

"Oh, no! That's not right!"

Child: Lauren
Date: 21 February
Observer: Julie

Learning Stories



I invited Lauren to do an overprint on the cat screenprint she did the other day.

"What else would you like to have in this picture, Lauren?"

"A basket! With blankets that go there and there!"

"Fantastic!" I said and watched as she drew her cat basket and cut it out.

Once the print was made, she looked at it and said, "Oh, no! That's not right! The cat needs to be in the basket – not up there!"

"You could draw another one if you like – you have another cat print you could use."



"That's a good idea!" she said.

She drew the basket. She then overprinted her screenprint. "Oh, no! It's too big! Never mind, I'll put some toys in it."

She drew a mouse, a cat's drink bottle – with milk in it – and a ball. As she was drawing, she said, almost to herself, "I'll have to concentrate!"

And she did, and we were both delighted with what she produced. Lauren cut the basket and handle out and most of the mouse toy. I helped with the drink bottle and tiny ball.

The second print met with a far more favourable reception. "I like that!" Lauren said.

It was so wonderful being part of Lauren's project today, and I'm glad she was happy with the result.

Short-term review

Lauren is far more comfortable and confident with the screenprinting process.

Lauren was really focused and involved with what she was doing. She had a clear idea of how she wanted her basket to be and was prepared to have another go to achieve what she wanted. Great persistence! It's fantastic that Lauren can express how she feels and is so articulate.

What next?

More screenprinting.

I believe that "cats" is a subject dear to Lauren's heart. How can we extend her knowledge and interest? Books, factual books, different sorts of cats, making cats out of material.

What's happening here?

Lauren tries to print a picture of a basket over a screen-printed picture she has made of a cat. She is not pleased with the result ("Oh, no! That's not right!"), and she tries again. The teacher writes down some of the comments she and Lauren made during the process.

What aspects of children's contribution to assessments does this exemplify?

This exemplar includes examples of self-assessment. The teacher records an occasion when Lauren appears to be developing her own sense of what is right. When she aligns a second template (a basket) over an earlier print (a cat) and makes a second print, she looks at it and says, "Oh, no! That's not right! The cat needs to be in the basket – not up there!" She tries again and, when she has aligned the basket and cat to her satisfaction and added a few more items to the picture, she comments, "I like that!"

Lauren also appears to be talking herself through the process, self-regulating her learning. The teacher notes, "As she was drawing, she said, almost to herself, 'I'll have to concentrate!' And she did ...".

The assessment records Lauren's apparent view that if something is not right, you either redo it or take a creative approach and readjust your goal. She sees mistakes as part of learning. Her response to an unacceptable amount of space in her second attempt to develop the original design was "Never mind, I'll put some toys in it." On this occasion, she appears to interpret mistakes as part of the process of completing a task, and she is developing strategies in response to that belief.

How might this assessment develop children's capacity to contribute to assessments?

Lauren's art work has changed a great deal during her time at the early childhood centre, and her folio records a shift in interest from "splodge" paintings to elaborate screen prints. (A parent contribution to her portfolio, not shown, notes the progress in her art work.) This pathway of learning, together with the teacher's commentary, has been of considerable interest to her family.

The teacher chose to take notice of Lauren's self-evaluative comments: "Oh, no! That's not right! The cat needs to be in the basket – not up there!" "Oh, no! It's too big!" "I like that!" Lauren is making her own decisions about what is right. The documentation means that this process can become a model for her later work. It is also available for other teachers to refer back to when they work with Lauren.

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

Lauren's strategies for responding to making a mistake are noticed and recognised as important learning. Lauren and her family are hearing the teacher's voice about what is valued here: perseverance, learning goals (see the reference to Dweck [1999] on page 3), creative responses to error, and self-evaluation.

The teachers made it possible for Lauren to redo her screen print when they encouraged her to make several copies of the first screen print. (If something goes wrong with the second overlay, there is another foundation screen print to use.) The teacher reminds her, "You could draw another one if you like – you have another cat print you could use." In this way, the teacher is providing some scaffolding for Lauren's persistence.

In this episode, the teacher's feedback and scaffolding also emphasise Lauren's interest in the potential complexity of this art medium.