MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

An Introduction to Kei Tua o te Pae

He Whakamōhiotanga ki Kei Tua o te Pae

1

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

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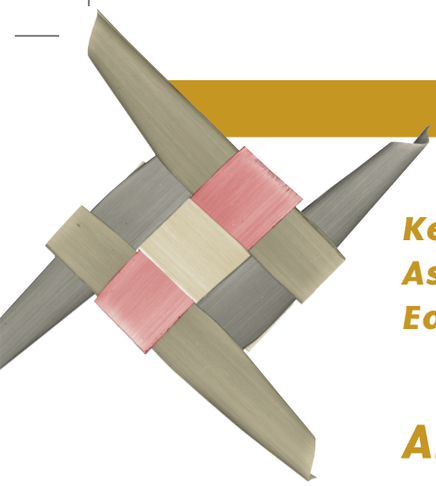


An Introduction to Kei Tua o te Pae
He Whakamōhiotanga ki Kei Tua o te Pae

E Tipu e Rea
nā Hirini Melbourne

translation by Mere Skerrett-White

Moe mai rā e te hua
I tō moenga pai
Kaua rā e tahuri
Taupoki ki roto i tō papanarua
Kia mahana ai

Ka tō te marama e tiaho nei
Ka hī ake ko te rā
Kei tua o te pae

Tipu kē ake koe
Me he horoeka
Torotika ki te rā
Whāia te māramatanga
O te hinengaro
O te wairua

Kia puāwai koe ki te ao
Ka kitea ō painga

Sleep my loved one
in your comfortable bed.
Don't be restless.
Snuggle up safe and sound in your
duvet so that you are warm.

When the translucent rays
of the moon disappear,
a new day dawns with the rising
of the sun beyond the horizon.

So too does the cycle of life continue.
Grow up strong and gracious,
just like the proud horoeka tree,
confident and free.
Seek out the secrets of the
hidden well-spring of your mind
and know the sounds and
dreams of your spirit.

So you shall blossom into the world,
and the world in turn is transformed.

Introduction

He kupu whakataki

An Introduction to Kei Tua o te Pae is the first in a series of books of exemplars developed to consider and inform assessment practice in early childhood education. Each book is briefly described on the contents page at the front of the folder. This book introduces the series and explains the thinking and philosophy behind the project. It discusses what assessment for learning entails.

The framework for the development of the exemplars emerged from the philosophy of *Te Whāriki*. The four principles of *Te Whāriki* are also the principles for assessment, and they provided the framework for *Kei Tua o te Pae*.

The five strands of *Te Whāriki*: Well-being – Mana Atua, Belonging – Mana Whenua, Contribution – Mana Tangata, Communication – Mana Reo, and Exploration – Mana Aotūroa, are woven into the exemplars.

The focus throughout *Kei Tua o te Pae* is on assessment as a powerful force for learning, not on a particular format or method for assessment. Everyday assessments from a range of early childhood settings have been selected as exemplars because they illustrate important assessment issues. They are not "exemplary" in the sense of excellent or perfect. Only the audience for whom they were recorded (the learning community) could make a judgment about that.

The books are designed as a professional development resource to enable learning communities to discuss assessment issues in general, both in terms of *Te Whāriki* and in terms of their own specific settings. They introduce principles that will help learning communities develop their own assessments of children's learning.

What are the early childhood exemplars?

He aha ngā tauaromahi kōhungahunga?

The following definition of exemplars was developed by advisers and co-ordinators during the exemplar project:

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

This definition has a number of aspects.

Exemplars are examples of assessments. The exemplars in this resource have been sent to the project or collected by co-ordinators from early childhood settings. All the exemplars are authentic. Excerpts from children's portfolios have been chosen to say something about assessment and about how assessments and pedagogy can build from one episode of learning to another. However, they do not attempt to illustrate *all* the learning of any individual child or *all* the opportunities to learn in any particular setting. The portfolios themselves are much more likely to say something about the whole child and her or his extended experience of learning in an early childhood setting.

Exemplars make visible learning that is valued. The exemplars illustrate the diversity of learning from a wide range of settings within the framework set out in *Te Whāriki*, pages 44–91. Not all of the indicative learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* are represented in the exemplars.

The exemplars indicate that there is a **learning community** that is involved in both curriculum and assessment. The learning community includes children, families, whānau, teachers, and others.

The exemplars illustrate how assessment can assist the learning community to develop **ongoing and diverse learning pathways**. Assessment sits inside the curriculum, and assessments do not merely describe learning, they also construct and foster it.

The annotations in the exemplars reflect all of these aspects.

The annotations to the exemplars

Ngā tuhinga mō ngā tauaromahi

The exemplars are followed by annotations that provide focused comment on each exemplar. These annotations follow a standard question-and-answer format.

What's happening here?

The answer gives a brief description of what's happening in each exemplar.

What aspects of [the area specified] does this assessment exemplify?

The answer refers back to the explanations in the exemplar book's front pages. It explains why this assessment was chosen. (The exemplar may also illustrate other aspects of assessment or of *Te Whāriki*, but these will not be discussed.)

How might this documented assessment contribute to developing [the area specified]?

The answer suggests how this assessment might be used to support learning and development in the relevant area.

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

The assessment process is part of the pedagogy that occurs in the context of reciprocal and responsive relationships in each setting. Exemplars and documented assessments inform the everyday noticing, recognising, and responding that is not documented. (See page 6.)

Kei tua o te pae — Beyond the horizon

This resource is titled *Kei Tua o te Pae*, a line from an oriori (lullaby) by Hirini Melbourne. There are a number of images in this oriori that can be applied to development, learning, and assessment for learning.

Continuity

The first relevant image is about continuity.

Ka tō te marama e tiaho nei	When the translucent rays
Ka hī ake ko te rā	of the moon disappear,
Kei tua o te pae	a new day dawns with the rising
	of the sun beyond the horizon.

In an ever-changing world, we know that young children's horizons will expand and change in ways that cannot be foreseen. Children will travel beyond the current horizon, and early childhood education is part of that. It continues the shaping of a vision for children – that of their being "competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (*Te Whāriki,* page 9). Learning is a lifelong journey that will go beyond the current horizon. The details of the journey will change as the world changes, but this vision will remain the same.

Engaging the body, mind, and spirit

The second image is about growth, development, and learning through the engagement of body, mind, and spirit.

Tipu kē ake koe	So too does the cycle of life continue.
Me he horoeka	Grow up strong and gracious,
Torotika ki te rā	just like the proud horoeka tree,
Whāia te māramatanga	confident and free.
O te hinengaro	Seek out the secrets of the
O te wairua	hidden well-spring of your mind
	and know the sounds and
	dreams of your spirit.

This holistic view of growth reminds us that development and learning have affective, social, and motivational dimensions and that assessment does too.

Reciprocal relationships

The third image is about the reciprocal relationship between the child and their world.

Kia puāwai koe ki te ao	So you shall blossom into the world,
Ka kitea ō painga	and the world in turn is transformed.

Children's learning is embedded in their reciprocal relationships with the world, with people, places, and things. The world shapes their learning, and in turn, their learning shapes and changes the world.

Assessment for learning Te aromatawai mō te akoranga

Noticing, recognising, and responding

In this project, assessment for learning is described as "noticing, recognising, and responding". This description comes from Bronwen Cowie's work on assessment in science classrooms (2000). It was useful to the teachers in her study, and early childhood teachers have found it useful as well. These three processes are progressive filters. Teachers *notice* a great deal as they work with children, and they *recognise* some of what they notice as "learning". They will *respond* to a selection of what they recognise.

Mary Jane Drummond's (1993) definition of assessment can be adapted to add more to this description of assessment for learning:

> [the] ways in which, in our everyday practice, we [children, families, teachers, and others] observe children's learning [notice], strive to understand it [recognise], and then put our understanding to good use [respond].
>
> page 13

The difference between noticing and recognising is the application of professional expertise and judgments. In particular, a powerful role for exemplars is to help teachers to recognise some of what they notice as learning (that is, to develop their ability to recognise learning). Sometimes recognising the learning occurs in retrospect, some time after the event. However, if there is a time gap between noticing and recognising, the teacher can't act (respond) in the moment. The exemplars have been published to assist with closing the gap so that many more responses will be immediate and professional and all members of the learning community will be better able to notice, recognise, and respond to children's learning.

The early childhood exemplar books use the term "assessment for learning". Many writers call this "formative assessment". Philippe Perrenoud (1991) says that "Any assessment that helps the pupil [child] to learn and develop is formative" and adds:

> Development and learning depend on countless factors that are often interrelated. Any assessment that helps to optimise one or more of these factors, to however small a degree, can be considered formative.
>
> page 80

Perrenoud includes children's motivation, their social identities as learners, their views about learning, and the learning atmosphere among these "countless factors".

One important connection between assessment and learning is feedback. Research tells us that feedback to learners improves learning. Some of this feedback will be through documentation (such as assessments that families and teachers can read back to children and photographs that children can "read" themselves). Some of it will be verbal. Some will be non-verbal (through a gesture, a nod, or a smile). Feedback tells the learners what outcomes are valued in the learning community and how they are doing, and it acknowledges the goals that children set for themselves.

Teachers share stories as well as feedback, and this enriches their noticing, recognising, and responding. A teacher in a childcare centre, discussing the sharing of stories at a team meeting, commented, "We've followed on. Jackie did one, and then from reading hers, Sheryl saw something happen and was able to follow it up."

Electricity in the wall

Tim is interested in vacuum cleaners. The record of this interest includes layers of noticing, recognising, and responding by the teacher and by Tim himself over a number of days.

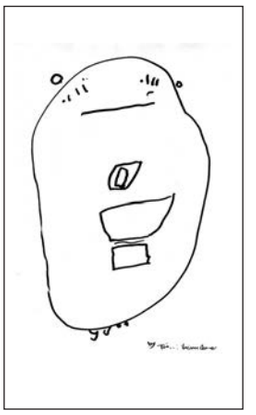
Noticing: Tim arrives at the early childhood centre and tells Julie, the teacher, in some excitement, "I've seen a Dyson." Another teacher hears the comment and explains to Julie that a "Dyson" is a vacuum cleaner.

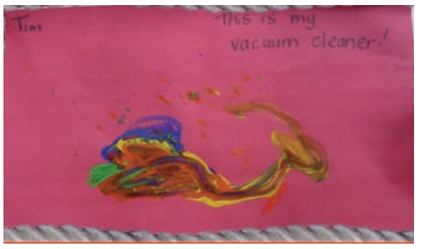
Recognising: Julie has a conversation with Tim and discovers that vacuum cleaners are of great interest to him. She recognises that for Tim, vacuum cleaners provide many opportunities for learning.

Responding: Julie fetches the centre's vacuum cleaner, and they take it apart and try an experiment to find out how many plastic plates it can suck up before the warning light goes on. A number of children also become involved.

Fairy Claire visits the early childhood centre. "Do fairies have vacuum cleaners?" asks Tim. "Yes, of course," she replies. "Can I see it?" She explains that she has left it at home.

The teachers have already noted Tim's early attempts at drawing. Julie recognises this as another learning opportunity and encourages Tim to draw a picture of the vacuum cleaner.





He also completes a painting.

Perhaps feeling that the two-dimensional drawing and painting are not enough to portray what he wants to represent, Tim decides to make a three-dimensional model of a vacuum cleaner.

The learning environment is widened when Tim goes on a visit to a vacuum cleaner shop. Tim notices the engines at the shop and later has a conversation with the teacher about motors and electricity.

Tim: Some vacuum cleaners are connected to motors.

Julie: Can a vacuum cleaner go if it doesn't have a motor?

Tim: No. If the motor's out, the vacuum cleaner might not go.

Julie: What do you think makes the motor go?

Tim: Um ... don't know.

Julie: What about the plug?

Tim: You plug it into the wall, because there's lots of electricity in the wall.

Julie: How do you think the electricity gets into the wall?

Tim: Don't know. When the cord is plugged into that plug, how does the electricity attach to the plug inside the wall?

Julie: Um ... what do you think?

Tim stood up and slowly walked towards the office, looking for clues. Julie followed behind, wondering where this would lead us. He came to a stop at the office door and peered in and up at the switchboard.

Tim: That's where the power comes in.

Julie: Yes, I think you're right – that's the control panel. And, look, here's a light switch.

Tim: I turned the light switch on and off.

Julie: Well, if that's the control panel, how does the power actually get into the box?

Tim went outside and looked about. He pointed to the power lines.

Tim: Through those wires?

Julie: Um ... maybe. I'm not sure. Let's get some other people's opinions – do some research.

We went back inside and asked Ali in the office what she thought. She thought, yes, those lines probably did carry power.

Then the sandpit called, and Tim went to dig another water channel.

Isn't it amazing where a journey with a child can lead! From baby Dysons to power lines. And the journey isn't finished yet. Where to next? – Julie

This is an example of *Te Whāriki* in action. Tim is gaining new information about vacuum cleaners and electricity. At the same time, he is gaining skills and developing dispositions about being a learner. He finds that learners explore ideas by asking questions, experimenting, observing (looking for clues), representing (in a range of ways), developing working theories (for example, the electricity is in the wall), and asking others. The teachers and Tim himself notice, recognise, and respond to opportunities to learn.

Having clear goals

Assessment for learning implies that we have some aims or goals for children's learning. *Te Whāriki* provides the framework for defining learning and what is to be learned. The goals and indicative learning outcomes are set out in strands.

Well-being – Mana Atua

> The health and well-being of the child are protected and nurtured. Children experience an environment where their health is promoted, their emotional well-being is nurtured, and they are kept safe from harm.
>
> Ko tēnei te whakatipuranga o te tamaiti i roto i tōna oranga nui, i runga hoki i tōna mana motuhake, mana atuatanga ... Kia rongo ia i te rangimārie, te aroha, me te harikoa, ā, kia mōhio ki te manaaki, ki te atawhai, me whakahirahira i a ia me ōna hoa, me ōna pakeke.
>
> *Te Whāriki,* pages 46 and 35

Belonging – Mana Whenua

> Children and their families feel a sense of belonging. Children ... experience an environment where connecting links with the family and the wider world are affirmed and extended; they know that they have a place; they feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events; they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
>
> Ko te whakatipuranga tēnei o te mana motuhake, te mana tūrangawaewae, me te mana toi whenua o te tangata ... Ko te tūmanako mō te mokopuna. Kia mōhio ia ki ōna tūrangawaewae, ki ōna marae, ki ngā pepeha hoki o ōna iwi ... ki te mana o te whenua.
>
> Kia mōhio ia ki te manaaki, ki te tiaki i te whenua, nō te mea, i ahu mai te oranga i te whenua.
>
> *Te Whāriki,* pages 54 and 36

Contribution – Mana Tangata

> Opportunities for learning are equitable, and each child's contribution is valued. Children experience an environment where there are equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity, or background; they are affirmed as individuals; they are encouraged to learn with and alongside others.
>
> Ko te whakatipuranga tēnei o te kiritau tangata i roto i te mokopuna kia tū māia ai ia ki te manaaki, ki te tuku whakaaro ki te ao ... Kia mōhio ia ki ōna whakapapa, ki te pātahi o ōna whānau, ki ōna kaumātua me ōna pakeke ... Kia mōhio hoki ki a Ranginui rāua Papatūānuku, ā rāua tamariki, me ngā kōrero mō rātou.
>
> *Te Whāriki,* pages 64 and 35

Communication – Mana Reo

> The languages and symbols of their own and other cultures are promoted and protected. Children experience an environment where they develop non-verbal and verbal communication skills for a range of purposes; they experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures; they discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive.
>
> Ko tēnei mea ko te reo, he matapihi e whakaatu ana i ngā tikanga me ngā whakapono o te iwi ... Kia mōhio te mokopuna ki tōna ao, ki te ao Māori, te ao o nāianei, me te ao o āpōpō, mā te reo Māori.
>
> *Te Whāriki,* pages 72 and 36

Exploration – Mana Aotūroa

> The child learns through active exploration of the environment. Children experience an environment where their play is valued as meaningful learning and the importance of spontaneous play is recognised; they gain confidence in and control of their bodies; they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking, and reasoning; they develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds.
>
> Ko te whakatipuranga tēnei o te mana rangahau, me ngā mātauranga katoa e pā ana ki te aotūroa me te taiao. Ka ako te mokopuna i tōna ōritetanga me tōna rerekētanga ki te taiao. Ka titiro whānui, ka titiro whāiti ki ngā taonga o te ao … Kia mātau ia ki tōna aotūroa mai i te rongo ā-taringa, rongo ā-whatu, rongo ā-waha, rongo ā-ihu, rongo ā-ringa, rongo ā-kiri, ā, mai hoki i ōna whatumanawa.
>
> *Te Whāriki,* pages 82 and 37

There are particular dimensions for considering Māori educational advancement.

In 2001, Mason Durie set out a framework for considering Māori educational advancement. He introduced three goals, emphasising that they are concurrent – a "parcel of goals" – that should all be pursued together.

Goal one – to live as Māori

This goal takes as its starting point the view that learning and education "should be consistent with the goal of enabling Māori to live as Māori", including being able to access te ao Māori (the Māori world) – its language, culture, marae, and resources. To the extent that the purpose of education is to prepare people for participation in society, preparation of Māori for participation in Māori society is an educational goal that imposes some responsibilities upon the education system.

Goal two – to actively participate as citizens of the world

Durie says that education is also about "preparing people to actively participate as citizens of the world". He reminds us that Māori children will live in a variety of situations and that they should be able to move from one to another with relative ease. He emphasises that this goal does not contradict the goal of being able to live as Māori.

Goal three – to enjoy good health and a high standard of living

The third goal is linked to well-being. Durie looks at the correlation between education, income levels, and health and concludes: "Education should be able to make a major – if not the major – contribution to health and well-being and to a decent standard of living."

Documenting assessment

Some assessment will be documented, but most of it will not. There should be a balance between documented and undocumented interactions, and the two kinds of interaction should be in tune with each other.

The phrase "assessment for learning" implies an assumption that we develop ideas about "what next?". (The exemplars include many examples of planning from assessments.) Usually the child will decide "what next?". For example, a child may decide whether to repeat an attempt on a jigsaw that was successfully completed yesterday or to try a more difficult one. Teachers, often in negotiation with a learner, will also make decisions about "what next?" and how to respond to what the learner does. Most teachers' decisions or negotiations will be undocumented and spontaneous, but there are good arguments for documenting some of the possible next steps.

The following documented assessment provides an example of an everyday context and routine being used as an opportunity for interaction and feedback – for noticing, recognising, and responding.

Blinking and clicking on the changing mat

The teacher (Sue) writes the following observation:

Jace was lying on the changing mat while I was changing him. I was blowing kisses with my mouth.

Jace began to imitate me and do the same action with his mouth.

I then winked at Jace and made a clicking sound with my mouth. Jace once again imitated me and carried out the actions also.

It was really amazing to watch Jace as he looked, listened, and then repeated the actions he saw and heard.

What next?

As well as making facial expressions and sounds, we can add words to what we are doing and encourage more oral language. This can be done throughout all aspects of routines and play.

Everyday contexts

The exemplars in these books are about assessments carried out in everyday contexts. A major purpose of documentation is that it will inform everyday, undocumented, interactive teaching and spontaneous feedback, making children's interactions richer and more reciprocal. The curriculum is at its best when activities and conversations are sited in meaningful contexts.

The following is an example of a typical everyday episode in a childcare centre, which happened to be recorded by a visiting researcher.

Where's Kirsty?

There are two teachers named Kirsty at this childcare centre. One of them is away. The interaction began with Zena asking Margaret (the visiting researcher) a question. Jade and Kirsty are teachers.

Zena: [To Margaret] Where's Kirsty?

Margaret: Where's Kirsty?

Zena: Yeah.

Margaret: I don't know.

Zena: [Calling to Jade, a teacher] Where's Kirsty? Um, Jade, where's Kirsty?

Jade: [From across the room] Who, sorry?

Zena: Kirsty at my daycare.

Jade: Kirsty Smith?

Zena: No. Kirsty.

Jade: Can I ask you which Kirsty you mean? Can you come and have a look at the board and show me? [They go together to look at a photo board of all the teachers.]

Zena [Points] That.

Jade: Oh, she's not here today.

Zena: Why?

Jade: She's got Friday off. She'll be at home.

Zena: Sick?

Jade: No, she's not sick. She's just having a day at home doing some jobs. Are you missing her?

Zena: Yeah.

Jade: She'll be in next week on Monday, though, when you come on Monday.

This episode was part of everyday life in Zena's childcare centre and illustrated the following features:

- Zena initiated an interaction by asking a question, and the teacher listened to her carefully.
- The teacher recognised that the way to clarify this question was to call Zena's attention to something she could "read" – the photo display of staff.
- The teacher continued the conversation, and Zena persisted with questions. "Why was Kirsty away?" "Was she sick?"
- The teacher responded to each of these questions and invited Zena to reflect further: "Are you missing her?"

In providing feedback to Zena, the teacher:

- indicated that she respected Zena's interest;
- encouraged a discussion about belonging as a member of this community (as Zena noticed who was not here and asked why, Zena having already had a discussion with the researcher about what she, the researcher, was doing here);
- gave credit to Zena for a meaningful question as she made sense of the array of teachers and adults in the centre that day;
- provided Zena with a mode of "reading" that assisted the verbal exchange and ensured a two-way discussion between herself and Zena.

We can see that there were elements of well-being, belonging, exploration, communication, and collaboration in an interaction that took just one minute and twelve seconds.

Protecting and enhancing the motivation to learn

Assessment for learning will protect and enhance children's motivation to learn. In 2002, Terry Crooks, one of New Zealand's leading commentators on assessment, set out some requirements for effective learning. He emphasises motivation:

> First, people gain motivation and are most likely to be learning effectively when they experience success or progress on something that they regard as worthwhile and significantly challenging. At its best, learning under these conditions occurs in the state Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow": single-minded concentration on the task, accompanied by confidence and determination that it will be completed successfully.
>
> page 5

> My second point about motivation is that personal desire to learn something is an incredibly powerful force, often able to carry learners through repeated disappointments and difficulties ...
>
> page 6

> My final point about motivation is the importance of how students interpret their success or failure. It matters whether they attribute successes to ability, effort, or good luck or attribute failures to lack of effort, lack of ability, or bad luck ... Effort attributions, whether for success or failure, tend to lead to improvement of performance, whereas ability attributions and chance attributions do not.
>
> page 6

He cites Csikszentmihalyi:

> The chief impediments to learning are not cognitive. It is not that students cannot learn; it is that they do not wish to. If educators invested a fraction of the energy they now spend on trying to transmit information in trying to stimulate the students' enjoyment in learning, we could achieve much better results.
>
> Csikszentmihalyi (1990), page 115

Crooks makes three other points about learning. He emphasises the importance of encouraging meaningful, deep learning, collaboration between students, and partnership between teachers, learners, and their families.

Learning with and from peers, whether in planned or unplanned ways, tends to lead to deeper and more enjoyable learning as well as to the development of communication skills and important social skills and attitudes.

The best teachers foster a sense of partnership between themselves and their students. They also build partnerships with parents to maximise the extent to which students' learning is guided and supported consistently by the students' teachers, parents, and peers. True partnership, based on trust, respect, and high-quality communication can create a very powerful learning synergy.

Acknowledging uncertainty

What does "assessment for learning" look like for the strands in which the outcomes of the curriculum are organised: well-being, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration? Part of that question is: how do we decide "what next?". Margaret Donaldson (1992) says that education "is about suggesting new directions in which lives may go" (page 259). Assessment is part of that process. But the phrase "assessment for learning" suggests that we know what an appropriate next step might be, and for complex learning, we don't always know. Gordon Wells (1999) states:

> [The] teacher always has to be responsive to the students' goals as these emerge in the course of activity, and by collaborating with them in the achievement of their individual goals, to enable them to extend their mastery and at the same time their potential for further development. From a teacher's perspective, therefore, one is always aiming at a moving target.
>
> pages 318–319

Who knows?

Isaac is one of a group of children who have been reading a book about space with the teacher. Isaac decides to make an alien out of green card "cos aliens are green". In the What next? section of the assessment, the teacher has written the following, concluding with the question "who knows?".

Keep supporting and extending his interest in space, which is encouraging him to try new things (using the art area resources) and to practise exploring his imagination and communicating his ideas. We have downloaded pictures of planets off the Internet for him, bought new books, and been playing a CD about planets for the children to listen to. The term break may have some effect on the interest, so we will have to wait and see if this is still topical when he comes back. A little provocation (perhaps alien footprints in the family area or a trip to the Star Dome) may help trigger something ... who knows?

Listening to children

One way of responding to the inevitable uncertainty is to get to know the children well, to listen and observe carefully, and to respond appropriately. This enables us to stand higher up the mountain so that we can see more of the horizon in order to provide continuity in their learning. Book 4 includes exemplars in which children comment on their own learning, set their own targets, and do their own assessing.

Philippe Perrenoud (1991), writing on assessment in schools, warns that it:

> would be absurd to proceed with formative assessment without first calling into question the teaching methods and without seeking, as a priority, to make the teaching situations more interactive and richer in spontaneous feedback.

page 84

Tēnā kupu, āe, tuhia!

In this example, Hinepau is dictating text for a book. During the discussion, the kaiako introduces the word "hīnaki" and Hinepau responds that "hīnaki" is a good word, instructing the kaiako to write it down.

Hinepau: Kei te tiki tuna mātou.
We are going to get some eels.

Kaiako: Kei te tiki ...
Going to get ...

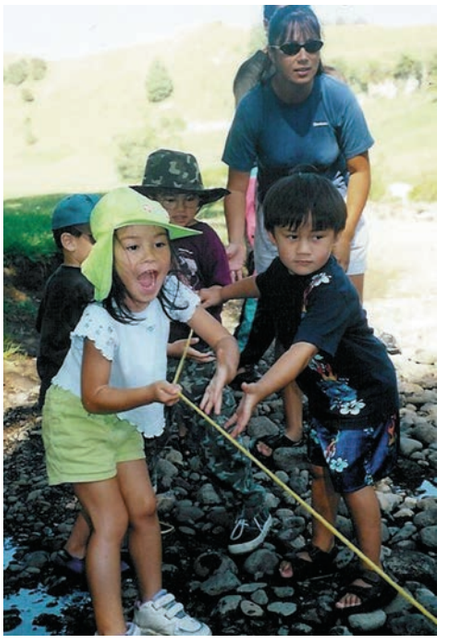
Hinepau: Kei te harikoa nā te mea i pupuri ahau i ētahi tuna.
I am really happy because I held some eels.

Kaiako: I pupuri koe i te hīnaki?
You held an eel trap?

Hinepau: Āe, i pēnei au. E, kei ahau [nana i whakaatu].
Yes, like this. Oh, I have it [demonstrates].

Kaiako: Nō reira ka taea e koe te kōrero, i pupuri ahau i te hīnaki?
Therefore, can you say, "I held the eel trap"?

Hinepau: Āe, i pupuri au i te hīnaki. Āe, tēnā kupu, āe – tuhia!
Yes, I did hold an eel trap. Yes, that word, yes – write it!



This is a good example of reciprocal noticing, recognising, and responding, with Hinepau both motivated and empowered to have a say in what is written down about a collective event that involved all the children (catching an eel).

Another example from conversations between Hinepau and the kaiako illustrates the rich and complex learning of a bilingual child. It is an example of word invention that illustrates Hinepau's growing metalinguistic awareness that language is fluid and flexible enough to be creative with and, indeed, that "words" symbolically represent "things".

In response to a comment by the kaiako about the transliteration of the word "drawer" (toroa) being inappropriate because a "toroa" was a magnificent bird, the albatross, Hinepau made up the alternative word "toroapa".

Kaiako: Kāore e pai taua kupu "toroa" ki ahau, nā te mea ko te toroa he manuariki.
I don't like that word "toroa" [for "drawer"] because the albatross is a sacred bird.

Hinepau: Me kī "toroapa".
Then say "toroapa".

Kaiako: Āe, he rawe tēnā kupu "toroapa".
Yes, that is a good word, "toroapa".

The kaiako looked it up in the dictionary to check that it did not have another meaning, and then it became the word used in the centre for "drawer".

Collective assessments

In Hinepau's centre, the documented assessments are both collective and individual (and often dictated by the children). *Te Whāriki* includes the following statement:

> This curriculum emphasises the critical role of socially and culturally mediated learning and of reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places, and things. Children learn through collaboration with adults and peers, through guided participation and observation of others, as well as through individual exploration and reflection.
>
> page 9

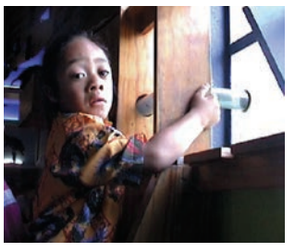
There is an argument that, for some desirable outcomes, an assessment of the learning environment and the learning opportunities it offers are an essential part of each assessment. Although such an assessment might also be described as "evaluation", holistic assessment includes the context. So the environment and the individual are closely woven together. Since the work of Lev Vygotsky, a number of writers have described classrooms and early childhood settings as "learning communities", arguing that belonging and participating in "what we all do here and what we value" is a prerequisite for individual learning. Book 5 emphasises this connection with community.

Learning opportunities are necessary, although they may not be sufficient, for learning to take place. So an analysis of the learning environment or experience (for example, a trip, a visitor, or a project) will frequently be supplemented by examples of the children's participation.

In this example, the children were asked for their comments about a trip to a Weird and Wonderful exhibition at the local museum.

Weird and wonderful

The teachers included a group story about the trip and its purpose in all the children's portfolios and asked the children for their own assessments of the trip. These illustrated that the children found very different things of interest in what was apparently the same experience for them all.



George

"My name is George.
I am wearing my dragon shirt.
The bees were going outside.
I liked the crabs.
I liked it when the bees went outside.
I sat next to my mum on the bus."

Rachael

"When I got on the bus, I was scared. My dad put on his sunglasses. I sat on the bus. I saw Jane on the bus. She had her butterfly wings on. Fuka's dad was driving the bus."

Teyilati

"I liked the spiders in a glass cage. They were big. I liked looking at the spiders. I played in the sandpit. There were toys to play with."

Keeping a view of learning as complex

Vic Kelly (1992) comments:

> Accuracy of assessment is related inversely to the complexity and the sophistication of what is being assessed. And, since education is a highly complex and sophisticated process, educational assessment can be regarded as measurement only in the remotest of metaphorical senses.
>
> page 4

Worthwhile educational outcomes are often complex, especially if they are about relationships and participation. *Te Whāriki* states that "the outcomes of a curriculum are knowledge, skills, and attitudes" and that they "combine together to form a child's 'working theory' and help the child develop dispositions that encourage learning" (page 44).

> In early childhood, children are developing more elaborate and useful working theories about themselves and about the people, places, and things in their lives. These working theories contain a combination of knowledge about the world, skills and strategies, attitudes, and expectations ... The second way in which knowledge, skills, and attitudes combine is as dispositions – "habits of mind" or "patterns of learning". An example of a learning disposition is the disposition to be curious. It may be characterised by:
>
> - an inclination to enjoy puzzling over events;
> - the skills to ask questions about them in different ways; and
> - an understanding of when is the most appropriate time to ask these questions.
>
> page 44

In *Te Whāriki*, therefore, the concept of "learning dispositions" includes learners' inclinations, skills, and understandings. Margaret Carr (2001) describes learning dispositions as "situated learning strategies plus motivation – participation repertoires from which a learner recognises, selects, edits, responds to, resists, searches for and constructs learning opportunities" (page 21). Within the *Te Whāriki* framework, they involve reciprocal and responsive relationships with people, places, and things. A focus on learning dispositions, accompanied by the aspiration that children should be secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society, foregrounds children's strengths and achievements. Assessment notes what children can do when they are "at their best".

Patricia Broadfoot (2000) comments:

> Increasingly now there is a need to harness the dynamic power of educational assessment to motivate and empower learners.
>
> page 201

Narrative assessment, which is often appropriate for complex outcomes, includes the surroundings: how the learning has occurred across people, places, and things. Sometimes, scaffolding can be progressively withdrawn so that children can achieve something by themselves. More often, however, the lesson in documenting the surroundings is to recognise that this is how learning occurs: in the context of interaction with people, places, and things. Children learn how to marshal this assistance for different occasions.

Book 6 of these exemplars adds a third cluster of outcomes: "social roles and culturally valued roles and literacies", together with their associated competencies. That book includes the comment:

> In any learning community, children will have the opportunity to try out a range of sociocultural roles and their associated competencies, for example, tuakana, teina, friend, measurer, jam maker, town builder, kaimahi, observer of insects, reader, citizen of the world, and member of hapū and iwi.
>
> page 4

Acknowledging the complexity of learning means understanding that noticing, recognising, and responding will include conjecture and intuition. Recognising complexity also means viewing assessment as something much more complex than assigning marks or ticking boxes. No one format is "right", but the *Te Whāriki* principles provide four evaluative criteria:

- Is the identity of the child as a competent and confident learner protected and enhanced by the assessments?
- Do the assessment practices take account of the whole child?
- Do the assessment practices invite the involvement of family and whānau?
- Are the assessments embedded in reciprocal and responsive relationships?

Reflective questions — He pātai hei whakaaro iho

What do we understand by "assessment for learning"?

In what way do the metaphors for learning in Hirini Melbourne's *E Tipu e Rea* relate to the assessment practice in our setting?

In what way might assessment for learning in early childhood settings support Mason Durie's broad goals of education for Māori?

How does the description of assessment for learning as "noticing, recognising, and responding" compare with our understanding of it?

To what extent are our assessment practices designed to be "for learning"? How do we use assessment to enrich the children's learning?

How is the sharing of undocumented noticing, recognising, and responding supported in our early childhood setting?

How do our assessment practices help the children to see themselves as competent and confident learners?

In what ways do our assessment practices highlight the learning going on in the everyday events and activities that children experience?

How do we acknowledge that children's multiple learning pathways are frequently uncharted and unpredictable?

How do we reflect the complexity of the children's learning in our assessment practices?

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