

# Fabric & Fibre/Print Lesson with Infants

By Gemma McGirr

## Objectives:

- *Explore the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression (page 23)*
- *Use a variety of print-making techniques (page 20)*

**Materials:** Hessian, cut into pieces about ½ the size of an A4 page  
Toothpicks  
Coloured sugar paper  
A4 sheets of white paper  
Crayons  
Coloured chalks

**Stimulus:** The materials

## Activity:

I asked the children if they knew what fabric is. Their response was to point out the towel, J-cloths and fabric scraps in a box. I asked if there was any other fabric in the classroom and again they looked around the room. I held up the piece of hessian and asked if they knew what it was. The reply was "fabric?" I gave them a piece each and asked them to describe what it felt like – "tough, scratchy, strong, rough, itchy" were some of the responses. I asked what it might be used for, would they like a vest made of hessian? The response was a very definite "NO, it's too scratchy." I asked them to feel their shirts and jumpers, to describe them. This led to a statement from one of the children, "our clothes are fabric too!" I asked them to smell the hessian and to describe it. One child said it reminded him of 'Woodies' because it smells like carpet.

We looked at the weave of the hessian to see how it was made and pulled a few strands from the edges. I asked them to look at their shirts, could they see the same weave? This led to a chat about soft fabric and very fine thread where they could hardly see the weave. As some of the children were wearing hand-knitted jumpers questions were asked about them, were they fabric too? They decided mummies and grannies are great because they could knit lovely jumpers!

I showed them how to pull a strand from the centre of the piece (of hessian), using the toothpick to pull it up a little and then pull with their fingers. (Some little hands find it difficult to pull the strands from the side.) I explained they could make lovely patterns by pulling out the strands, would they like to try it? They set to and discovered that by pulling from the side and the top they could make squares and rectangles. Some children put their fingers into the holes to

make them circular. When they had made their patterns they were put on coloured sheets of sugar paper and looked really well.

We gathered up the strands and I told them we were going to use them to make another picture. They were encouraged to make patterns with the strands on the table, any kind of pattern they liked, wriggly, straight, bendy, twisty.....

We placed the A4 sheets over them and took a rubbing with crayons. The page was moved slightly and another rubbing was made, using a different colour crayon. The page was moved again and another rubbing was made, this time using coloured chalk. I explained to them that this was 'mixed media' often used by artists. They were delighted with their efforts and there was a lot of talk about patterns, colour and how the colour changed when one went on top of another. They were quite eager to show their pictures to one another. The strands were gathered up for another day and the pictures were displayed side-by-side on the notice boards.

#### **Evaluation/Looking and Responding:**

This happened as the children worked and for several days after, the children were thrilled with their 'mixed media' prints. There was a lot of talk about classroom artists and what they were going to be when they grew up!

**Linkage:** Fabric and Fibre; Print; Paint and Colour

#### **Integration:**

*Maths:* Shapes, patterns

*Language development*

*SPHE:* The clothes we wear, looking after ourselves

*SESE:* Where does fabric come from?

**Note:** If the children were capable, possibly towards the end of Senior Infants, the strands we collected up could be plaited into rope. Colouring the strands with chalks or crayons would be a help.