

Fabric and Fibre Lesson with Infants

'Let's Explore Fabric'

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Curriculum Strand: Fabric and Fibre (Visual Arts Curriculum p.23)

Objective: *Explore the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression (p.23)*

Linkage: **Print** > *Experiment with the effects that can be achieved with simple print-making (p.20)*
Paint and Colour > *Experiment with a variety of colour drawing instruments and media to develop colour awareness (p.19)*
Construction > *Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials / making structures (p.22); Make imaginative structures (p.22)*

Integration Possibilities:

Oral Language: *Provide further information in response to the teacher's prompting (p.20); Focus on descriptive detail and begin to be explicit in relation to people, places, times, processes, events, colour, shape, size, position (p.20)*

Mathematics: Spatial Awareness — *Explore, discuss, develop and use the vocabulary of spatial relations (p.28); 2D Shapes — Sort and name 2D shapes: square, circle, triangle, rectangle (p.29)*

Science: *Observe and investigate a range of familiar materials in the immediate environment (p.27); Know about some everyday uses of common materials (p.27); Identify some materials that are waterproof (p.27)*

Developing this Activity in Class:

Getting Started: Have scraps of fabrics of various textures, colours and patterns available for the children to see and handle.

Materials Needed: Hessian, cut into pieces about half the size of an A4 page (1 per child)
 Coloured sugar paper (for backing)
 Crayons, coloured chalks and/or paint and brushes
 A4 sheets of paper (for optional print lesson)

Stimulus: "Can anyone tell what fabric is? Where do you find fabric? Are all fabrics the same? Can you name any fabrics? What is your favourite fabric? What fabric feels soft against your skin? Can any fabrics keep us dry? Which is best to keep us warm? Do you know where any of these fabrics come from?"

Activity: Give each child a piece of Hessian. "Feel this piece of fabric and describe it. Would you like a vest made from it? Why do you say that? Look closely at the fabric, can you see the lines going up and down? Pull a fibre from the edge and see what happens. Can you see how it goes over and under the other fibres? What is happening to the edge of your piece? Pull fibres along the other sides and tell us what happens. If we pull a fibre from the middle of the Hessian what happens? Pull some more fibres and describe what shapes you have made in the Hessian. If you stick your finger in the hole what happens to the shape?"
You can stop the lesson here if you wish, staple the deconstructed pieces to a coloured backing and display them in the classroom, or you can continue...
 Give the children coloured chalks and invite them to add colour to the piece. (This could also be done with crayons or paint.)
These can be stapled to a coloured backing and displayed in the classroom.

If the children continue to deconstruct the piece of Hessian, ask them what the loose fibres could be used for. (This should elicit a wide variety of responses, some of which will raise a few smiles.) If the children have seen the *I Am An Artist* DVD they will have an idea of what other children have done with the fibres, i.e., making homes for animals and birds.

These can be displayed on the Nature Table in the classroom.

The loose fibres can also be used to make simple prints by taking rubbings of them. The children arrange the fibres on the table either selectively or at random, place an A4 sheet of paper on top and using the side of a crayon make a rubbing. If they lift the page and move it slightly they can rub again using a different coloured crayon. This can be repeated several times to produce really interesting effects. *Display these in the classroom.*

The children can also make prints of the deconstructed Hessian.

Evaluation/Looking and Responding:

This will be happening as the children work. Encourage them to talk about what they are doing and what is happening to the Hessian as they pull the fibres. Encourage them to use the language of weaving, over and under, weave, fibres, threads. Give them other fabrics to look at to see the difference in the various threads and yarns used in their making.

Extension Activities:

The children could add threads, wool or ribbons to the Hessian. Infants will not be stitching but can glue, tie or weave through the holes made by pulling the strands.

ICT Possibilities:

Look at the slide show in the Fabric and Fibre section of the website and encourage discussion on the creative uses of fabric. The children's work can also be scanned into the computer and used as a screensaver, giving them another display space. They can also be sent to the website to be included in the gallery.

Using the I Am An Artist DVD:

The *Fabric and Fibre* programmes on the DVD offer opportunities to see children deconstructing and colouring Hessian. They can also see children making simple constructions with the Hessian strands.

Note:

Fabric is a very rich area for creative work with children. It can be pulled apart, written/drawn/painted on, can have bits added to it, can be used for dressing up (invent a costume) and can be used for simple constructions and collages.

Relevant Artists:

Christo and Jeanne- Claude

Relevant Websites:

See artist Liz Kane's work using paint and fabrics
http://www.lizkane.net/html/gallery_0203.html

Visit the site of Mary Manahan and see her beautiful quilt designs
<http://www.marymanahan.com/Gallery.asp>

The official site of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, famous for the art of wrapping famous buildings and landmarks with fabrics
<http://www.christojeanneclaude.net>

Scoilnet, which is a portal to lots of sites useful in the classroom
<http://www.scoilnet.ie>