

## Construction Lesson with Infants to 2nd Classes 'Buildings, Houses and Homes' Gemma Mc Girr

**Curriculum Strand:** Construction (Visual Arts Curriculum p.22, 38)

**Objective:** *Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials in making structures (p.22, 38)*

**Linkage:** **Paint and Colour** > *Use colour to express vividly recalled feelings, experiences and imaginings (p.19)*  
*Explore colour with a variety of materials and media (p.32)*  
**Drawing** > *Discover and draw line and shape as seen in natural and manufactures objects and discover that lines can make shapes (p.18)*  
*Make drawings based on his/her personal or imaginative life with a growing sense of spatial relationships (p.30)*

**Integration Possibilities:**

**Science:** *Observe and investigate a range of familiar materials in the immediate environment (p.27)*  
*Begin to explore how different materials may be used in the construction of homes suited to their environments (p.46)*

**Oral Language:** *Focus on descriptive detail and begin to be explicit in relation to people, places, times, processes, events, colour, shape, size, position (p.20)*

*Experiment with more elaborate vocabulary and sentence structure in order to extend and explore meaning (p.27)*

**Geography:** *Acquire some awareness of different types of homes in the locality (p.24)*

*Develop an awareness and appreciation of different types of homes in the locality and other areas (p.38)*

**Mathematics:** *Sort 3D shapes, regular and irregular (p.28), sort and name 3D shapes: cube, cuboid, sphere and cylinder (p.28), sort and name 2D shapes: square, circle, triangle, rectangle (p.29)*

*Sort, describe, compare and name 2D shapes: square, rectangle, triangle, circle, semicircle oval (p.49), describe, compare and name 3D shapes, including cube, cuboid, cylinder, sphere and cone (p.50), explore the relationship between 2D and 3D shapes (p.50)*

**Developing this Activity in Class:**

Before I start an art lesson I find it very helpful to do a little exercise with the children to unlock their imaginations and to create a safe environment in the classroom for them to show and discuss their work without fear of ridicule. Mankind's imagination got us out of the caves and onto the moon!! Anything can happen in our imagination if we only let it! "Close your eyes and imagine a big door. It can be any colour you like. Written across the door in big capital letters is the word IMAGINATION. Now reach out and slowly open the door, let your imagination out! Open your eyes and let me see the sparkle! Now we can do anything, our imaginations are at work and we are all different!"

**Materials Needed:** Construction toys, e.g., Lego, wooden blocks, mobilo, stickle bricks ...  
 Boxes of different sizes and shapes  
 PVA  
 Masking tape/sellotape  
 Poster paints  
 Brushes

**Stimulus:** **Buildings**  
 Buildings are a great surprise,  
 Everyone's a different size.

Offices grow long and high  
 Tall enough to touch the sky.

Houses seem more like a box,  
Made of glue and building blocks

Every time you look, you see  
Buildings shaped quite differently.

*Mura Cohn Livingston*

"What buildings do you see on your way to school? What type of building do you live in? What shape is it? Can you see other shapes in the building? Describe these shapes, can you name them? Are these buildings separate or are they joined together? What heights are they? What colours are they? How are offices different to homes?"

**Activity:**

(1) The children use the construction toys to construct different types of buildings. Encourage them to describe what they are doing, the type of building they are constructing and what it might be used for.

(2) The children can group and balance the various boxes to construct a variety of buildings. These can be stuck together with PVA, masking tape or sellotape and painted if the children wish (and if they are able).

**Evaluation/Looking and Responding:**

This will be happening as the children work. Encourage them to talk about their constructions, where they might have had any difficulties and how they overcame them. Show them pictures of buildings in the locality, e.g., castles, office blocks, terraces. Show them pictures of other types of dwellings also, e.g., mud huts, Bedouin tents, holiday tents, etc.

**Extension Activities:**

The children could make drawings of different types of buildings, draw a street scene, draw an imaginary house of the future.

**ICT Possibilities:**

Photograph the children's work before it is dismantled and scan it into the computer. The children (and you) now have a record of their fabulous constructions.

**Using the I Am An Artist DVD:**

The *Construction* programmes on the DVD offer opportunities to see children making constructions, using a variety of construction toys.

**Note:**

Allow the children to design and make their own constructions. It might seem like a good idea to show them how to make something dreamed up by an adult but it only stunts their imagination and leads to frustration. It will also more than likely be too difficult and you will end up doing the work. Children are so creative themselves, provide the stimulus and materials and let them at it!

**Relevant Artists:**

Antoni Gaudi  
Artists and architects you think relevant

**Relevant Websites:**

This site shows images of Gaudi's architecture in Barcelona  
<http://www.red2000.com/spain/barcelon/gaudi.html>

This site contains images of unusual buildings in India  
<http://www.cbmpphoto.co.uk/India/buildint.html>

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