

ADVENTUROUS GUIDES

Step by step instructions for 8 creative activities

© The Building Exploratory 2010



ADVENTUROUS: exploring place and play

The Building Exploratory

INTRODUCTION

The Building Exploratory creates innovative ways to involve people in changes taking place in their local environment.

The “adventures” outlined in this booklet show the creative activities that we used with young people in Camden involved in the creation of Kilburn Grange Adventure Playground. The activities have been developed by visual artists and highlight the value of participative arts as a way to empower young people and help them develop a sense of place.

The adventures use easily found objects and materials to explore and celebrate the area around the adventure playground. Play workers, teachers and parents can use them with groups of young people to explore any local environment. The activities are fun and engaging and include: sun prints and photography, model making and structures, animation, casting using clay and plaster and sign making.

Each activity is outlined in a step-by-step guide illustrated with photographs showing how they can be used to help young people develop their creative skills and explore and celebrate their local area.

To find out more about the Building Exploratory please contact us 020 7729 2011 or mail@buildingexploratory.org.uk

www.buildingexploratory.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1077600
Company Number: 3684034

Contents

Click on each title to get instructions of how we did each activity and be inspired to have a go yourself

Adventures from A-Z

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental alphabets

Adventures in 3 Dimensions

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental model making

Adventures in Engineering

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental shapes and structures

Adventures in Motion

Try some exciting activities exploring animation

Adventures with Shapes

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental patterns and textures

Adventures in the Dark

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental photography

Adventures with Light

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental light and shadow

Adventures with Words

Make a sign to tell others how you feel about the place where you play

ADVENTURES FROM A-Z

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental alphabets

Make Sunprint letters from A – Z

Materials

- Loose natural objects collected from a park or garden e.g. fallen twigs, grass, seeds, feathers, leaves, earth, pebbles
- Sun-print paper (www.tobar.co.uk - product 02278)
- Container with clean water
- String and pegs
- Digital camera

Method

- Working in strong sunshine, find where your shadow is falling.
- Place a piece of A5 paper in the area of your shadow.
- Practice arranging some of the loose natural materials in the shapes of letters – why not try your own initials?
- When you are happy with the shapes, place a piece of sunprint paper in the shadow your body is making.
- Arrange your materials as letters onto the sun-print paper
- Move away and let the sun fall on your paper for two minutes or until the paper turns pale blue. Be careful that the natural objects don't blow away! You could place a sheet of perspex or cellophane on top.
- Once your sunprint has been exposed for the right amount of time, take the objects off of the paper and then immerse the paper in cold water in the shade for one minute.
- After one minute hang your sunprint to dry.

Additional ideas

You can use different materials and methods, for instance:

- If you don't have sunprint paper why not take a digital photo to capture your letters. Print out your photos and join them together to create words
- You could play with scale and make larger letters from loose objects, working with others in a team to spell out whole words

Inspiration

Look at examples of work by artists who make compositions with loose natural and waste objects such as **Andy Goldsworthy and Tony Cragg**

What shapes have they made? What are they made from? What do they make you think of?

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques and materials; communication skills

Knowledge & Understanding: learning facts about the plants and natural elements that make up the park; deepening understanding; making links and relationships between things

Enjoyment Inspiration & Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using surprising materials and imagination to create new outcomes; exploration, experimentation and making

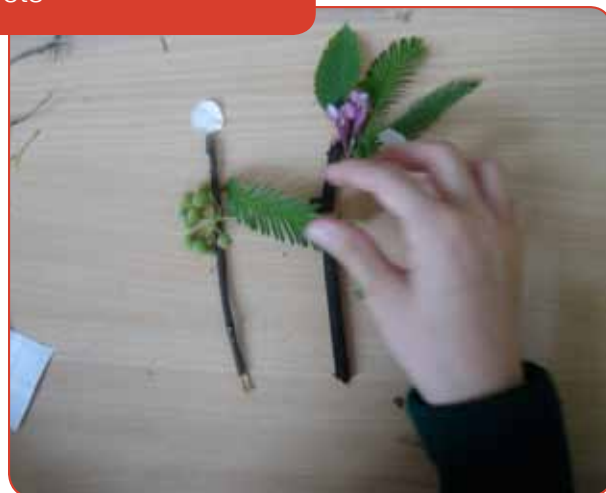
Attitudes and Values: working together as a team

ADVENTURES FROM A-Z

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental alphabets



Working in strong sunshine, find where your shadow is falling



Practice arranging some of the natural materials in the shapes of letters



Arrange your materials as letters onto the sunprint paper in the shadow



Let the sun fall on your paper for two minutes or until the paper turns pale blue.



Remove the objects and immerse paper in cold water in the shade for one minute



After one minute, hang up the paper to dry

ADVENTURES IN 3 DIMENSIONS

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental model making

Make an architectural model of a tower and platform for a small model or figure to play in

Materials

- Model or toy figure
- Twigs
- Barbecue sticks
- Artstraws
- Pencils
- Cork tiles
- Balsa wood
- Cardboard
- Scissors and small hacksaw
- String, tape and glue

Method

- Choose a small model or toy figure.
- Sketch out some rough ideas on paper.
- Try different ways of joining materials together e.g. tying, taping, gluing, threading sticks through holes in wood or cardboard.
- Join 3 sticks, straws, twigs or pencils together to make a triangular base (triangles are strong shapes).
- Join sticks, straws, twigs and pencils to base pointing upward and stick them together.
- Add a ladder and platform for your figure to climb and stand upon.
- Keep building and adding to your architectural model.

Additional ideas

- Working as a team you could join your models together to make a complicated network of walkways and platforms.
- Photograph your finished model in a natural setting such as a park or a garden.
- Use your model and toy figure to act out a performance for your friends.

Inspiration

Lie under some tall trees and look up into the canopies of branches above you. What wildlife lives there? How does the wildlife get from one branch or tree to another?

Look at examples of structures that let us sit in treetops such as **Xstrata Treetop Walkway in Kew Gardens** and **Fujimori tea houses**

What materials are these structures made from?

How might it feel to be in these spaces?

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; physical skills.

Knowledge and Understanding: learning new words; learning about the use of words in art; making sense of information.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using imagination and unusual materials to create a new outcome; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: considering the needs of other people.

ADVENTURES IN 3 DIMENSIONS

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental model making



Choose a small model or toy figure



Try different ways of joining materials together



Join 3 sticks, straws, twigs or pencils together in triangular base



Join sticks, straws, twigs and pencils to base pointing upward



Add a ladder and platform



Keep building and adding to your model

ADVENTURES IN ENGINEERING

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental shapes and structures

Make a temporary 3-D structure for you and a friend to play inside

Materials

- A big bundle of bamboo canes, garden sticks or dowel rods (approx. 1 metre long)
- Elastic bands
- Tarpaulin or fabric sheets
- Willingness to take a creative risk
- Patience

Method

- Hold 3 sticks together and wrap an elastic band tightly around one end of the sticks. Spread the opposite ends out to make a tripod stand.
- Lay another 3 sticks in an equilateral triangle shape to linking the points of the tripod stand.
- Wrap elastic bands around the 3 sticks that come together at each point of the tripod stand to make a pyramid shape.
- This is called a tetrahedron, it is a very stable and secure form.
- Make lots of tetrahedrons.
- Join your tetrahedrons together with elastics bands and other sticks to make a structure – you could make a tower, tunnel or a den.
- Lay tarpaulin or fabric sheets over the structure.
- Give your structure a name suggested by its shape.

Inspiration

Look at all the geometric shapes and forms in your local neighbourhood such as parks, streets, houses and school playgrounds.
How many different shapes can you see?
What shapes can you see the most?
Are there shapes you can't see?

In architectural structures you will often see triangles because triangles are very strong shapes.
Look at buildings or structures that are made of triangles such as the Louvre Pyramid, the Gerkhin and truss bridges.

Additional ideas

Try using different materials, for instance:

- Roll sheets of newspaper to make paper sticks. Starting from a corner roll diagonally, as tight as you can (wrap around a pencil to start it off), fix with tape.
- Use Artstraws or barbecue sticks to make small tetrahedrons and stick them together using a glue gun or sticky tape to made a small model.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, and materials; physical skills; planning and visioning skills; communication skills.

Knowledge and Understanding: learning about triangles; learning about shapes in architecture; understanding why different shapes are stronger than others.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using simple materials to create large-scale innovative outcomes; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: working as a team; increased motivation.

ADVENTURES IN ENGINEERING

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental shapes and structures



Hold 3 sticks together and wrap an elastic band tightly around one end of the sticks



Spread the opposite ends out to make a tripod stand



Lay another 3 sticks in an equilateral triangle shape to linking the points of the tripod stand



Wrap elastic bands around the 3 sticks that come together at each point of the tripod



Join the tetrahedrons together with elastics bands and other sticks to make a structure



You could make a tower, tunnel or den

ADVENTURES IN MOTION

Try some exciting activities exploring animation

Make your own character from found natural objects and create a stop frame animation

Materials

- Loose natural objects such as twigs, grass, seeds, feathers, leaves
- A4 paper
- A tripod
- Digital camera
- Computer with a video editing programme such as iMovie
- blu tac

Method

- Look at all the loose natural objects in a local park or garden and gather a selection that you think will make an interesting portrait.
- Work on a flat surface. Arrange the objects on a piece of A4 paper to create your portrait.
- carefully set up a digital camera on a tripod centred over your portrait.
- Make sure the lens is parallel to table top and your portrait.
- Take a single photo.
- Make a very small movement to one feature in your portrait e.g. you might want the eyes to look to the side.
- Take a single photo for each very small movement.
- Keep moving the features a very small amount and taking a single photo until you have completed the movement you want.
- Make a very small movement to a different feature in your portrait e.g you might want the mouth to open and close.
- Take a single photo for each very small movement.
- Upload your sequence of photographs into iMovie or other video editing programme to create a QuickTime movie, where you can add sound effects and/or music.

Additional ideas

Try using different materials and methods, for instance:

- Fix your portrait with glue rather than creating an animation.
- Place a piece of thin paper over the top of your fixed portrait and make a rubbing using the side of a crayon.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; ICT skills; visual literacy; precision.

Knowledge and Understanding: understanding stages of movement; learning about nature; making connections between real and abstract objects and images.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using unusual materials and imagination to create new outcomes; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: conveying feelings and facial expressions; patience

Inspiration

Look at portraits by artist, **Giuseppe Arcimboldo**.

What can you see? What sort of character do you think you are looking at?

What would they say if they could speak?

What is Animation?

The rapid display of a sequence of images, each a slightly changed version of the previous in order to create an optical illusion of movement, due to the phenomenon of persistence of vision.

Look at the animations of artist **Jan Svankmajer**.

ADVENTURES IN MOTION

Try some exciting activities exploring animation



Look at all the loose natural elements in your environment. Gather a selection



Arrange your natural elements on a piece of A4 paper to create a portrait



Arrange your portrait onto the paper



Set up a digital camera on a tripod centred over the A4 paper



Make a very small movement to one element in your portrait. Take a single photo for each very small movement



Upload your sequence of photographs into iMovie or other video editing programme to create a QuickTime movie

ADVENTURES WITH SHAPES

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental patterns and textures

Make your own pattern and cast it in plaster

Materials

- Small everyday tools, e.g. rulers and pencils
- Petroleum jelly
- Plastic/polystyrene cups
- Scissors
- Clay
- Rolling Pin
- Plaster, bucket & water

Method

- Roll out clay until it is 2cm thick.
- Press a circular band into the clay e.g a plastic or metal strip bent into a circle. Push it one centimetre into the clay, do not push it all the way to the bottom.
- Choose a small everyday object to create your repeated pattern. You might want to coat your object in petroleum jelly so it will be easier to clean afterwards.
- Push your object into the clay repeatedly, vary the direction and depths but do not push all the way to the bottom.
- Mix a small amount of plaster with water, follow manufacturers instructions and use a stick to stir it. Never put fingers into wet plaster.
- Pour into your moulds and wait at least one hour until the plaster is set.
- If you have extra plaster allow it to harden in the mixing bowl, break off and throw into bin. Never pour wet plaster down the drain.
- Carefully peel the clay off to reveal a 'negative' (back to front) impression of your pattern. You can wrap the clay in cling film until you want to use again.
- When plaster is completely dry you can carefully rinse off any leftover clay with water.
- Display your repeating pattern.

Additional ideas

Try using different methods, for instance:

- Make a bigger area of clay and use more than one object to make your pattern.
- Paint the plaster before displaying it.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; physical skills; measuring.

Knowledge and Understanding: understanding shapes and pattern; science of plaster (exothermic reaction).

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using unusual materials and imagination to create new outcomes; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: working together; patience.

Inspiration

Look at the work of artists **Paul Klee** and **Bridget Reilly**.

What shapes can you see?
Do the shapes represent anything?
Can you see repeated patterns?
How do they make your eyes feel when you look at them?

Look closely at and feel some small everyday tools such as pencils, rulers, spoons and rolls of sticky tape. What shapes are they? How do they feel?

ADVENTURES IN SHAPES & PATTERNS

Try some exciting activities exploring shapes, patterns and textures



Roll out clay until it is 2cm thick



Press a circular band one centimetre into the clay, do not push it all the way to the bottom



Mix a small amount of plaster with water (follow product instructions) and use a stick to stir it



Choose a small everyday object to create your pattern and push it repeatedly into the clay



Pour plaster into your moulds and wait at least one hour until the plaster is set



Display your repeating pattern

ADVENTURES IN THE DARK

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental photography

Make a pinhole camera and take black and white negatives of the place where you play

Materials

- Strong lightproof container e.g. biscuit tin
- Black spray paint
- Drill & sandpaper
- Tin foil, cardboard & pin
- Black electrical tape
- A5 photographic paper
- 3 plastic trays big enough to hold A5 paper
- Dark room & safe light
- Photographic developer, stop and fix solutions
- String and pegs

Inspiration

The word photography is derived from the Greek words photos - meaning "light" and graphein - meaning "to draw". The world's first photograph was taken in France in 1826. Look at early examples of photography such as daguerreotypes, heliographs and calotypes.

Do these look like the photos we can take today? How are they similar or different? How does the picture differ from real life?

Method

- Spray paint the interior of container and lid and allow to dry.
- Drill a small hole in centre of base of container and sand off any ragged edges.
- Cut a 2 cm square piece tin foil and carefully make a pin hole in it's centre.
- Tape tin foil to the interior of container lining up the 2 holes.
- Stick a piece of electrical tape over the hole on the outside of the container – this is the camera's shutter.
- Now set up your dark room, you could use a cupboard without windows. Make sure there is no light entering the room, use a safelight.
- Measure developing, fix and stop solution following instructions from the manufacturer and pour into 3 separate dishes.
- Tie up a line of string and pegs.
- While in the darkroom, Blu-Tack a piece of photographic paper onto the centre of the interior of the container lid.
- Make sure the lid is closely firmly and the 'shutter' is taped down before leaving the darkroom.
- Place the camera on a still, flat surface pointing the 'shutter' tape towards the view you want to photograph.
- Lift the 'shutter' tape to allow light into the pin hole for 20 seconds and then cover it again.
- In the darkroom, open the container. Wear latex gloves and place the photographic paper into the developing solution.
- When photographs have been developed, stopped and fixed, wash them gently and hang them from pegs until dry.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; physical skills; planning ahead.

Knowledge and Understanding: science of early photography; understanding light and exposures.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using unusual and familiar materials to create a new outcome; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: attitudes to a place; working together; patience.

ADVENTURES IN THE DARK

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental photography



Drill a small hole in centre of base of container and sand off any ragged edges



Make a hole with a pin hole in the centre of a 2cm square of tin foil, line up the 2 holes and tape it to the interior of container



Stick a piece of electrical tape over the hole on the outside of the container



Now set up your dark room, make sure there is no light entering the room, use a safe light



Place the camera on a still, flat surface pointing the 'shutter' tape towards the view you want to photograph



When photographs have been developed, stopped and fixed, wash them gently and hang them from pegs until dry

ADVENTURES WITH LIGHT

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental light and shadow

Make your own shadow sculpture, transforming everyday objects into something completely different

Materials

- Collection of small everyday objects e.g. disposable cutlery, toys, tools, paper cups, pencils, coathangers
- Tape, string and pegs
- Projector or strong lamp
- White wall
- Digital camera

Method

- Gather everyday objects.
- Set up a projector or strong lamp so a pool of light hits a white wall.
- Build a temporary sculpture using the objects, sticky tape, string and pegs, working in the beam of light.
- Remember to keep looking at the shadow to check your shadow sculpture is taking shape
- Take a photo of the shadow of your sculpture.

Additional ideas

Try using different materials, for instance:

- Try using your bodies or hands to create shapes and stories in the light.

Inspiration

Look at sunlight and shadows in your local neighbourhood.

How can you work out where is North, East, South, West?

How can you work out what time of day it is?

How does it feel in the sunny parts?

How does it feel in the shady parts?

Look at shadow sculptures by **Tim Noble** and **Sue Webster**.

They arrange found objects and shine light through behind them to make shadows. The sculptures might look like piles of junk, but the shadows look like real objects or people.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; physical skills; visual literacy skills.

Knowledge and Understanding: understanding the origin of materials and objects; learning about natural light.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using imagination and unusual materials to create a new outcome; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: working as a team.

ADVENTURES WITH LIGHT

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental dark and shadows



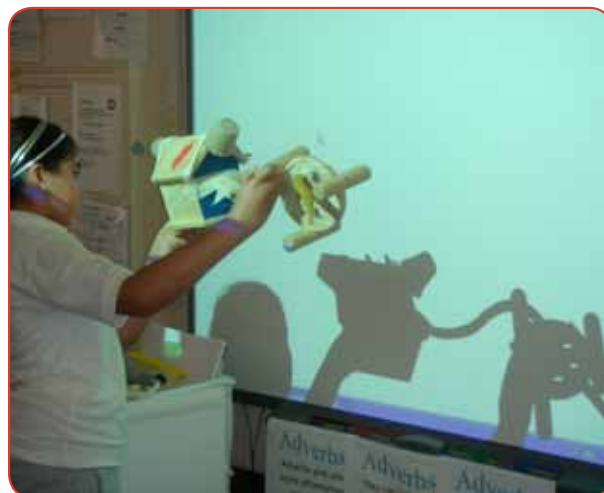
Gather everyday objects



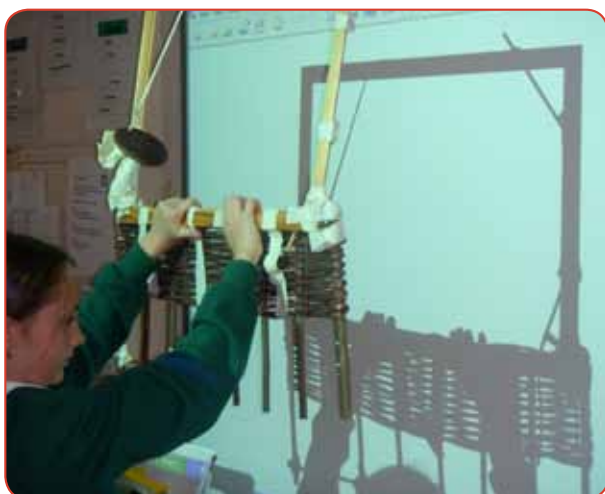
Set up a projector or strong lamp so a pool of light hits a white wall



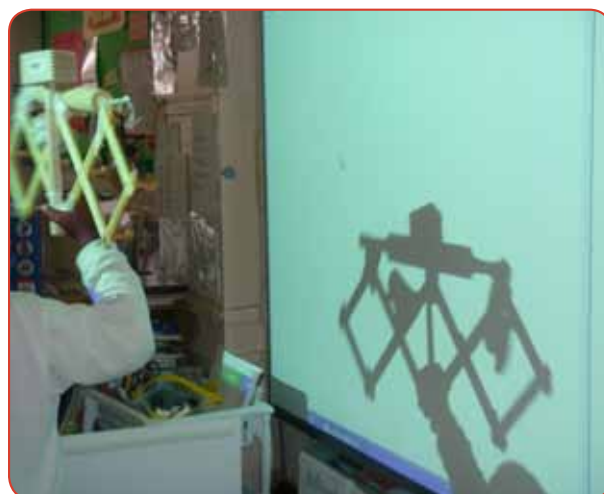
Working in the beam of light, build a sculpture using the objects, sticky tape, string and pegs



Now keep looking at the shadow to check your shadow sculpture is taking shape



Hold up your sculpture in the light to display the shape you have created on the wall



Take a photo of the shadow of your sculpture

ADVENTURES WITH WORDS

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental communication

Make a sign to tell others how you feel about the place where you play

Materials

- Large rectangles of wood or cardboard
- Pencils
- Paint and brushes
- Hammer and nails
- Old broom handles or wooden sticks
- String or strong tape
- Camera

Method

- Think about your favourite things in the place where you play.
- Write a list of all the words you can think of to describe your feelings about this place.
- Arrange your words into a short message.
- Think about the colours and type face that will best express your message.
- Use a pencil to write your letters on a rectangle of wood or cardboard, so they fill all the space.
- Paint the letters and background in contrasting colours.
- Fix your sign to a wooden stick, or hang it from a string, or stick it with tape.
- Put your sign in the place where you play.
- Photograph it in place – then your sign can last forever.
- Try putting it in a different place – does that make it communicate something different?

Additional ideas

Try using different materials and methods, for instance:

- Draw letters on paper or fabric, cut them out and arrange them to spell out your message on contrasting coloured paper or fabric.
- Cut out letters from headlines in newspapers and magazines and re arrange them to spell out your message on contrasting coloured paper or on enlarged photocopies of interesting places.
- Blu-Tack cut out letters onto windows so you can see the outside world beyond the words.

Learning Outcomes

Skills: learning new creative techniques, tools and materials; communication skills; physical skills.

Knowledge and Understanding: learning new words; learning about the use of words in art; making sense of information.

Enjoyment Inspiration and Creativity: having fun; being inspired; using familiar materials and imagination to create new and unfamiliar outcomes; exploration, experimentation and making.

Attitudes and Values: attitudes to a place; feelings; considering a public audience; attitudes towards other people; empathy.

Inspiration

Look at all the written words in your local neighbourhood such as park notices, street names and billboards.

Look at examples of artists who use written words in public places e.g **David Shrigley, Bob & Roberta Smith, Jenny Holzer.**

What messages do these words communicate? Are they funny or serious? Are they temporary or permanent? Who are they trying to communicate with?

ADVENTURES WITH WORDS

Try some exciting activities exploring experimental communication.



Write a list of the words you can think of to describe your feelings about where you play



Arrange your words into a short message



Use a pencil to write your letters on a rectangle of wood or cardboard



Paint the letters and background in contrasting colours



Fix your sign to a wooden stick, or hang it from a string, or stick it with tape



Put your sign in the place where you play