

Castles: A joint Primary Schools/College of Art Project*

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I was approached by Mr Arnold, our Headmaster at Harriers, during the 1990 Summer Term, and asked whether I would be interested in establishing a link with Banbury College of Art & Design. Of course I didn't need much persuading so several meetings subsequently followed, where I met some of the lecturers who were to be eventually working with my class.

It was later on (in the Autumn Term) when we began to talk in more detail, discussing what we could do that would be related to our topic on castles, where we would be working, how many lecturers would be involved etc. We eventually decided on the following:-

Time allocated to us: 2 days

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| Location | - 1 day at Harriers
- 1 day at the College |
| Number of Adults | - Myself (class Teacher) 3 Lecturers from the College, Paul, Inga and Imogen, with Trevor to join us in the afternoon. Plus a student who had shown some interest in the project, from the College. |
| Pupils | - 9/10 year olds approximately 30 |
| Type of work | - Day 1 at Harriers — to make items that would be found inside a castle.
- Day 2 at the college — to make something on a larger scale, for example, siege machines or a castle. But we all decided that ultimately it should be left up to the children. |

Session One

Paul, Inga and Imogen talked to the class about what would have been found *inside* a castle. For the next 15 minutes we had a brainstorming of ideas. We then gave the

children the opportunity to make whatever they wanted, anything that could be put inside a castle. They tended to fall into three equal groups:-

- 1 — tapestries and clothes
- 2 — armour
- 3 — table and items to go on it.

As the items they had chosen to make started to take shape, the children's attention was focused on how their own pieces of work could be improved upon. For example, by adding food to a plate, sticking shiny paper onto their armour to make it look metallic, and adding decoration to their costumes.

Towards the end of the day, each group showed one another what they had made. A great feeling of satisfaction was felt by everyone concerned.

Session Two

We finally decided that for this session we would make a castle as opposed to the siege machines. This was partly due to the fact that one member of the class had already asked if it would be possible to do just that. Also, as we had already made things to go inside a castle, then why not try and build the castle itself?

This session took place at the College, in a very spacious building. We took with us paper, cardboard boxes and sticky tape. (The day before, I had taken everything down to the College that we had made from the first session).

The children were first shown how to make newspaper stronger by rolling it up. For the next 30 minutes they then had to make as many tubes of newspaper as they could.

They were then asked to join these tubes together to form a hollow shape.

Some children constructed cubes, triangular prisms etc, whilst others let their imagination go and devised some very unique structures.

** The joint venture came about as a result of the tutors from The School of Art in Banbury asking me if they could be involved in a project with a local primary school. A generous, and rewarding offer that owes a debt of thanks to the college tutors, the easy co-operation of the teacher and the unbounded enthusiasm of the pupils.*

Richard Speed — Technology Associates



it was great fun!! I liked the building and making.

I enjoyed both days. But I Liked the day we went to the college best.

It was great fun working at the Art college in Banbury. It was very hard work but it was worth it.

The first day was brill.
The second day was brill too.
My favourite thing was when me and clarie made the spit.
and when we made the castle.

The children then formed a circle with their structures, and the idea was to put to them, as to whether their structures could be joined together with more tubes of newspapers. Could height be gained? Very soon every child was busily engaged in either expanding (upwards and outwards), this open structure, or manufacturing a supply of newspaper tubes.

A few children worked on constructing the gatehouse and drawbridge out of large cardboard tubes and others made a moat by ripping up cardboard boxes and laying it around the 'castle'.

Towards the end of the day the children filled their castle with everything they had made back at school — candles, table covered with food and a wine goblet and dog. Whilst outside the knights were dressed in their outfits of armour, looking ready to attack.

The children were once again very pleased with what they had achieved. As one child put it 'it was nothing like I had expected, our castle seemed to have an almost futuristic appearance to it'.

College Tutor Comments

Part of a report by Trevor Wardle, tutor at The School of Art in Banbury

Prior to investigating any particular aspect of the project I think it is important for me to state that I regard the two days as very successful in their own right and useful in providing a point of reference for further activities. As an initial venture it provided criteria for future activities.

The exercise created links between the School of Art in Banbury and the Primary School that can and should remain. I am sure that Linda benefited from having the teaching pressure removed so that she herself could learn. I may be too much of a romantic, but a very positive offshoot was the fact that, for most of the children involved, it will remain something that they remember. My favourite quote was from a girl on the first day who said 'it has been the best day of my ENTIRE life'.

If INSET is also allowed to benefit the lecturers running the course then I think that the whole team realised something about the level of study, commitment, problems in Primary Education, linking with fellow professionals etc:

I would hope that Linda in particular managed to recognise a more liberal but still purposeful approach to craft/design/art teaching.

As a direct result of the course one of the student helpers has decided that she does want to follow a career in Primary Education and another is hoping to help at the School for some time in the coming year.