

Terrific Textiles and Fabulous Fabrics



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Felted Balls

Curriculum Area: Science/ Social Studies: making textiles from sheep's wool

Related Books: *The Goat in the Rug* by Charles L. Blood and *Charlie Needs a Cloak* by Tomie dePaola

Materials: Unspun wool fleece or roving, soap, warm water, plastic tubs, Styrofoam ball.

Optional: yarn

Process: Gently stretch out wool so that you can barely see through it. Wrap Styrofoam ball with wool about 3 times, criss-crossing the wrapping as much as possible. If you want to include yarn, wrap a few strands around the ball over the wool. Fill plastic tub with water and dampen wool wrapped ball. Get hands soapy and lightly rub the wool, adding water as necessary. Rub and rub and rub keeping ball wet and hands soapy. After about 15-20 minutes, rinse the balls and allow them to dry. If you want the felt to be really firm, you can put the balls into old pantyhose, knotting between each one, and run them through the dryer to speed drying process and firmly felt the fibers. Add beads, bells, yarn, or whatever you like to make Christmas ornaments or planets. This can also be done around a plastic Easter egg and cut off when dry, adding a fluff of yellow wool tied in the center to form a chick inside.

Batik Fish

Curriculum Area:

Science: study of sealife and fabric dye techniques

Related Books: *Fishes* by Brian Wildsmith

Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister

Materials: white paper, black Sharpies, muslin fabric or old white sheets, paste made with flour and water and alum in an Elmer's glue container, diluted food coloring or commercial dyes.

Process: After looking at pictures of fish or real fish, students draw a fish picture with black Sharpies on white paper. Make a paste by combining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and 2 teaspoons of alum in a blender. Spoon the paste into an empty glue bottle. Give students a piece of muslin that is twice as big as the drawing. Fold the fabric in half and put the drawing inside the folded fabric so the drawing is visible through the muslin. Then children squeeze paste mixture out of glue bottle tracing over the lines they can see through the fabric. Let dry overnight. The next day, students paint in sections of the fish with diluted food coloring or dye. Let dry. Crack off dried paste. Fold over muslin so that it is doubled with the fish on one side and a blank section on the back. Sew around the fish, leaving about 2 inches open. Trim with pinking shears. Students can stuff with batting and sew the opening section closed. These look nice hanging in front of an ocean themed bulletin board.

Kool-Aid Dyed Scarves

Curriculum Area: Visual Arts and Science: mixing colors

Related Literature: *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh
Little-Blue-Yellow by Leo Lionni

Materials: white silk fabric or white silk scarves (available from Dharma Trading Company), packages of unsweetened Kool-Aid, white vinegar, hot water, glass jars, plastic tablecloths, white construction paper, iron.

Process: Cover tables with plastic tableclothes. Soak the scarves in a pot of 2 cups hot water with 3 cups of white vinegar while you prepare the dye. Open three packets of one flavor of Kool-Aid and pour the contents into a glass jar. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup hot water and mix completely until all the powder is dissolved. Do this for each color you plan to use. Students spread out the scarves on tables covered with plastic tableclothes. Next they paint their scarves with one color of Kool-Aid. Repeat for each color they wish to use. Have students observe the areas where the colors mix and see what new colors are created. Let scarves dry overnight. On the next day, rinse scarves until water runs clear. Place between white construction paper and iron to set dye.

Fabric Bowls

Curriculum Area:

Visual Arts 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts. Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

Role and Development of the Visual Arts

3.1 Describe functional and non-utilitarian art seen in daily life; that is, works of art that are used versus those that are only viewed.

Materials: small bowls (I used disposable plastic bowls, but could be anything), plastic tablecloth, Saran Wrap, strips of torn fabric, diluted Elmer's glue, pinking shears.

Process: Cover small bowl with Saran Wrap. Place inverted bowls on table covered with plastic table cloth. Give students strips of torn fabric. Students soak the fabric in diluted Elmer's glue (about half glue, half water) in a pie tin. As they remove the fabric from the glue, they run it through their fingers, removing excess glue and letting it drop back into the pie tin. Students place soaked fabric over the inverted bowls. When entire bowl is covered, let dry overnight. When dry, students remove the fabric bowl from the Saran wrapped bowl. Trim with pinking shears if desired.

Cardboard Looms

Curriculum Areas:

Social Studies: weaving in history and other cultures

Math: patterning

Related Books: *Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castañeda

Wild Rose's Weaving by Ginger Churchill

Materials: Cardboard, string, ribbon or yarn

Process: Cut small notches about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart on 2 ends of the cardboard and wrap the cardboard loom with string.

Students weave ribbons or yarn using under/over, under/over pattern.

Scarecrows

Curriculum Area: Math, subtraction and odd/even

Related Book: *The Little Scarecrow Boy* by Margaret Wise Brown

Materials: blue construction paper, wiggle eyes, precut paper bag circles for heads, precut overalls made of old jeans, fabric strips for shirts and patches, hats, lots of little crows, copies of song lyrics missing the numbers.

Process: After hearing the story, children create scarecrows from the available materials. They can choose 1, 2, 3 or 4 crows to glue on their scarecrows. They also need to glue one crow flying away. Then they glue on the song lyrics and fill in the correct number of crows for their pictures. When dry, have the children hold up their scarecrows at the appropriate time as the class sings the song. Compare the scarecrows. Ask a few children at a time to find someone who has more crows (less, the same) as they do. Does your scarecrow begin with an even or odd number of crows? Does he have an even number or an odd number after one flies away? Do you notice a pattern?

_____ crows so shiny black, sat on a scarecrow's back,
Eating some most delicious corn. Yum, yum!
Scarecrow winked and shouted, "Shoo!" scared one crow and off it flew,
Now there are _____ crows shiny black. Caw, caw!