

Monster mâché

Investigate recyclable materials by creating your own mini monster

Learning objectives: to select techniques and materials for making a product; to explore the sensory qualities of materials; to assemble, join and combine materials.

NC links: Design and technology 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c.

QCA links: Art and design Unit 1b Investigating materials.

You will need

Newspaper; cellulose powder or wallpaper paste; plastic bottles; cardboard rolls; egg boxes; sand; masking tape; different-coloured paints or tissue paper; PVA glue.

Whole class

Begin by asking the children to explore the ways a sheet of newspaper can be changed. Its shape can be changed by tearing randomly or cutting precisely; its volume can be increased by scrunching and wrapping; and its size can be changed by taping it to other pieces or shredding it into strips.

The paper's strength can be increased by rolling it tightly, while symmetrical patterns can be cut into folded sections.

Some of these options will occur to the children immediately, and others will occur to them if they are given the time to explore the qualities of the newspaper without having to use it to construct something specific.

Group/independent

Tell the class that they are going to design and make a papier-mâché monster from newspaper and other recycled materials. Encourage the children to draw their inspiration from their imagination and also illustrations, such as those in *How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?* by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague (Picture Lions). Detailed plans are unnecessary – remind children that any 'mistakes' they make will probably suggest new and better ideas.

Materials such as large plastic bottles weighed down with sand are ideal starting points for the structures. The children must ensure that any

other parts
– cardboard tubes, boxes and so on – are joined solidly with tape

before any papier-mâché is applied, otherwise the weight of the wet paste can mean structures may fall apart.

Encourage the children to coat newspaper strips with a thin layer of paste and wrap them like bandages on to the structures, applying extra layers where two pieces of the structure are joined. Only a thin layer of paste is needed, and the structures should be dry within a day or two. A final layer of coloured tissue paper will bring the monsters to life, or they can be painted when dry. Strengthen the structures with a coat of PVA glue.



Differentiation

Support

Younger children could make collages using a combination of natural and recycled materials, such as string, twigs, bamboo, feathers, pebbles, wood, paper, newspaper and card. These collages need not be fixed into place but could be photographed.

Extension

Challenge more able children by limiting the range and quantity of the materials to which they have access. Set them a target, for example, their monster must be made only of newspaper and tape, but be as tall as a child or strong enough to hold an apple in its hands. This will prompt children to investigate ways of increasing the strength and stability of their structures.

ICT link

Many simple art and design software packages on the computer allow images to be easily manipulated and changed. Scan the children's drawings or load portraits from a digital camera, and demonstrate how to stretch and distort their features into monstrous proportions.

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