

Themed Activities: **Dream Tree**



A dream tree wall hanging made by pupils in Rotherham

Learning Objective

To work as a group to plan and create a piece of community art.

Starting Points

The project shown here started in school and was then taken into the community to the local youth club, a church drop in centre, a home for the elderly, a centre for adults with learning difficulties and a multicultural centre. At each venue the people were asked to think about the local environment and to consider ways in which it could be improved, and what they could do to help.

- Ask the children what they think of their local environment. Is there anything about it that they would like to change? Can they think of ways to improve it? Draw up a wish list.
- Does the school have links with the local community groups? Define a group or groups to work with and ask children to design a questionnaire and carry out a survey to find out what people think of the local area.
- Once children have the results, you can begin to plan what your wall hanging will look like. In the featured project, it was decided that the best form to create was a tree that would carry all the dreams of the community and would hopefully bear fruit. Because the tree was going to be a dream tree it could be bright and unnatural, and we opted for a shocking pink trunk and bright red, yellow and orange leaves. On the underside of each leaf the dreams, messages and aspirations were written.

Make

- Find a large piece of black fabric – perhaps an old backout curtain – for the backdrop and gather the other materials that you will need: Unwanted clothing, curtains and sheets in your chosen colours, bright wools in all shades and weights, hessian, sequins, latex glue, rug prodders, weaving sticks, French knitting bobbins, white iron-on interfacing, fine permanent markers or fabric pens.
- Make as many lengths of French knitting and stick weaving as possible.
- Twist the lengths of knitting into a tree trunk and attach them to the background with latex glue.
- Create the leaves by ironing the interfacing onto the back of the red, yellow and orange fabrics.
- Ask children to draw and cut out many leaves. Write each dream or wish on the white side of a leaf using a marker pen. Glue sequins to the coloured side of the leaf.
- Firmly glue the finished leaves at the stalk end only to the background fabric to enable people to turn the leaves and read the messages.
- Now create the grass and lettering. Using a felt tipped pen, draw the letters to spell 'Dream Tree' in reverse onto rectangles of hessian.
- Using the pen rugging technique, work the letters in red and the surrounding areas in shades of green.
- Glue the rectangles across the bottom of the fabric.

Tip

If you want to display the finished work in community venues make sure that you use simple techniques and create a wall hanging that is extremely portable.

Activities

- Ask children to create a slogan or title for the wall hanging, using alliteration if possible. For example, 'Wishes of Wheatley', 'Dreams of Doncaster' or 'Rooted in Rotherham'.
- Cut the letters out of bright fabric and glue them to the wall hanging.
- Work out a programme for displaying the finished work at venues in the local area.

Develop and Extend

Now everyone has written their wish for the community which ideas are feasible and who can help to get the ideas started? Lively discussion groups should follow.

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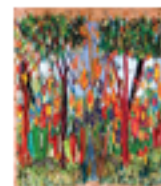
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