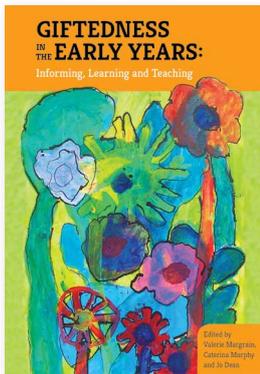


Assessment – Learning stories of Giftedness

Early years education with gifted children - Quality practices series



Jo Dean & Valerie Margrain

This brochure connects to chapters 4 & 5 of Margrain, V., Murphy, C., & Dean, J. (2015). *Giftedness in the early years: Informing, learning & teaching*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.



Curriculum Connections

"*Te Whāriki* places emphasis on planning based on individual characteristics strength, interests and needs. All children have the right "to reach their potential" (Ministry of Education, 1996).

"Planning experiences or events can focus on the environment, the setting, particular age groups, and on groups of children or individual children through an IDP or IEP" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 28).

"The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. ... Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 39).

References:

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Emma's Learning Story

(age – just turned 4 years)

Emma, today you brought a book that you had created at home. It was called 'Cinderella'. You have demonstrated your artistic skills in the past, particularly through your sewing interest. I was just amazed at your illustrations in your book, clearly showing the difference between the dirty dress and the clean dress that Cinderella was wearing. You could articulate your drawings, identifying the different parts on the dresses such as the 'puff sleeves' and the 'overlay on the skirt'. Your Mum and I also talked about your perception of distance. You have shown your understanding this through your drawings; one page shows Cinderella close up. "You can't see her shoes here" you said, "because it's close up". On the next page you told me that "you can see the ceiling and the floor because Cinderella is far away". What an enjoyable book this was to read.

Thank you so much for sharing it with me Emma!
Mahi pai! Great work!



Emma's learning story demonstrates some of the gifted characteristics that this young girl has, including advanced language and knowledge, and conceptual thinking. This narrative also documents valued connection between home and centre.

Why use Learning Stories?

Learning Stories are a narrative approach to describe and highlight children’s learning and our understanding of it. Learning Stories have become a popular tool for assessment in early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2004/2007/2009). Having storied accounts of children’s progress – from children’s, families’ and teachers’ perspectives is hugely valued and provides a strong thread of continuity to the child’s learning. Including many perspectives creates a bigger picture of the child’s learning and their learning context; multiple voices strengthens validity.

Emma’s learning story illustrates the opportunity that learning story portfolios provide to document continuity of learning across settings, and connections to previous stories and experiences. Partnership between home, community, ECE and school can not only be captured within learning stories, but also fostered by them.

References:

- Margrain, V. G. (2005). *Precocious readers: Case studies of social support, self regulation and spontaneous learning in the early years*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- Ministry of Education. (2004/2007/2009). *Kei tua o te pae: Assessment for learning. Early childhood exemplars*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Perkins, D. N., Jay, E., & Tishman, S. (1983). Beyond abilities: A dispositional theory of thinking. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 39(1), 1-21.
- Van wijk, N. (2008). *Getting started with schemas: Revealing the wonder-full world of children’s play*. Auckland, New Zealand: Playcentre Publications Inc.

Documenting Dispositions for Learning

In New Zealand, learning stories often draw on a dispositional framework for understanding children’s working theories and expertise (Ministry of Education, 2004/2007/2009). Thinking dispositions (e.g. Perkins, Jay & Tishman, 1993) and schema (van Wijk, 2008) can also be connected to learning stories and curriculum. Margrain’s (2005) study of early readers connected dispositions to *Te Whāriki* and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996, 2007), adapted in the table below.

Learning & Thinking Dispositions	Links to Te Whāriki	Links to The New Zealand Curriculum
Perserverance	Wellbeing, Exploration	Thinking, Managing self
Confidence	Exploration, Wellbeing	Relating to others; Using language, symbols & text
Responsibility	Belonging Contribution	Thinking, Relating to others
Courage & curiosity	Exploration	Managing self, Participating & contributing
Trust & playfulness	Communication	Thinking
Logical & ordered	Exploration	Thinking, Using language, symbols & text
Inquiry	Exploration	Thinking; Participating & contributing
Passionate	Wellbeing, Belonging	Managing self
Internal control	Contribution	Managing self

Iti noa ana, he pito mata.

“With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest.”

Acknowledgements:



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