

Te Aranga responds to a photograph

Tōku tipuna

Te Rangihaeata (ten months) sits on a whale during a recent trip back to his marae. It is one of the props from the movie *Whale Rider*, which was based in his home town of Whāngārā mai Tawhiti on the outskirts of Gisborne.



Te Rangihaeata's pepeha

Ko Pukehapopo te Maunga, Ko Waiomoko te Awa,
Ko Whāngārā mai Tawhiti te Marae, Ko Ngāti
Konohi te Iwi, Ko Paikea te Tangata.

The legend of Paikea goes, in part, as follows: Paikea was the son of a great chief. One day, Paikea and his brother Ruatapu set out to sea in their waka on a voyage from Hawaiki to explore the surrounding lands. A number of prominent people from their tribe went with them. Ruatapu was very jealous of his brother and had set a trap to sink the waka and return to shore a hero.

However, Paikea became aware of this ploy and began reciting a karakia, chanting for help from beyond to give him the strength to survive. Many of the people with him had already drowned. A whale came up out of the sea. Paikea climbed upon his back and was carried to the shore of what was to become his new home, Whāngārā mai Tawhiti, where he now sits upon his whale on top of the wharenui Whitireia.

Learning story

Over the past few months, Te Aranga (four and a half years), who also attends our centre, has been fascinated with all things to do with Paikea. He really enjoys dressing up, draping a piece of material around his shoulders like a cloak, and spending the rest of the day known only as "Paikea". He likes discussing the *Whale Rider* movie with the whaea and his peers and singing the song "Paikea", which depicts Paikea's travels from Hawaiki to Aotearoa.

So, when Te Aranga saw the picture of Te Rangihaeata, he couldn't believe his eyes. We sat and had a discussion about where the photo had been taken, why the whale was on the grass, and how Te Rangihaeata got onto the whale. As the whale looked so lifelike, he was pleased to hear that it wasn't, in fact, a real whale and that it would be OK and wouldn't be hungry or lonely without its whānau.

Te Aranga and Te Rangihaeata have a family link through Paikea, making the link beyond the centre environment even stronger. The picture of Te Rangihaeata is now on his pepeha, alongside those of the other children.

What's happening here?

This exemplar starts with a photograph of Te Rangihaeata sitting on a whale, one of the props from the movie *Whale Rider*. The kaiako explains the significance of this photograph and describes Te Aranga's response to it.

What aspects of bicultural assessment does this exemplify?

This exemplar emphasises whakapapa connections with land, people, whānau, history, waiata, and identity. The significance of these connections is highlighted by the responses to their documentation. Te Aranga recognised the connections when he saw the picture of Te Rangihaeata.

How might this assessment contribute to bicultural practice here?

In this centre, "Pepeha are displayed in the ruma moe along with the photos of the tamariki and the whaea to give the whānau a sense of belonging here. Lots of the parents read the pepeha and recognise links to their own whānau, too." Te Rangihaeata's pepeha is included here, beneath his photo.

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

The kaiako comments that "Paikea" is the waiata Te Aranga always wants to sing after he has finished reciting his pepeha during te wā mō te karakia (prayer time). These valued connections with whānau, waiata, maunga, awa, marae, iwi, and tangata are part of everyday life in the centre and are reflected in the artefacts (in this case, photographs) and documentation. The children can recite their pepeha every day if they want to, ensuring that the connections are continually revisited.