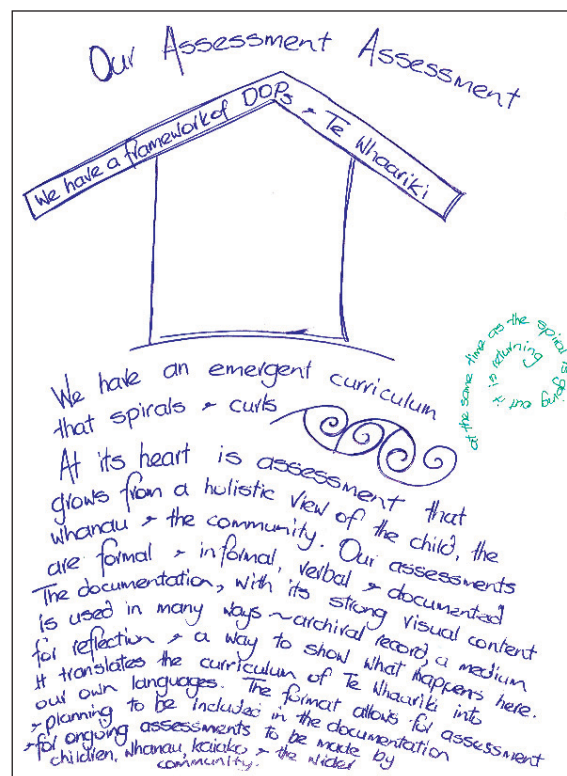
How might this assessment encourage community participation?

The exemplar includes a section on the continuing story: "As the children get out the term books or their own kindergarten books and look at the photos and the newspaper cuttings, they remember and reflect. They update us on the progress they notice as they drive past the church."

Through this ongoing interest, the children will continue to engage with people, places, and things in the community.

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

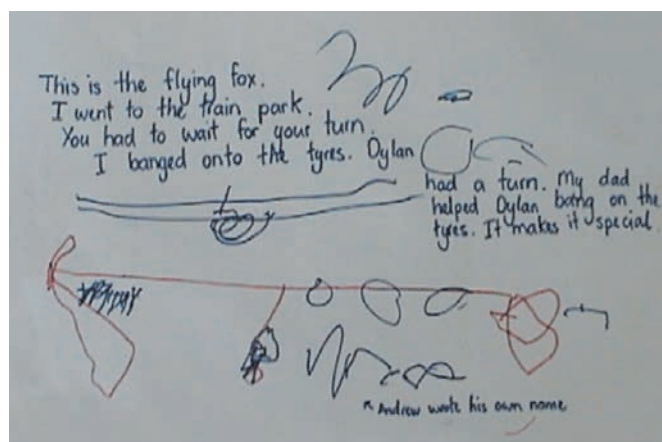
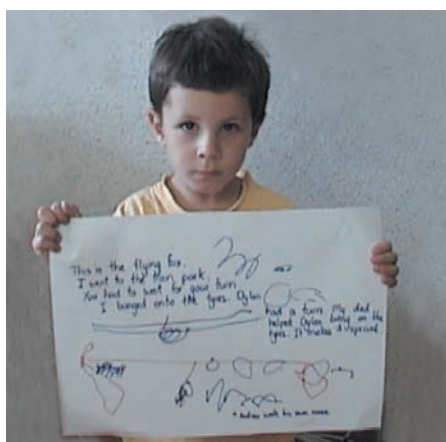
The centre has written an "Assessment Assessment" (see below). The body of the text reads, "We have an emergent curriculum that spirals and curls. At its heart is assessment that grows from a holistic view of the child, the whānau and the community. Our assessments are formal and informal, verbal and documented. The documentation, with its strong visual content, is used in many ways – archival record, a medium for reflection and a way to show what happens here. It translates the curriculum of *Te Whāriki* into our own languages. The format allows for assessment and planning to be included in the documentation and for ongoing assessments to be made by children, whānau, kaiako and the wider community."



The Flying Fox

Child's name: Andrew
Date: February
Teacher: Karen

		Examples or cues	A LEARNING STORY
belonging mana whenua	TAKING AN INTEREST	Finding an interest here – a topic, an activity, a role. Recognising the familiar, enjoying the unfamiliar. Coping with change.	When Andrew's mum came to kindergarten today, she got Andrew's portfolio and began to write a Parent's Voice. Andrew's mum was writing a story about Andrew's exciting weekend.
well-being mana atua	BEING INVOLVED	Paying attention for a sustained period, feeling safe, trusting others. Being playful with others and/or materials.	Later on in the session, I asked Andrew to share his story with me, and he got his file and proudly showed me his mum's story. We had a great discussion about the fun he had had on the flying fox and his visit to the park.
exploration mana aotiora	PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY	Setting and choosing difficult tasks. Using a range of strategies to solve problems when 'stuck' (be specific).	I then suggested he might like to draw or paint a picture about his great weekend, and then we could write his story, too. Andrew decided to draw a picture and went and collected paper and pens.
communication mana teo	EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING	In a range of ways (specify). For example: oral language, gesture, music, art, writing, using numbers and patterns, telling stories.	As he created his picture, he explained how the flying fox worked and I recorded his words. After I had finished writing, Andrew said he would write his name.
contribution mana tangata	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY	Responding to others, to stories, and imagined events, ensuring that things are fair, self-evaluating, helping others, contributing to programme.	Andrew asked to share his and his mum's stories at mat time. He very proudly stood up the front with his file and picture. He told the children about his flying fox adventure, and I read his story from his file.



Short-term review	What next?
<p>Thank you, Dantrea, for sharing Andrew's exciting weekend with us. This has given us an insight into Andrew's interest at present. It has also strengthened links between home and kindergarten and helps us to form a stronger relationship with Andrew.</p> <p>It is great to see Andrew expressing his ideas and interests with his friends and teachers. [Belonging, goal 2.3]</p>	<p>Continue to encourage Andrew to share his news about what he does at home.</p> <p>Record Andrew's ideas and thoughts in a story.</p> <p>Encourage Andrew to use his name card when he is writing his name.</p> <p>More Parent Voices would be great!</p>

Parent's Voice

A LEARNING STORY	
belonging mana whenua	<i>Last weekend, Andrew, Dylan, Mum, and Dad went to Cornwall Park.</i>
well-being mana atua	<i>Andrew's favourite toy was the flying fox. He kept telling all the kids to hold on very hard. Dylan had a turn, too. They also played on the train, slide, swing, and more. We all had a great time.</i>
exploration mana aotūroa	
communication mana reo	<i>I would like to see Andrew sharing his stories with his friends at the kindergarten mat time.</i>
contribution mana tangata	

What's happening here?

Andrew's mother contributes to his portfolio about what they did at the weekend and asks the teachers to include "Andrew sharing his stories with his friends at ... mat time".

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

The assessment portfolio here invites Andrew's family into the curriculum. Andrew's mother wants him to develop the ability to describe an event to a group of children. The teachers respond accordingly, indicating that they respect and value her contribution to the curriculum.

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

The short-term review in this assessment is written directly to the parent, thanking her for her contribution. The written contributions are a conversation. This is the first of several such sequences, in which the parent describes an event at the weekend and Andrew shares the news with a group.

These sequences are read at home to Andrew and to others in the family, strengthening their participation in the wider community of learners.

Andrew asks for his work to be displayed on the wall of the centre and, when his mother comes at the end of the session, he shows it to her. The wall display provides another way of showing that the teachers value the family's voice.

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

This is a centre where a high proportion of families, including Andrew's, are from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The written assessment reflects a pedagogy that values contributions from families. It incorporates families' ideas into opportunities for children to communicate with others and to begin writing in a meaningful and valued context.

Growing Trees

Children: Thomas and Isaiah

26 February

Teacher: Margaret

It's our centre's first birthday and distinguished guests have come from afar to help us celebrate. Isaiah and Thomas stand around the birthday cake with other tamariki.

Some of our guests donate trees to the centre. We were so lucky to receive two silk trees, two kauri trees, and an olive tree.

During morning mat times, we discuss the trees we received for our birthday in detail, thinking about the process that they may take to grow and develop. The tamariki take an interest and assist in digging the holes for the trees, planting the trees, and giving small karakia to Tāne Mahuta to help our trees grow.

Watering the trees takes on a new meaning for



Thomas as he waters one of the silk trees. Whaea Margaret explains that the trees need to be watered every day to help them to grow. Naming

the trees as they are watered helps the tamariki to recognise the differences between them. Isaiah says, "There's silk trees at the kindy too, aye Whaea?" (referring to his last kindergarten). Whaea agrees and says, "One day our silk trees will be just as big as those ones."

Thomas and Isaiah count and name the trees as they water them. Soon, other tamariki take an interest and ask if they can have a turn at watering the trees.

Short-term review

Thomas and Isaiah take an active part in any discussions that arise about the growth and development of plants and trees.

Tuakana-teina relationships develop as a result of Thomas and Isaiah's interest. (That is, both boys show the younger tamariki how to water and care for our trees and help them to recognise certain trees.)

What learning occurred here?

Science, maths, social skills, co-operative play, tuakana-teina relationships, and communication skills.

What next?

A programme on the theme of autumn and what happens when leaves change colours and fall to the ground.

Discuss and provide hands-on experiences of animals that may use some trees as homes (for example, birds and insects).

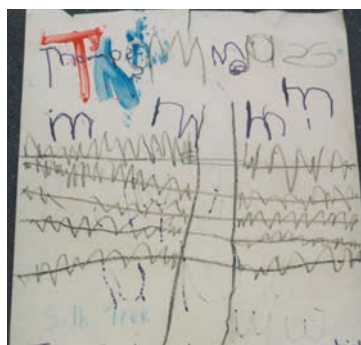
Give the tamariki an awareness of Tāne Mahuta and his role and importance to Māori (for example, through discussions, waiata, and looking at pictures of the ngahere [forest]).

A trip to the ngahere.

Evaluation

Still evaluating. The programme is ongoing.

Thomas was very excited about his painting. "Look, Whaea Aggie, I drew a silk tree."



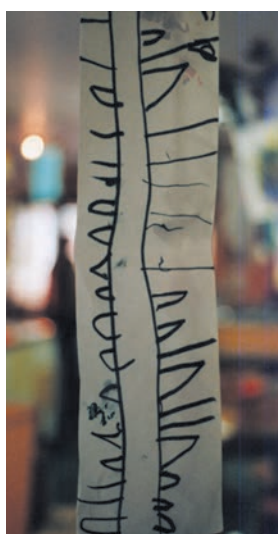
"Ka pai, Thomas, he ōrite tō rākau, ki ngā rākau a waho (your tree looks just like the trees outside)," Whaea Aggie tells him.



Isaiah explains: "I dig a big hole. Isaac and Whaea Helen filled the hole with water."



Isaiah also painted a wonderful silk tree. He knows how to care for our silk trees and can name the other trees that were donated at our first birthday.



Somebody else has made a wonderful effort as well. Ka pai e tamaiti.

Learning story: autumn

To extend the theme in the previous story on the growth of trees, the centre is looking at the theme of autumn, with staff and tamariki making their own tree. We are putting leaves that have fallen from the trees in our environment onto our tree trunk.



The leaves on our tree have a new home. There are lots of different-coloured leaves that we picked up off the ground around the centre.



Tyscheen does an excellent job of gluing fallen leaves onto the tree that most tamariki helped to paint. Using the glue gun also has its benefits ... it's fun to use!



Tyscheen helps Eden to stick leaves onto the tree with the glue gun. Ka rawe korua.

What's happening here?

This exemplar is from a whānau-based early childhood centre. It starts with a group story about celebrating the centre's first birthday and the gift of trees from the visitors. It continues with stories about children caring for the trees, showing the younger children how to water and care for them, and helping them to recognise certain trees. The children draw and paint the trees in recognition of their significance. There is a feeling here that the trees are part of the community.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

The sense of community is expressed in relationships, history, people, place, participation, manaakitanga, karakia, waiata, and te reo Māori.

The birthday celebration includes welcoming "guests ... from afar", and the tree planting includes a karakia to Tāne Mahuta.

The children plant the trees and look after them, and tuakana-teina relationships develop as Thomas and Isaiah show the younger tamariki how to water, care for, and recognise the trees.

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

Photographs and records of significant community events are a regular feature of this centre, reinforcing and encouraging others' involvement in the learning community.

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

Activities at the whānau-based centre have meaning for tamariki, whānau, iwi, and others beyond the immediate learning community.

Reflective questions

He pātai hei whakaaro iho

Who are we documenting for? Who should we be documenting for?

How do our assessment practices make valued learning visible to teachers, to children, and to families and whānau?

In what ways do assessment examples from our early childhood setting reflect socially and culturally valued roles in the community?

Have the families contributed to the development of our learning community? In what ways? How do we make this possible for families where English is not their first language?

Do our assessments include contributions from home? How do we encourage and nurture such contributions?

How do we ensure that our assessments reflect the diversity of cultures in our learning community?

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