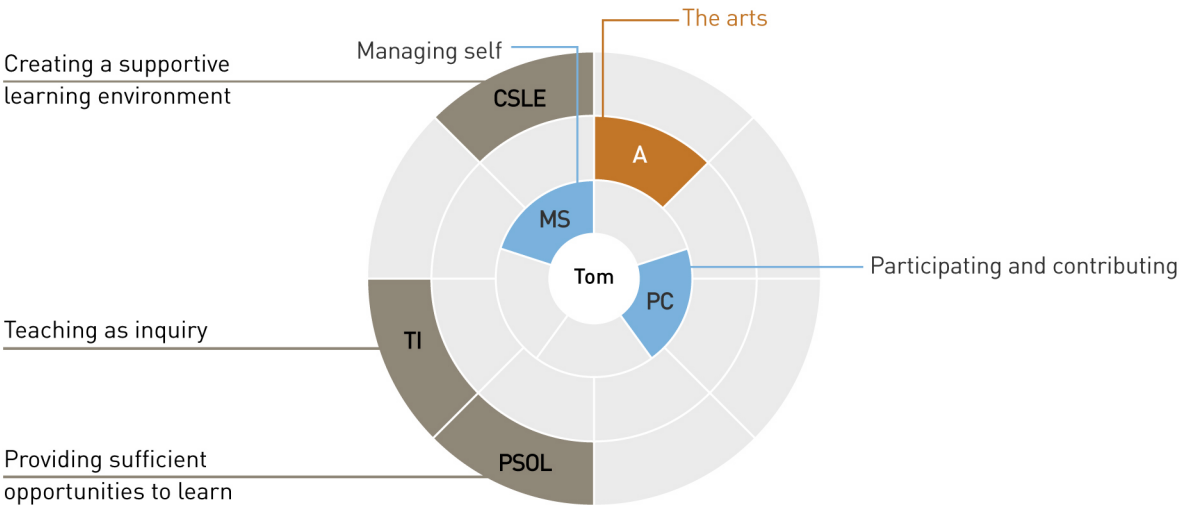


Tom's learning in and through art

Links to the curriculum



Student background

Name	Tom	Tom has a wonderful sense of humour and we love the way he giggles when he has played tricks on us. Tom has the support of a teacher aide throughout his day as he works alongside his year 4 peers. Tom has a range of complex sensory needs, which can change quickly.
Age	8	
Year	4	
School	Primary	

At times Tom can tolerate various materials and sounds, yet within minutes these can be unbearable for him. He is able to communicate with us by pointing at some objects or cards. We have come to understand Tom's use of pitch to communicate his acceptance or reluctance of requests and tasks. At other times, Tom will use physical actions to express his acceptance or otherwise (for example, dropping to the ground). We continue to work on understanding Tom, taking the time to process the information he is presenting to us, and providing him with a safe learning environment.

Three learning stories

- 1. Touching the sponge** 21 February 2008
- 2. Tom the painter** 29 February 2008
- 3. Tom is an artist** February/March 2008

This string of learning stories shows how, through art, Tom is participating and contributing in a number of ways within the art learning sessions that he and his classmates have undertaken over a period of seven weeks. Tom is also able to demonstrate choice-making and risk-taking skills (managing self) during these activities. The string illustrates a shift from engagement with known tools and materials towards experimenting with what Tom's peers are also using.

Touching the sponge

Student	Tom	Date	21 February 2008
		Observer	Steffi (teacher aide)

Learning goal

- Tom will participate in an art activity alongside his peers.



Tom's class was learning about insects.

The children were working at their desks, painting their bees. I left Tom with books at his desk while I prepared the materials. I wondered if he used this time to watch the other children paint. Tom was sitting at his desk with his group. He was presented with a picture of a bee. I said, "Tom, we are going to paint the bee". I lifted up the sponge in my hand and said, "Sponge, Tom". Tom made a verbal sound that I understood to mean he was not happy. I provided hand-over-hand support to raise Tom's hand with the sponge. Tom grasped the sponge.

I said, "Sponge in paint, Tom" and guided his hand to the yellow paint. Tom dropped his hand and the sponge on the paper over the top of the bee. He then dropped it again just under the bee.

Tom put the sponge down and turned away. The children in his group made comments such as, "Wow, Tom that's clever", and "Great art, Tom". Tom did not look at the children, but he did smile. Everyone is proud of your painting Tom.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Tom touching the sponge is a great step forward in risk taking. Historically, he has been reluctant to use any art materials at school and home.

Participating and contributing

Tom shows that he is comfortable to participate in the activity and to share the results in his group.

Learning areas

Level 1 the arts: Communicating and Interpreting: visual arts

Having a go, alongside his peers, shows that Tom is comfortable to participate in the activity and to share the results in his group.

Level 1 the arts: Developing Practical Knowledge: visual arts

It was great to watch Tom explore this paint and sponge opportunity.

Where to next?

We will provide Tom with further opportunities to use a sponge and encourage him with any other materials that he shows an interest in.

We will continue to encourage Tom's peers to help us celebrate his achievements.

We will reduce the amount of physical and verbal prompting used to support learning.

What has Tom taught the adults working/living with him?

Tom's parents and school staff were thrilled with his decision to take a risk in this art activity. We have been encouraging him to experiment with art materials for many years. This has reminded us to keep providing these opportunities for Tom at both home and school.

Tom the painter

Student	Tom	Date	29 February 2008
		Observer	Steffi (teacher aide)

Learning goals

- Tom will complete an art activity alongside his peers.
- Tom will use art materials/tools to complete his work.



This art activity was part of the "Introducing Me" unit in term 1. All the children were given an outline of their head. We worked at Tom's desk, alongside his group. I drew some lines with a pencil to provide a frame for Tom to paint. I chose the red paint and Tom painted three areas with hand-over-hand support.

All the children were using paintbrushes and, although Tom has been reluctant to use a brush, I decided to try one again. Tom has recently been more adventurous in using different tools and if he was not happy with a brush we could use a sponge. We used a wide paintbrush. I prompted him with "From side to side, Tom" as we painted. I gave Tom three colours to choose from and Tom chose yellow paint by reaching out for it.

Tom took the yellow paint and dipped in it with a wide paint brush. I provided him with hand-over-hand support again. I prompted him, "From side to side," as we moved the brush across the page.



Tom was able to look down at his work while he painted. Tom was very patient and stayed at the activity, even though at times he wanted to leave. When the head had been painted I said, "Finished Tom, well done". The children were very impressed with Tom's art. One of the children said, "Oh Tom's painted his head in the Chiefs' colours".

Another child said, "He probably likes that team".

"Tom's stripes are very big", said some other children. I said, "Yes, Tom needs to use a wider brush to paint than you do". The children were very proud of Tom's efforts. It has been great to see Tom stopping to look at his artwork on the wall alongside everyone else's. We are proud of you Tom. You are an artist.

Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

We were proud to see Tom staying at an activity, even when he wished to move to something else. It was also wonderful to watch Tom make choices and to be happy with those choices.

Learning areas

Level 1 the arts: Communicating and Interpreting: visual arts

Tom was able to participate in a class activity and contribute to the class display of art on the wall. There was much discussion and sharing.

Level 1 the arts: Developing Practical Knowledge: visual arts

It was great Tom used a new art tool (the paintbrush) and selected a colour.

Where to next?

We will provide Tom with opportunities to repeat the use of these art materials and tools.

We will encourage Tom to complete some part of an art activity with less physical support from us while maintaining the “choice” aspect and the supportive community of learners. A community of learners is where students can be encouraged to keep noticing what each person is doing, copying techniques (developing practical knowledge: visual arts), ideas (developing ideas: visual arts) and sharing comments (communicating and interpreting: visual arts).

What has Tom taught the adults working/living with him?

Tom keeps surprising us with his new adventures with art materials. We need to remember to give him many opportunities to show us what he knows and is willing to use. We need to give him sufficient opportunities to learn to use a particular tool, maybe in new contexts.

Tom is an artist

Student	Tom	Date	February/March 2008
		Observers	Sue (teacher aide) Steffi (teacher aide) Annie (ORRS teacher)

Learning goals

- Tom will participate in, and complete, an art activity alongside his peers.
- Tom will complete an art activity over a number of sessions.



Tom's class was learning about insects and everyone was learning to draw a large insect. All work was completed in the classroom alongside Tom's peers.

Session 1: All the children were drawing chalk lines for two big insects on A2 sized paper. I told Tom it was time for drawing with the other children. One of the children got a piece of paper for Tom and it was placed on his desk. Tom's group asked, "What's Tom going to draw?" and I replied, "I don't know. Let's see what Tom wants to draw". Tom happily held the chalk and let me guide him with a rough outline and then made a lot of the lines and shapes himself.

He drew lines that looked like two big wings. He drew the wings outlines independently and I provided him with hand-over-hand support for the body and some of the left-hand wing. He made circles on his own. In fact, we could not tell which ones were Tom's and which were mine. One of Tom's peers said, "Look at your cool butterfly, Tom". I said to Tom, "You've drawn a butterfly, Tom". The children were really positive about Tom's work. After the lesson, I drew over Tom's faint chalk lines with a vivid pen so that he could see the outline for the next stage of work. I stayed true to the lines he drew. (Sue)



Session 2: I placed Tom's picture in front of him. I had some dye and gave Tom a big paintbrush. He took it. I placed his hand onto the paper about 40cm from his body and Tom started painting. He moved the brush in a circular motion. He moved his hand closer to his body. I moved his hand further away from him. He did more painting. I said, "Well done Tom. Good work. We can go to the computer now". (Steffi)

Session 3: We had paper on the floor. I placed Tom's drawing on the floor. Tom did not want to paint. I repeated, "Sitting down Tom" until he did so. I gave him a brush, which he put in his mouth. He then turned it in his hands. I allowed him some time to play with the brush and get to know how it felt before he started painting. I said, "We're going to finish your painting, Tom". I placed the jar of dye in front of Tom's face and physically prompted him to put the brush into the dye. I said, "We're putting the brush into the dye". Tom made some loud noises. He appeared happy to use the brush on the paper. He used circular motions. I held the jar while Tom did the strokes independently. I changed the dye so that Tom had another colour to use. He dipped the brush twice. Great work Tom!

You stayed and painted with dye even though you had difficulty tolerating it. Your butterfly is amazing. Mrs B (class teacher) left a space for your art to go on the wall. She told you how clever you were. Mum came to school to look at your art up on the wall with all the other insects. (Annie)



Analysis – what learning is happening here?

Key competencies

Managing self

Tom is continuing to experiment with a range of art materials and is showing us that he can use new techniques, such as strokes, and can combine processes over time to produce an artwork. We are so proud of Tom because he has completed his first long-term art project. He has persevered, even when he wished to do something else, with less physical prompting.

Learning areas

Level the arts: Communicating and Interpreting, Understanding the Arts in Context: visual arts

It is wonderful to see Tom's completed art on the wall alongside his peers. The community of learning supports Tom's work as authentic arts learning.

The first learning story started with a predetermined image and applying colour, whereas in this third learning story, Tom is generating the image. He has more control over the visual ideas and how he will develop these.

Where to next?

We will support Tom to complete a sustained art-making process alongside his peers.

We will provide Tom with further opportunities to make choices and to recognise those choices in our interactions with him.

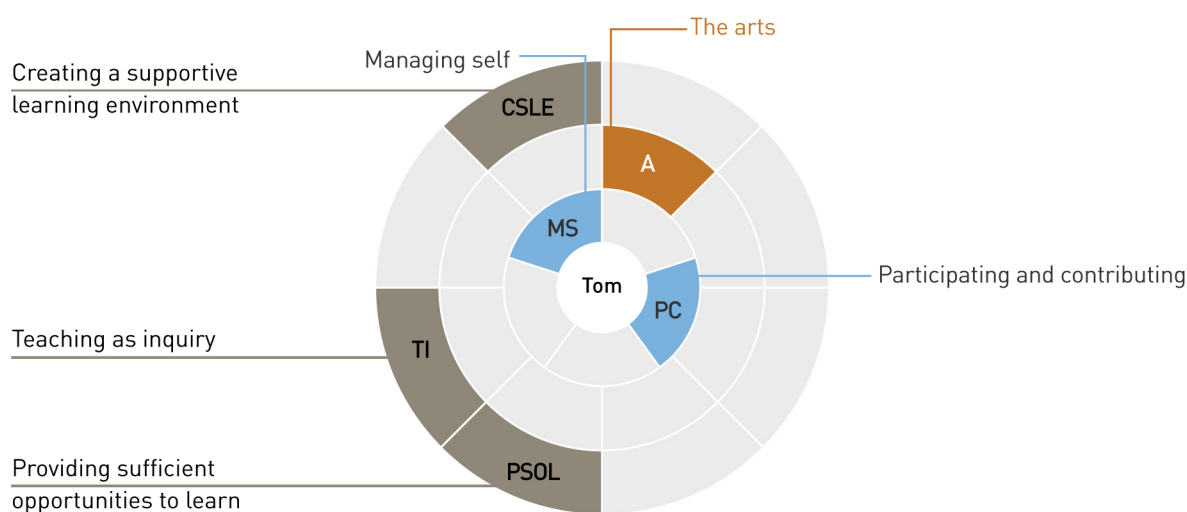
We will support Tom to extend some of the movements with the sponge and brush and with the application of paint methods.

What has Tom taught the adults working/living with him?

These sessions have shown us that Tom will work with us, even when he finds a task challenging. Tom has also demonstrated to us that he can persevere even when he really does not feel like staying at an activity. Maybe he is experiencing the rewards of his art actions so that becomes a stronger motivation for engagement. Art can give children instant feedback on their actions. All the hard work we do together can show itself in predictable and unpredictable ways.



Reflection – what these stories exemplify



Key competencies

Tom displays the key competencies, managing self and participating and contributing in this string of stories as he trusts and becomes more adventurous in his exploration of art materials.

How might these stories strengthen Tom's identity as a learner?

Tom became more independent in these stories over time (agency), requiring less physical prompting to complete activities. Tom was able to take the initiative with his learning on a number of occasions; for example, making a clear choice of paint colour. He was able to experiment with a range of tools and materials and work with a variety of people (depth). Tom was able to complete tasks set for his class, as a collective community, alongside his peers. This resulted in his work being part of a collective display and his peers expecting that it would be framed alongside theirs.

For more information on the four dimensions of agency, breadth, continuity, and depth (ABCDs), refer to *Narrative assessment: a guide for teachers*.

Learning areas

Level 1 the arts

This learning was within visual arts. Tom is developing his practical knowledge of art materials and tools and the learning community is supporting Tom with the other visual arts learning strands (communicating and interpreting, developing ideas, and understanding the arts in context). Tom was able to use both sponges and brushes within this unit. This is a huge breakthrough, as in the past Tom has avoided any contact with these art materials and tools. Dye was chosen for one activity rather than the pastels and crayons used by his peers, as we know Tom has an aversion to these materials.

Effective pedagogy

What does this tell us about teaching and learning in this setting?

Tom's learning environment was safe and supportive, and therefore conducive to Tom taking risks within this work. Learning "in" art also seems to have resulted in learning "through" art as Tom became part of the class art community (creating a supportive learning environment). Although we had a knowledge of Tom's resistance to art materials and tools, we were curious to learn whether he would try the new materials presented to him (teaching as inquiry). Tom had time to explore the art materials in his own ways a number of times during this eight-week unit. We think this gave him the confidence to investigate those tools as well (providing sufficient opportunities to learn).

Reflective questions for the reader

The teacher in this exemplar has focused on two key competencies, managing self, and participating and contributing.

"What other key competencies can I identify in this story? How are these integrated with the strands in the visual arts?"

"How would I support a student to increase her/his comfort with a variety of new materials?"

"How would I know when an activity or process becomes intrinsically motivating for a student?"

Useful resources

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Exploring the visual arts years 1–6: Painting, printmaking, fabric and fibre*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *He wakahuia toi Māori – Māori visual culture in visual arts years 7–10*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2007). "The arts" *The New Zealand curriculum (pp 20–21)*. Wellington: Learning Media.