



Matariki Breakfast

Acknowledgements

This Dramatic Inquiry experience uses the big book "[Matariki Breakfast](#)" by [Andrē Ngāpō & Rozel Pharazyn](#) as a stimulus. The book is a commonly available text within the *Ready to Read* series. It includes reference to one story of Matariki told in the Waikato region. Bear in mind that other parts of Aotearoa have their own stories which will be different.

The planning also draws on a lovely waiata composed by Erana Hemmingsen and published on the Te Papa website

<https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/maori/matariki-maori-new-year/whare-tapere/waiata-song>

The lesson plan has been used with classes of children from New Entrants up to year 3-4. Thanks to teachers at Knighton Normal School, Hillcrest Normal School and St Theresa's school who have helped with trialling this planning.

To go straight to the lesson plan [click here](#). Or read on for a few insights into the thought process that went into the planning

Initial thoughts

This book will already be familiar to many children - so we need to think about ways to 'hook' their interest and make the familiar story new.

This book has a traditional story (Tama-nui-te-rā and Matariki) embedded within a modern story (Kara and her family) so we could either

- just explore one of the stories
- Explore both stories with very careful signalling to move between the two
- use a mixture of embodied drama for one story and projective drama (shadow puppets, paper cut out, finger puppets etc) for the other. We've discovered before that traditional tales work well through projective drama as we want to preserve and respect the original story.

This text doesn't really suit the "creating drama from a picture book" framework (also known as 'tackle a problem' key) since it doesn't have a strong central tension. However, the 'Let's all be.... Plus' approach (also known as the 'explore some action' key) is a good fit, as the story is full of action and doing.

Explore some action / Let's all be.... Plus!

Explore some action / let's all be Plus! is not about simply "acting out" the story (though it starts with that). It's also about opening opportunities for children to inquire and create. The simplest way to use the strategy is to look through the text for where moments of action are described or implied.

<p>ACTION Things that happen in the story - or are implied by the story</p>	<p>Cooking kai, waking early, dressing up warm, Walking up the path, Carrying kai, putting it in the kitchen, hugging whanau, sitting down, listening to story, walking up the hill, carrying the kai, spotting the stars, eating breakfast Trapping the sun, sun hiding, people on earth feeling cold, Stars deciding to help,</p>
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	stars singing, sun coming back, people feeling better
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Mark these moments in the text. Then, as you read the story, invite the children to embody the people carrying out the action by saying “let’s all be...” (for example “Let’s all be Kara carrying the pot of kai to her Auntie’s house). The children can be invited to carry out this action without even moving from the spot.

Then the all-important “plus” can be added by the teacher, asking a question or prompting a creative response from inside the imagined world (for example “what can we see around us as we walk up the steps....?”) It’s this plus that adds the inquiry element to the drama.

Other strategies used in the planning

The storybook could be explored successfully using just the “Explore some action / let’s all be ... plus” strategy. However, the plan shown below also uses some other strategies from Dramatic Inquiry. These are:

- Six dimensions of dramatic imagination: a way to set the scene for a story - in this case Kara’s bedroom. The scene is described by drawing attention to the light and the darkness, the movement and the stillness, the sounds and the silence. The effect is something like an establishing ‘shot’ in a movie.
- Teacher in role: taking on the role of someone from within the story - in this case the role of Kara’s mum. Any time we shift into a role, we always signal this clearly to the children. In this plan the shift into role is signalled through the use of an object - the pot. The teacher doesn’t stay in the role for long.
- Teacher in role VOICE: speaking as someone from the story - without fully taking on the role - in this case the voice of Matariki. This is a form of teacher in role except the teacher doesn’t fully embody the role but simply speaks ‘as’ the role. May be more appropriate when representing a non-human role. Once again, we always signal this to children. In this case the teacher holds a star cut out as the signal.
- Projective drama: using cut outs to represent elements of the story - in this case Tama-nui-te-rā, Matariki and her daughters
- Expressive representation: Using something from music / sound arts, dance or visual art to express a moment from the story. In this plan, a song is mentioned in the original story so I searched for a suitable waiata online and found [this one](#). It has a clear purpose within the story (being the waiata the stars used to call back the sun) and is taught using ‘call and response’

Things to bear in mind while teaching

- Dramatic inquiry is not about asking children to 'show' you their ideas. It's all about imagining ourselves in a story together. Avoid 'show me...' or giving instructions on how children should use facial expression or body language. The simple instruction "Without moving from the spot, let's all be...." sets this up nicely.
- Join in the story along with the children. Once you have said "let's all be..." show through your own behaviour that you are doing just that.
- Focus on what's happening within the imagined world of the story rather than what's happening in the classroom. Make the story the most important thing in the room.
- Remember Dramatic inquiry is about more than 'acting out' the story, although it starts there. The main thing is what we find out together - so don't forget to add the 'plus' question.
- In Dramatic Inquiry the goal is not to stay in role for long periods. This is not sustained improvisation. Rather, aim for short bursts of exploration of the imagined world followed by periods of reflection and discussion out of role.
- Sometimes the most powerful instructions are non verbal ones. With care and practice you can signal role, teach a song, invite children to participate in a ritual with minimal 'instructions'.
- The way you move, speak, turn pages, speak and hold objects all signals to the children how they should behave. Go for conscious use of ritual.

Plan for Matariki Breakfast Drama

Requirements: Copy of Matariki breakfast (preferably big book version).

Extras (not essential but can be used to add to the experience): Large stock pot, Cut out of Tama-nui-te-rā with distressed expression on one side and calm expression on the other, cut outs of stars (Matariki and her daughters) - write names on the back. A length of thick twine or string (I used baling twine),

To prepare: Go through the text and place sticky notes or pencil marks at each action point. Familiarise yourself with the 'plus' questions below or make up your own. Learn the Matariki [waiata](#). Place the paper cut outs and twine out of sight (e.g. in a bag). Have the book ready but out of sight.

Organisation	Teacher script	What's the point? (purpose within imagined world - story)	What's the point (Learning Purpose within real world - curriculum)
Join children sitting on the mat. Have book and resources nearby	I thought we might make a story together. Our story is about someone called Kara. They're about your age.	Introducing Kara	Introducing task Signalling collaboration Inductive language Connecting to their prior experiences
As you say 'let's all be...' carry out the action. Children will follow your example	At the start of this story Kara is fast asleep in bed. Without leaving our places on the mat - Let's all be Kara curled up in bed.	Being Kara Exploring what she's doing before the story starts	Inviting children to step into story Transitioning children into role Management - a gentle start with everyone still & quiet. Using listening skills
Sit up slightly to speak - use storyteller voice	It's very early in the morning and Kara's bedroom is pitch dark apart from one line of	Feeling what it's like to be Kara in	Engaging the children through the senses Modelling the use of descriptive language

	light visible under the door. There's the sound of a ruru outside but otherwise the night is quiet. Kara's duvet slowly rises and falls with her breathing. And there above the bed, her toys sit motionless, watching over her sleeping form.	this moment	Using the 6 dimensions of dramatic imagination
<p>Storyteller voice</p> <p>As you say 'let's all be...' carry out the action. Children will follow your example.</p>	<p>Suddenly Kara heard her mum's voice. "Wake up girl... it's time" Kara stretched her arms and legs and gave a big yawn.</p> <p>Let's all be Kara stretching herself as she wakes up</p> <p>[Out of role 'plus'] <i>What do you think could be going to happen? Why would someone wake up a child so early in the morning? Let's find out...</i></p>	<p>Preparing for the day</p> <p>Wondering what might be going to happen next</p>	<p>Moving into action, diagnosing whether children accept the offer and carry out the action.</p> <p>Shifting from storyteller voice (past tense) to teacher in role voice (present tense) to out of role voice (conditional)</p> <p>Encouraging inquiry / prediction</p> <p>Using enactive (drama) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation</p>
<p>Storyteller voice.</p> <p>As you say 'let's all be...' carry out the action. Children will follow your example.</p>	<p>Suddenly Kara remembered - and sat up with a big smile. Today is a very special day. Near the bed were the warm clothes she got ready last night. She put them on over the top of her PJs.</p> <p>Let's all be Kara putting on those warm clothes.</p> <p>[Plus] <i>There's a big thick jersey, a pair of socks... what else are you putting on Kara?</i></p> <p>Use children's suggestions and fold them into the story using third person <i>And she pulled on a knitted hat</i> etc</p>	<p>Preparing for the cold</p>	<p>Feeding in further information about what's happening (we're going outside) without giving too much away</p> <p>Giving opportunities for input from children</p> <p>Using enactive (drama) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation</p>

<p>Storyteller voice Pick up pot Shift to teacher in role voice Then out of role - put pot down.</p>	<p>Once she was fully dressed, Kara went out of her room, down the corridor and into the kitchen. There was mum, standing with an enormous pot full of... Kara's favourite breakfast.</p> <p><i>Morena Kara - are you ready for your picnic breakfast?</i></p> <p>[Out of role 'plus'] I wonder what might be in that pot ?...</p>	<p>Introducing Mum</p>	<p>Use of teacher in role Visual language Using enactive (drama) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation</p>
<p>Out of role (without pot) first, then pick up pot.</p>	<p>[Out of role] I'll stand here as mum with the pot and if anyone wants to, they can come and be Kara, lifting the lid, taking a big sniff and describing the delicious food inside. I wonder what might be in the pot? You decide what's right for your story.</p> <p>As each child comes up, press for as much description as possible, "ooh, what's does that look like? How does it smell?"</p> <p>Use storyteller voice to fold their ideas into the story <i>"And Kara saw delicious creamy scrambled eggs, blobbing and steaming ..."</i></p>	<p>Working out what's for breakfast</p>	<p>Giving opportunities for input from children Using enactive (drama), iconic (drawing) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation Descriptive language vocabulary Drawing on children's prior experiences Building investment in the story</p>
<p>Gather on mat. Reveal big book</p>	<p>Now, Kara is from a storybook - some of you might even know this book? I thought we could read it together and hear a bit more about what happens.</p>		<p>Transitioning into the world of the storybook Demonstrating that texts are stories in written form</p>

<p>Read from big book</p>	<p>Pause at each moment of action to say “Let’s all be ...” And add a “plus” inquiry question</p> <p><i>E.g. Kara and her mum and dad walked up the path to Aunty’s house, carrying kai for the breakfast</i> <i>Let’s all be Kara, carrying that kai up the path</i> <i>[Plus] What can we see around us?</i> ... <i>The family put their kai in the kitchen and went into the living room</i> <i>Let’s all be Kara heading into the the living room.</i> <i>[Plus] What furniture is in the living room?</i> ... <i>“Sit down and I will tell you”</i> <i>[Plus] Where are you going to sit?</i></p>	<p>Working out what it’s like at Auntie’s house</p> <p>Coming together with the rest of the family</p>	<p>Giving opportunities for input from children Using enactive (drama) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation Drawing on children’s prior experiences Co-constructing details of the story</p>
<p>Read up to “hungry after their long journey”. Pause and put book down.</p>	<p>There are many many different stories told at Matariki time.</p> <p>This story is one that some people from Tainui in the Waikato like to tell.</p> <p>This is the story that Kara’s aunty Wai heard when she was a little girl and now she’s going to pass it on to Kara.</p>		<p>Giving context for Matariki</p>
<p>Use paper cut outs and</p>	<p><i>Some people in our iwi tell the story of how</i></p>	<p>Listening to Auntie</p>	<p>Giving opportunities for input from children</p>

<p>twine here - no need to show the book.</p>	<p><i>Māui and his brothers slowed Tama-nui-te-rā the sun.</i></p> <p>Reveal sun (distressed face) and position as if it is being pulled by the twine.</p> <p><i>Let's all be Māui and his brothers pulling on the ropes to slow the sun</i></p> <p><i>[Plus] Heave- heave! Why are we doing this my brothers? Do you think we can succeed? What do we need to do now?</i></p> <p><i>Tama-nui-te-rā was so hurt by this that he ran away and hid</i></p> <p><i>[Out of role plus] Where do you think the sun might hide?</i></p> <p><i>Without Tama-nui-te-rā in the sky the land grew colder and colder and the people grew sadder and sadder - they missed the sun.</i></p> <p><i>Let's all be the people on the earth getting colder and colder and missing the sun</i></p> <p><i>[Plus] What is happening to our earth now there is no sun to warm it? How is it to live in eternal night?</i></p>	<p>Wai's story</p>	<p>Using enactive (drama) iconic (drawing) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation</p> <p>Drawing on children's prior experiences</p> <p>Co-constructing details of the story</p> <p>Revisiting an important story and respecting the original</p>
<p>Reveal Matariki cut out</p>	<p><i>Matariki the star, was a cousin of Tama-nui-te-rā.</i></p> <p><i>Matariki and her six daughters decided to</i></p>	<p>Listening to Auntie Wai's story</p>	

	<p><i>go and find Tama-nui-te-rā and try to bring him back</i></p>		
<p>Hand out the six stars while singing the waiata. Sing this 'live' NOT with the recording as the ritual element will be lost.</p>	<p>Use 'call and response' to teach the names of the stars through the waiata. Hand out the first star, while singing the name. Repeat. Then hand out the second star, singing that name. Then layer the two together and move on to the third star.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Waitī, Waitā, Waipunarangi, Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi, Ururangi e </p> <p>You can stop with just the names, or teach complete waiata - as follows</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Waitī, Waitā, Waipunarangi, Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi, Ururangi e Koinei ngā tamariki o Matariki <i>(These are the children of Matariki)</i> Ngā whetū e pīataata i te rangi e <i>(The bright stars that shine in the sky)</i> Ngā whetū e pīataata i te rangi e <i>(The bright stars that shine in the sky)</i> </p>	<p>Listening to Auntie Wai's story</p>	<p>Giving opportunities for input from children Using enactive / expressive (drama, music) iconic (drawing) and symbolic (oral language) modes of representation Teaching a waiata Teaching names of the Matariki stars</p>

	<p>Teacher holds the star representing Matariki - Use teacher in role voice <i>“My daughters What has happened to my cousin the sun? Why is he hiding? What is happening to the earth - what do you see when you look down there? We must help!”</i></p> <p><i>The seven stars sang to Tama-nui-te-rā and sparkled their light onto him</i></p> <p><i>Repeat the waiata</i></p> <p><i>Tama-nui-te-rā felt the warmth of the music and light. Slowly he started to heal. Slowly he came out of hiding.</i></p> <p>Reveal the Tama-nui-te-rā paper cutout (the side with the calm facial expression).</p>		
Pick up the book and finish the story	Read to the end of the story	Taking the picnic breakfast up to the lookout	Using symbolic language (storytelling) Listening skills
Sing waiata to conclude	<i>Happy Matariki she whispered And the stars whispered back.... (Sing waita in a whispered voice)</i>	Listening to the stars and singing back to them	Adding ritual to the closure of the book
Reflection	How was that?	Taking the story with us into our	Encouraging reflection Critical reflection

	<p>Which parts of this story were familiar and which were new? What was tricky? What did YOU put into the story?</p> <p>Who might have a different point of view? Whose story did we not hear today?</p> <p>Have you had a Matariki breakfast?</p> <p>Can you remember the names of the stars?</p> <p>Did you learn anything new about Matariki?</p> <p>Although Kara is from a story, the Matariki stars are real - and visible during the month of June - perhaps we will get the chance to see them EARLY in the morning.</p> <p>We have a public holiday at Matariki time to allow us to celebrate love, family connection, yummy food and to remind us all to wait patiently through winter for the warm sun to return in spring</p> <p>What could we take away from this experience and do in real life?</p>	<p>own lives</p>	<p>Making links to own experience</p>
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