

Visual Arts Toolkit for SPED Schools



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
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Visual Arts Toolkit for SPED Schools

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Preface

The Arts are an expression of ideas, feelings and experiences through different art forms: theatre, dance, music, literary arts and visual arts. The different art forms encourage cognitive, behavioural and affective growth and development among Special Education (SPED) students.

The NAC Artist-SPED School Partnership Programme presents a unique opportunity for artists and SPED teachers to co-create learning activities for students to experience and enjoy the Arts.

This Visual Arts Toolkit contains a collection of unique and innovative projects jointly developed and implemented by Singapore-based artists working in close collaboration with SPED teachers in bringing the teaching and learning of the Visual Arts into the SPED classroom. These projects give students the opportunities to express themselves through different modes, acquire social skills and cultivate their self-confidence. This contributes to their holistic development.

By gathering these experiences into a toolkit, we hope to inspire more teachers to explore ways to introduce the Visual Arts into their classrooms. We believe that in time to come, the Arts will become an integral part of SPED schools' curriculum and their students' learning experience.



Introduction

MOE-NAC Collaboration

The Ministry of Education (MOE) considers the Arts as an integral part of the SPED curriculum that contributes to a holistic development of SPED students. In the SPED Curriculum Framework (2012), the Arts come under one of the six core Learning Domains to meet the desired Living, Learning and Working (LLW) outcomes of every student.

In 2012, the National Arts Council (NAC) launched the NAC Artist-SPED School Partnership Programme to promote the teaching and development of the Visual Arts, amongst the other art forms, in SPED schools. NAC commissioned local artists to partner with SPED teachers to co-develop and co-teach arts-based lessons. They used a variety of mediums, and lessons were customised to the learning needs of students with diverse abilities and interests. As a result of this programme and the NAC Artist-in-School scheme, seven projects were selected to be included in the Visual Arts Toolkit for SPED Schools catering to students of varied disability profiles.

The toolkit aims to inspire SPED teachers to engage students in appropriate, meaningful and successful artmaking. We believe that the NAC Artist-SPED School Partnership Programme will provide immense benefits and learning outcomes for students, teachers and artists alike.

Visual Arts in Special Education

The Visual Arts provide SPED students with a holistic way of learning through creating a rich variety of opportunities for cognitive and emotional development, motor development, social interaction skills and problem-solving skills. Such benefits positively influence students' academic learning, as well as their social and adaptive skills.

This art form includes drawing, painting, sculpting, constructing or creating art products. It provides alternate forms of meaningful interaction with peers and teachers through a repertoire of ideas, designs, skills and techniques from which they can choose and adapt their art products. This creates space for creativity and enables the display of originality from the students.



How to Use the Toolkit

This toolkit contains a selection of seven exemplars of the Visual Arts projects by the teachers and the artists from the NAC Artist-SPED School Partnership Programme. In each exemplar, you will see a brief introduction to the project and a short description of the artist-collaborator. In addition, each exemplar has a set of specific instructional objectives grouped under Knowledge, Skills, as well as Values and Attitudes; with easy to follow step-by-step pictorial instructions on how to carry out each project.

Projects

Five of the projects involved drawing and painting using watercolours, acrylic paint as well as Chinese ink. Some of the Visual Arts projects use daily themes such as family or pets, to ease the students into the artmaking process. The sixth and seventh projects used clay and moulding plaster, respectively, to form objects familiar to the students, such as owls, dinosaurs and human-forms. As all seven projects share common educational aspirations, the projects' specific instructional objectives can be summarised.

The students will

Knowledge

- Recognise Elements of Art: Colour, Form, Line, Shape, Space, Texture and Value
- Recall Principles of Design: Balance, Contrast, Emphasis, Movement, Pattern, Proportion, Repetition, Rhythm, Unity and Variety

Skills

- Demonstrate artmaking techniques e.g. painting, sculpting, etc.
- Gather information and apply/use it e.g. observing, interpreting, generating ideas, making decisions, etc.
- Visually communicate ideas/experiences

Values & Attitudes

- Increase their understanding of artmaking as an experience to be explored
- Identify personal strengths through exposure to the different forms of the Visual Arts
- Exhibit self-expression and a sense of self-worth

Teachers may choose to carry out the selected project and its subsequent steps in an order that best meets their students' learning pace and needs. Each project can also be carried out over several lessons, days or weeks, depending on the teachers' lesson plans.

Customisation

For each exemplar, the teachers and artists selected a range of pedagogical approaches to cater to their students' learning profiles. We encourage teachers using this toolkit to exercise flexibility when selecting the projects and adapt them according to their students' skills and readiness. Students gain the greatest benefits from the Visual Arts when learning objectives are customised to their abilities.

The following four approaches are given as a guide for teachers to customise the exemplars to cater to the profile, interests and learning readiness of their students. The examples provided in each instance are taken from the projects themselves.

Content Selection: Select the skills and/or knowledge to be learnt by students

Depending on the readiness of the students, the teacher may select easier content areas for beginners or increase the complexity of some skills by combining two or three content areas to challenge the more advanced students. Modifications can also be made in the selection of single-step or multiple-step methods.

Example: Drawing with Shapes: Family

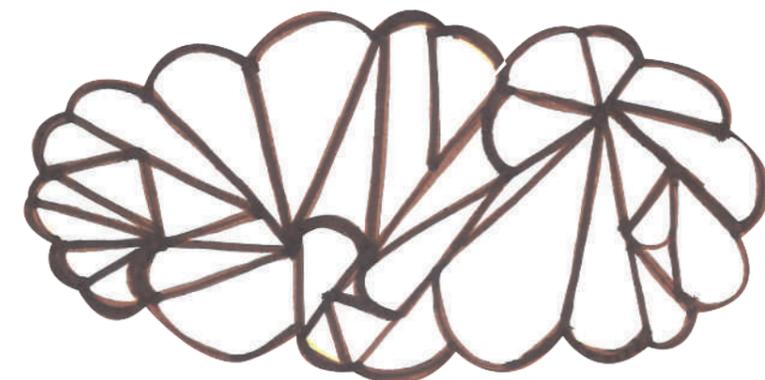
Students working on the project may progress from using colour pencils to poster and acrylic paints.

Instructional Approaches: Structure the lesson e.g. fixed or interactive

Teachers may draw from a continuum of instructional approaches to carry out a lesson, ranging from teacher-led to student-led pedagogies. The teacher can provide explicit instruction through a step-by-step demonstration or allow students to gather information through a guided discovery activity. The selection of the approach would depend on the student's capacity to be self-directed.

Example: Sculpture from Moulding Plaster: Human Figures

Teacher may provide clear and simple instructions i.e. visual steps, to guide the students in gaining mastery of one step before moving on to another step in the artmaking process.



Students' Products: Assign different end-products to be made by the students

Students may create artwork for various reasons. The project may be based on ideas to express versions of their reality, or the artwork may be created based on students' enjoyment in using the materials and the artmaking experience.

Example: Pinching and Joining Two Bowls: An Owl

Students could demonstrate lateral thinking when given opportunities to manipulate clay to create their art pieces, and explore what they can create using the medium such as using one instead of two bowls to create the owl.

Learning Environment: Modify the physical supports to facilitate learning e.g. through the provisions of different equipment or the set-up of the room

Some students may need more help with certain tools e.g. scissors, or may be at risk of drinking paint contained in paper cups. As such, teachers should use their discretion to select materials that do not pose risks to the students.

Example: Colour Dispersal: Salt, White Glue and Water

The students could be given sponges to work with instead of paint brushes or drizzle white glue with the help of a spoon instead of squeezing it straight from the nozzle.

The above approaches are not mutually exclusive. Tips outlined in boxes found in each project suggest ways in how teachers may customise the projects as well as provide pointers to take note of when carrying out the projects. In addition, there are templates such as those found on pages 27, 32, 54, 60 and 61 which teachers can make copies for students' use when necessary.



Preparation

Designated spaces in the classroom

The lessons conducted by the artists are held in typical classrooms or art rooms found in Singapore. Artists work with these spaces and typically designate areas for the following functions:

- 1 Explanation or demonstration at the front of the classroom
- 2 Area to display artworks
 - Whiteboard or cork board
 - Empty walls
 - Plastic sleeves used for filing paper can be hung on a string
- 3 Storage of art materials and completed pieces of artwork
- 4 Workspace for teachers and students
 - Easels and boards
 - Wide table tops
- 5 Drying area
 - Open area with shelves
 - A commercial drying rack
 - A string with clips
- 6 Cleaning area
 - Rags
 - Pails or containers
 - Designated place to air/dry brushes, palettes or sculpting tools

Recommended items for school's art supplies

Different results are obtained when different materials are used for the same project.

- 1 Equipment for support
 - Clipboards to provide support when not drawing at a desk or easel
 - Rectangular, shallow container e.g. a baking tray or plastic box
 - Plastic sheets to cover table top
 - Sprinkle water on the surface of the table top instead of using sticky tape
- 2 Basic materials
 - Drawing paper
 - Coloured paper
 - Assortment of papers with a variety of textures
 - Craft paper
 - Dry Medium
 - o Chalk
 - o Charcoal
 - o Oil pastel
 - o Soft pastel
 - Wet Medium
 - o Batik dyes
 - o Chinese watercolour
 - o Liquid acrylic
 - o Poster paint
- 3 Basic painting equipment
 - Containers for water to clean brushes between colours
 - Shallow dish to dilute a single colour or to mix colours with water
 - Palettes
 - Brushes
 - o Round tip: Sizes 2, 4 and 7
 - o Flat tip: Sizes 2, 4 and 7
 - Chinese brushes: basic set of three different size brushes or set of similar size brushes
- 4 Basic tools for clay
 - Wire cutter
 - Sponge
 - Modeling tools e.g. boxwood tool
 - Rags used for cleaning
 - A clean, A4 size cloth to place clay work on
 - Pails or containers
- 5 Mark-making tools for two-dimensional and three-dimensional projects
 - Sponges
 - Combs and hair brushes
 - Erasers or rubber stamps
 - Forks and spoons
 - Buttons
 - Bottle caps
 - Rollers



Health and Safety Advice for Three-dimensional Projects

Prolonged exposure to clay dust is hazardous to health. Moulding plaster contains minerals that react with water (resulting in temperature up to 60°C). Both clay and moulding plaster are irritants and can be harmful to one's health, therefore it is important to follow good practices before the commencement of three-dimensional projects.

Teachers should actively guide their students to be responsible for the safety of themselves and their classmates.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS		
	Clay	Moulding Plaster
Ingestion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not eat or drink in the classroom. 2. Wash hands with clean water and soap before leaving the classroom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not eat or drink in the classroom. 2. Wash hands with clean water and soap before leaving the classroom.
Inhalation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not inhale particles. Do not sweep or dust surfaces as this may stir up clay particles. 2. Wear a dust mask while recycling dry and refined clay particles. 3. Ensure that the workspace is well ventilated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not inhale particles. Do not sweep or dust surfaces as this may stir up plaster powder or other impurities. 2. Wear a dust mask while mixing dry moulding plaster or while smoothing out rough surfaces of the hardened pieces. 3. Ensure that the workspace is well ventilated.
Absorption through skin	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cover all open cuts on hands. Do not rub hands. 2. Wear an apron. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cover all open cuts on hands. Do not rub hands. 2. Rough edges and chips from hardened plaster are sharp and can cause cuts or scratches. 3. Wear an apron. 4. Wear gloves. Never mix moulding plaster with bare hands. Adult supervision is always required.
Contact with eyes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not rub eyes with unwashed hands. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wear goggles while sieving or mixing plaster.

CLEAN-UP ROUTINE	
Clay	Plaster
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick up any clay pieces on table or floor and recycle them. Do not mix rubbish and contaminants. 2. Never sweep or dust the classroom. Always use a damp cloth or mop to wipe up clay dust/particles. Always use a container of water to wash hands and tools. This prevents clay particles from being lodged in drainage. 3. Rinse hands, cloth and tools under clean water after items are free from residue. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lightly spray water on plaster and newspaper. Gather both items and dispose them. 2. Never pour wet plaster or residue down the sink. Ensure a plaster trap is placed at the sink. 3. Discard plaster separately from regular waste.



2D School Projects Project 1 – Sensory Stimulation with Paint

Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore School



About the Artist

Ms. Vanessa Tong has a Masters in Art Therapy and has experience working with different communities. She considers it essential to first identify the needs of her students before determining the instructional objectives and designing the programmes accordingly. At the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore School, her sessions are attended by students from across a wide age range. Nevertheless, the sessions were skillfully tailored to cater to the participants' learning abilities.

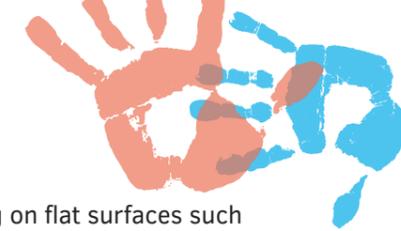
One of the core objectives for the project is to use art for therapeutic purposes. This project is sensorial and the sense of touch is applied in two ways. Firstly, it involves the physical contact between two persons as they collaborate on a single piece of art. Secondly, it involves a tactile experience where fingers and hands come in contact with paint. The technique employed (hand-printing) can be used to enhance or decorate many other objects.

More about the project

During the project, students at Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore School were engaged and enjoyed working with the medium (tempera paint). They paid close attention to the colours on the palette and on their hands.

The project was also a great opportunity for caregivers to bond with the students through this shared experience. The caregivers shared that they learned how to provide support to suit the child's abilities through the project. They found the project to be a relaxing as well as a rewarding learning experience.





Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Recognise the texture of paint through touch and sight e.g. opaque/thick to translucent/thin, slippery and squishy.
- Identify materials suitable for recycling.
- List alternative uses for the materials.
- Select and employ regular and irregular patterns using paint.

Skills

- Decorate recycled materials.
- Strengthen their fine motor skills.
- Check for stains and wipe them away with a wet wipe or towel, independently.

Values & Attitudes

- Explore non-toxic paint using hands and fingers.
- Attempt open-ended experiences.



Materials you will need

1. Plastic bottle
2. Tempera paints
3. Flat surfaces to be used as palette, e.g. a lid of a plastic container

Tips

- Fill bottles with water to weigh them down.
- Place bottles in sunlight or use a hairdryer to dry them.
- Keep wet wipes handy to clean the surface of bottles before hand-printing and to wipe the paint off hands. This will cut down on trips to the sink.



Before we start

- Experiment with hand-printing on flat surfaces such as paper or onto bottles. Allow students to experiment with the types of marks their hands and fingers can create.

Discussion Questions

- What happens when we use our thumb?
- What happens when we apply pressure or use less paint?
- Does printing to a rhythm change the marks?
- What happens when we press against the surface and drag our hands to the side?

Tips

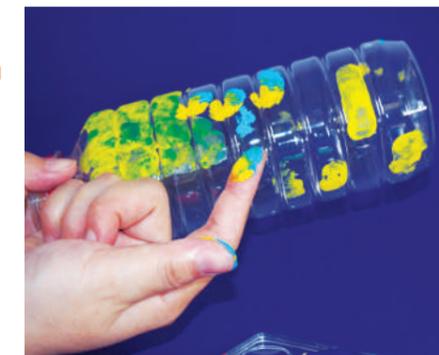
- Use different parts of the hand for different colours.
- Allow the paint to dry in between printing to reduce smudging.
- Allow students to decide when to add more colours or learn when they can stop printing.

1



- Start with the lightest or the brightest colour.
- Print around the bottle leaving empty spots for another colour.

2



- Print the next colour. Students can have more than one colour on each finger.

3



- Repeat until the desired design is obtained.



- Here are some examples of the completed project.

Project 2 – Colour Dispersal: Salt, White Glue and Water

Rainbow Centre-Margaret Drive School



About the Artist

Ms. Chai Chee Seam specialises in paintings and has won accolades such as the Highly-commended award for the UOB Painting Of The Year in 2003. She has conducted art lessons in schools and community-based workshops at venues such as the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay Singapore and The People's Association. She is currently a music and art trainer for mainstream school students and students with special needs.

One of the basic elements of the Visual Arts, "Colour", is introduced in this project. The art form is experienced through touch via sensory and tactile stimulation. Gross motor skills are employed through the use of different tools. Fine motor skills are needed when students pinch a small amount of salt using their fingers or when they cradle salt in their palms. This project is suitable for students who enjoy experimenting with colours and those who have low cognitive-motor skills.

More about the project

At the start of this project, Ms. Chai found the project challenging but it became easier as she got to know the students better. It was rewarding to see the students in the group participating and enjoying themselves. Many students enjoyed watching the colour swirl and the scatter effect caused by the white glue and salt.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Select different materials for mixing to create effects such as colour dispersed artwork.
- Recall three key materials such as table salt, white glue and paint – in different sequences to produce different effects.
- Recognise the effect of salt and glue on pigments.

Skills

- Learn to mix colours.
- Adjust their body balance while using tools to swirl paint and white glue.
- Use observational skills to determine when to stop swirling the paint, such as when the paint gets too dark or is no longer clearly defined.

Values & Attitudes

- Display patience while waiting for the visual effect to emerge.



Materials you will need

1. Drawing paper
2. Watercolour in tubes
3. Watercolour palette
4. A large flat tip brush
5. A container of water to clean brushes between colours
6. White glue (Note: the glue should not be too runny because the medium needs to hold its form and shape during the drying process.)
7. A small dish of table salt

Customisation

- Use sponges instead of paint brushes.
- Drizzle white glue with a spoon instead of squeezing it straight from the bottle's nozzle.

Before we start

- Conduct a demonstration that allows students to observe how liquid flows and the kind of effects it creates as it moves.
- Experiment using different types of paint mixed with water.
 - Place a piece of paper in a tray or container and add water and paint.
 - Have students hold the tray or container with both hands and gently rock the tray back and forth or left to right.



Tips

- A deep container or tray to contain paper, paint and water.
- Dry the artwork on a flat surface such as a drying rack or shelf.



- Brush or sponge a generous amount of water onto the paper.
- From Steps 1 to 5, the paper should remain wet.



- Add colours to the paper.



- Using white glue, draw designs on the paper.



- Sprinkle table salt onto the paper while it is wet. Watch the colours disperse.
- Try to avoid getting salt on the glue.



- Add more lines or table salt to enhance the artwork further.



- Leave artwork to dry overnight.
- Dust off excess salt.
- The artwork is now complete.

Here are some other examples of the completed project you can try:



- Salt on Glue:** This follows the same concept as tracing where table salt and paint are applied along the same image.
- Use white glue to draw an image.
 - Sprinkle table salt on the white glue and allow it to dry.
 - Before the white glue hardens, sprinkle paint on both the table salt and paper and watch the colours disperse.



- White glue resist:** This follows the same concept as wax resist where a crayon is used to draw designs before paint is applied.
- Use white glue to draw an image.
 - Allow white glue to dry overnight before paint and table salt are added.

Project 3 – Drawing with Shapes: Family

MINDS Fernvale Gardens School



About the Artist

Mr. Joshua Yang has been involved in the field of Special Education through the arts since 2003. He is an active practitioner of the Visual Arts. His works under the collective, Vertical Submarine, have gained critical success including winning several awards such as the President's Young Talents in 2009 and the Sovereign Art Prize in 2015. Mr. Yang had been awarded the UOB Painting of the Year for the abstract category in 2005. He holds the Singapore record for the longest continuous drawing marathon of 48 hours.

The project emphasises the use of basic shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and triangles to form complex shapes which include figures, people, vehicles and objects, placing them within a composition. This can be done either by drawing shapes or through collages, such as cutting shapes from coloured paper and then pasting them on a piece of canvas or on a sheet of drawing paper.

More about the project

Mr. Yang was introduced to the project at MINDS Fernvale Gardens School to help identify students who have an interest in drawing and painting. He was also asked to develop their talents by exposing them to different mediums. For example, students progressed from using colour pencils to poster paints and acrylic paints; or worked with overlapping shapes to create a more complex design.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

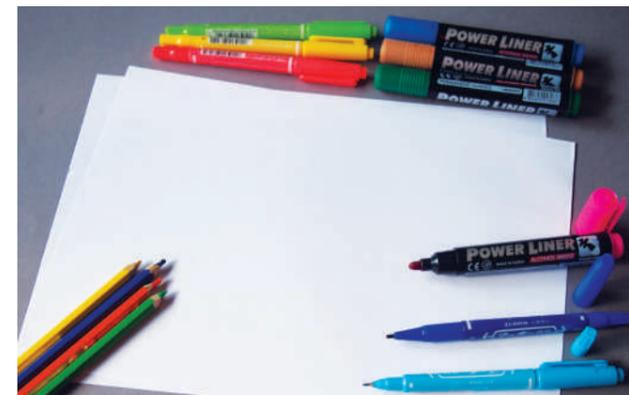
- Name and identify shapes.
- Recognise the differences between 3D and 2D shapes such as cubes and squares.

Skills

- Practise repetition in drawing geometric shapes of varying sizes.
- Use repeated shapes to form patterns.
- Associate facial expression to a posture made by the human body, e.g. a sad face and a slumped posture.

Values & Attitudes

- Be attentive to shapes in daily objects.
- Acknowledge that objects can be simplified in pictorial form.



Materials you will need

For Preliminary Idea:

1. Drawing paper
2. Coloured markers
3. Colour pencils

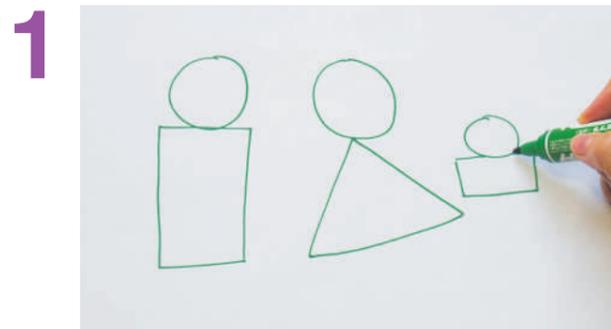
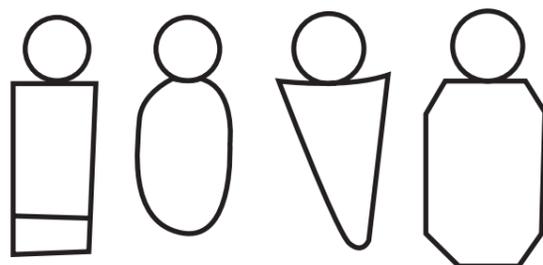


For Artwork on Canvas:

1. Stretched canvas
2. Coloured markers
3. Acrylic paints
4. Shallow palette
5. Brushes
6. A container of water to clean brushes between colours

Before we start

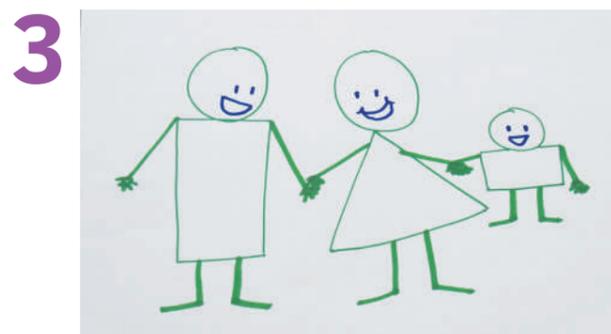
- Experiment with shapes. Allow students to mix and match shapes of different scale and arrangement for characters' torsos.
- Next, draw different expressions positioned within different locations of a circle to indicate the direction of gaze. Also, try shapes other than circles for heads.



- On a piece of paper, draw geometric shapes to form heads and torsos.



- Draw limbs.



- Add facial features.



- Draw hair and hats.

5



- Add attire and accessories.
- Decorate with more shapes.

6



- Draw a horizontal line to represent the floor.
- Add objects in the foreground.

7



- Draw in the background.

8



- Fill colours with colour pencils or markers.
- Here is an example of a completed preliminary idea.



- Here are more examples of preliminary ideas done in colour pencils (left) and coloured markers (right).

Customisation

- Ideas can be expressed using shapes that are easier or harder to draw, depending on the student's ability.
- Use templates, such as the ones on page 21, to prepare copies on drawing paper for students' use.

Artwork created on stretched canvas

Tips

- The surface of the canvas does not absorb water.
- Do take note of brush size against the scale of drawing done on canvas. Consider using a foam or sponge to expand handle grip instead of using a large brush.



- Transfer preliminary ideas to canvas.



- Start by painting the largest surface area.



- Add colours to the characters.



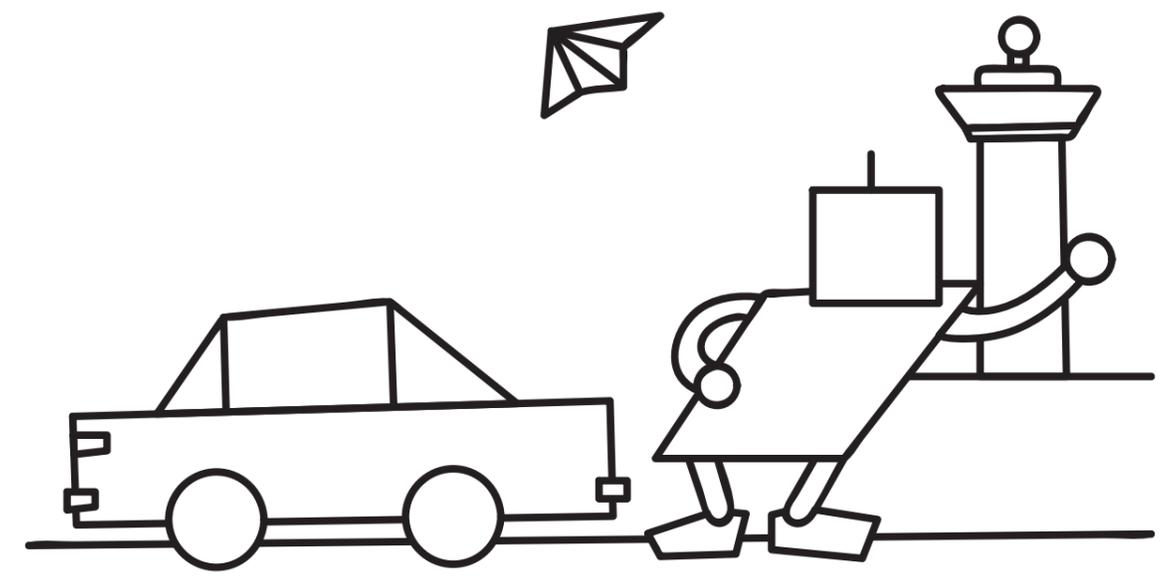
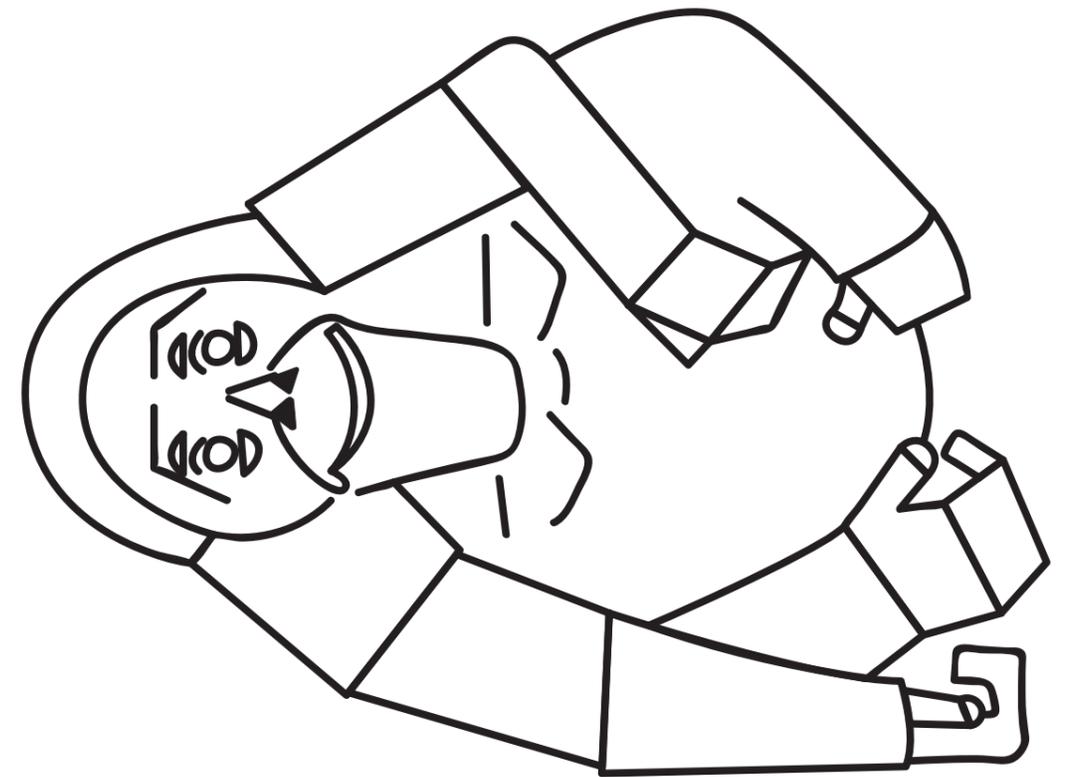
- Add colours to the background.



- Use markers or paint to draw in the finer features.



- The artwork is now complete.





Project 4 – Drawing with Lines: Cats

MINDS Woodlands Gardens School



Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Identify the types of lines made by different brushes.
- Recognise the different kinds of marks created when a brush is pressed onto the paper surface.

Skills

- Use lines and strokes to fill as 'colours' instead of the usual colouring within boundaries.
- Apply lines or strokes in both dry and wet mediums to produce different effects, whether in clusters or spread out.

Values & Attitudes

- Display self-confidence in painting with colours, shapes and strokes without having an initial outline drawn.



About the Artist

Ms. Ranae Lee-Nasir is a practicing visual artist and a former docent who used to manage daily operations at a Singapore-based art school. She recognised the benefits of positive art experiences by participating in many projects in SPED schools and not-for-profit organisations over the years. After more than a decade of teaching art to students with special needs, she has developed a well-constructed methodology for use in the art studio.

This project started out as an exploratory effort where the artist, teachers and students were unfamiliar with each other. Through spending time together learning about lines and shapes, the teachers and the artist noticed that the project can be used as a baseline to assess students' drawing and observational abilities. Nevertheless, the teachers and artist made time to brainstorm suitable instructional approaches for the students.

More about the project

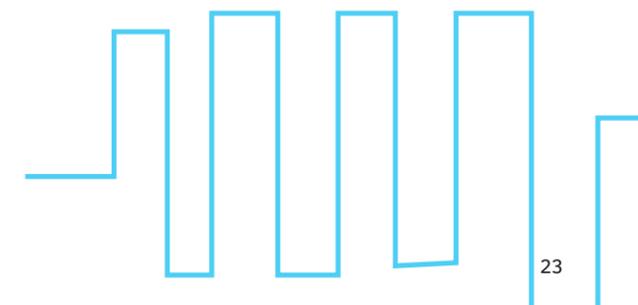
Dots and lines are essential visual tools for modes of communication such as writing and drawing. A drawing is essentially a mixture of lines that may be short, long, broad, fine, straight, angled, curved or wavy. Letters in the English alphabet are constructed from shapes and lines, one example is the alphabet, "D", which resembles a semicircle. As students are familiar with letters and numbers, the lessons were scaffolded by tapping on students' prior knowledge to create art.

The choice of medium is one of the key characteristics of this project. It allows the teacher to add or paint over as you will see in this project. Teachers can choose to stop at any point or build on it.



Materials you will need

1. Drawing paper
2. Watercolour, in cake or pan form
3. Flat tip brushes
4. Round tip brushes
5. A container of water to clean brushes between colours
6. Coloured markers and colour pencils which are optional

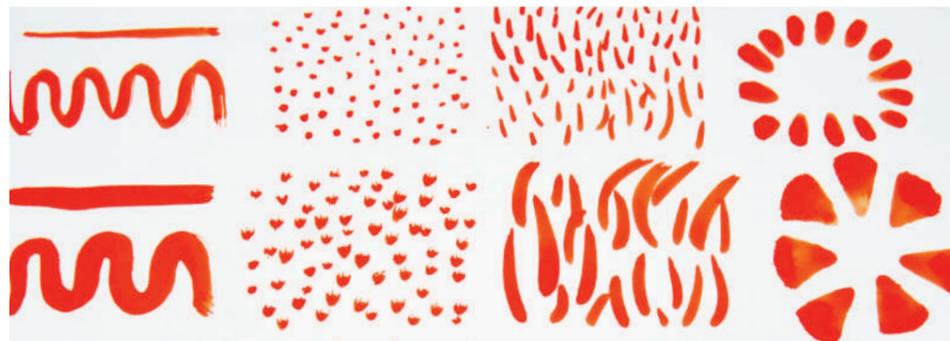


Before we start

Explore a variety of lines drawn with a dry-medium:



Explore a variety of lines drawn with a wet-medium:



Round tip brush



Flat tip brush

Tips

- Scale or size is a critical component in pictorial composition because large objects draw attention and small objects add details.
- It is not necessary to change the water every time a new colour is used.
- Use the template on page 27, to make copies for the students' use if necessary.

1



- Draw Cat #1 and #2.

2



- With a round tip brush, try pressing the bristle in different directions to obtain a fur-like texture.

3



- Alternatively, fill single-coloured shapes to represent patches on the cat.

4



- With a flat tip brush, paint an oval shape to represent a carpet or a rug.
- Add lines for floor tiles.

5



- Add stripes for the wallpaper. Tip: Use dark and light tones of a single colour for a soft touch.

6



- Consider adding more smaller shapes when paper is dry or fill the background with another colour.



7



- With a fine round brush, paint curves. Tip: Try rotating the paper.

8



- Try different types of curves.

9



- Add finishing touches to the cats.

10



- Fill in empty spaces between patterns.
- Tap the tip of the brush onto the paper, lightly dabbing in colours.

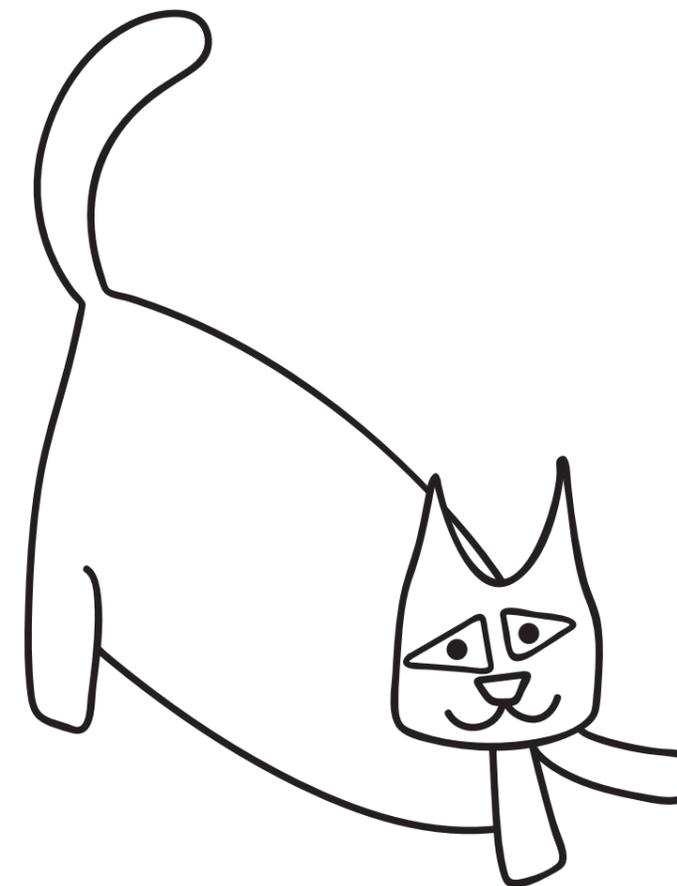
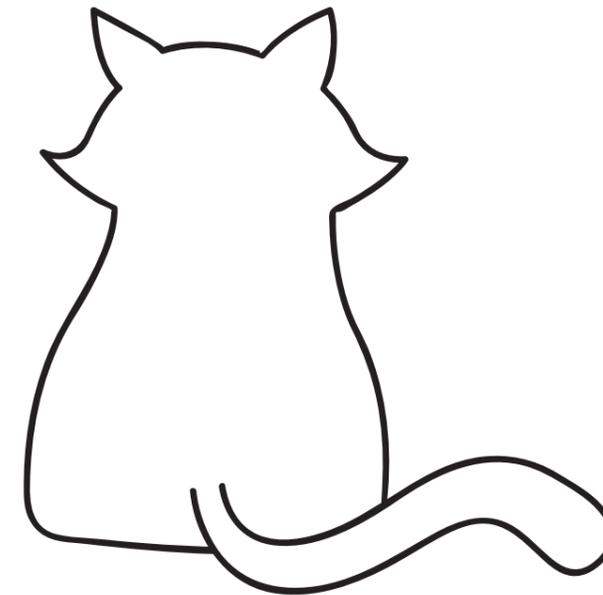
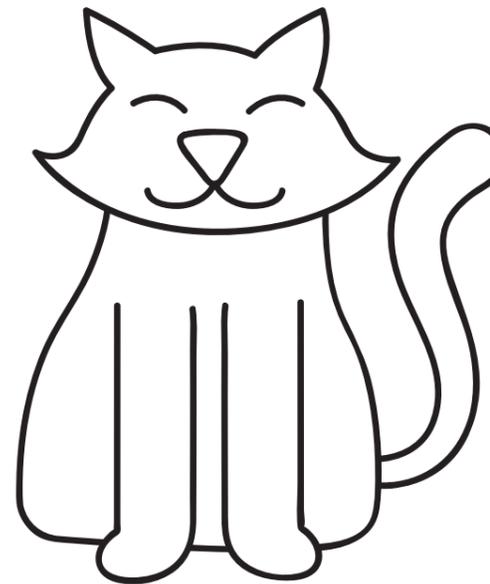
11



- Add whiskers if desired.
- The artwork is now complete.



- Here is another example:
 - A combination of medium such as colour pencils, coloured markers and paint is recommended.
 - Repeating alphabets or numbers is another way to get creative using lines.



Project 5 – Chinese Brush Painting: Pandas

APSN Katong School



About the Artist

Mr. Alan Tan Jwee Meng's approach towards the Visual Arts is a good balance between traditional and modern art as he is fluent in both traditional Chinese painting and Western painting. In 1991, he established an Art school which offers a fun-filled learning environment for all his students. He believes that education is similar to heritage and culture where we reap the rewards from the seeds we sow.

The project is part of a series of lessons to bring Chinese culture to students in SPED Schools. The essence of Chinese brush painting is not to replicate or to imitate the subject in its forms or in pictorial composition. Chinese brush painting is judged by quality brushstrokes and ink work. Students experimented in Xie-Yi (写意), a non-representational composition captured through spontaneous and expressive brushstrokes. Through these projects, students gained knowledge about The Dot, Line and Filled Space that are the foundation of Chinese brush painting. A filled space starts off as a line and is expanded to create balance within the composition. It is not a coloured space within a drawn shape. The strong essence and movement of these brushstrokes characterise Chinese brush painting.

More about the project

To engage the students, Mr. Tan made adaptations to traditional Chinese brush painting techniques by applying methods that are related to students' prior experiences. After each session, students gained a positive experience which helped in cultivating an interest in the Visual Arts and motivating further exploration and deepening of their skills. One of the greatest achievements was seen in one such session where students were invited to give a live demonstration of Chinese brush painting to their schoolmates during recess. The students showed great confidence in their techniques after their performance. They learnt that they were capable of applying knowledge and experience gained from lessons and their self-esteem increased. Although the students were initially reluctant and nervous, they became eager for a chance to share their painting skills. Encouraged by Mr. Tan's work with the students, the teachers joined in to learn together with the students about Chinese brush painting. The teachers' willingness to try made them excellent role models for the students as they developed their skills in artmaking.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Select the correct amount of water to use that will prevent paper from tearing.

Skills

- Capture a subject in a single brushstroke, without sketching.
- Control the amount of force required to grip the Chinese ink brush.

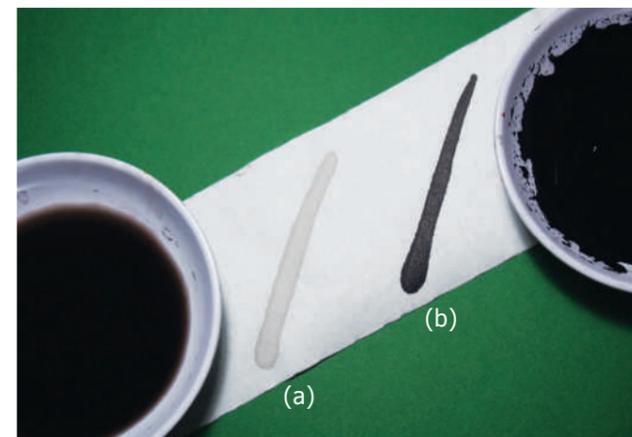
Values & Attitudes

- Strive with joy when creating one's own art piece.
- Observe good habits when painting.
- Adopt good habits outside the classroom as well.



Materials you will need

1. Rice paper of good quality
2. Two Chinese medium sized brushes
3. Chinese ink from a bottle
4. Felted cloth: place cloth beneath rice paper to absorb ink and water
5. Two small dishes: one for waterbrush (水笔) and the other for Chinese ink
6. A container of water to clean brushes at the end of the project



(a) Waterbrush (水笔) is a solution of ink and water. It is light when drawn on paper. It is used in this project to draw the basic layout for the composition.

(b) The characteristic of Chinese ink is black and rich in tone.

Before we start

- The grip for the brush is important as it keeps the brush firmly in the hand.
 - Fingertips and thumb to rest on the handle at four points. The four points can be related to the North, South, East and West.
 - The bristle of the brush is soft. When painting on paper, the brush should be upright, at a right-angle to the paper.



- The ink should not cover the entire brush but only the tip to the middle of the brush illustrated in the image on the right.
 - Soak the brush in clear water to allow the bristles to absorb water to prepare the brush for painting.
 - Slide the brush 10 times along the side of the container to remove excess water. The brush should be moist, not dripping wet.



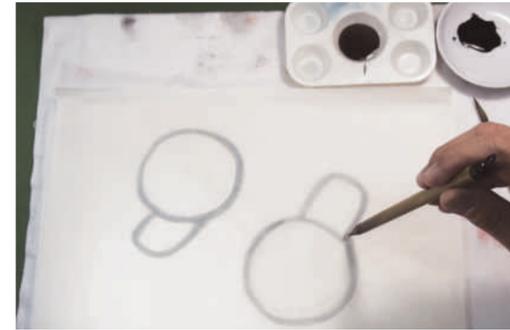
- When washing brushes, avoid pressing the bristle of the brush against the base of the container. Instead, gently swirl the brush in the middle of the container.
 - Care for materials and tools is important. Wash the brushes at the end of every session, then leave them to dry on a piece of fabric placed on a flat surface.



Tips

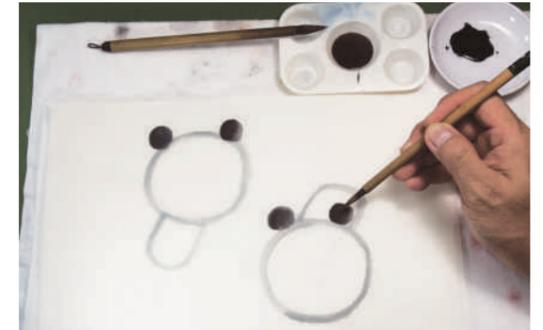
- It is not necessary to wash the brush or dip it in water after every stroke.
- Too much water will cause ink to spread rapidly on the rice paper, making it difficult to control both the brush and ink.
- Use the template on page 32 to practice brushstrokes involving dots and lines. Steps 1 and 2 describe the painting process.

1



- After dipping the brush in the waterbrush and applying it on rice paper, the strokes will appear light grey. This technique can be used to draw the initial shapes of the composition, as shown in the image above.
- Paint an O and a U for the head and the body respectively.

2



- Dip the second brush into the dish with Chinese ink.
- Paint ears using fluid strokes in a curve.

3



- Paint limbs using elongated brushstrokes.

4



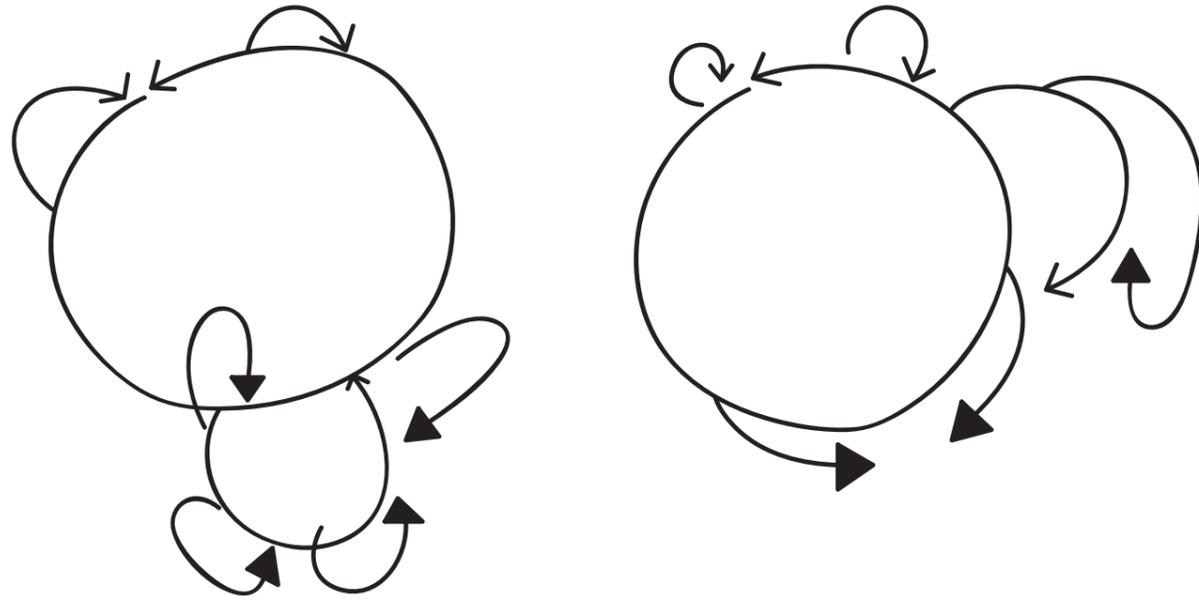
- For facial features, paint around each feature in quick and successive strokes.
- Paint short strokes to create visual balance within the composition.



- In traditional Chinese painting, an artwork is considered completed when there is a signature accompanied with a seal.
- The artwork is now complete.



- Here is another example of a completed project by Mr. Alan Tan Jwee Meng.



3D School Projects

Project 6 – Pinching and Joining Two Bowls: An Owl

Metta School



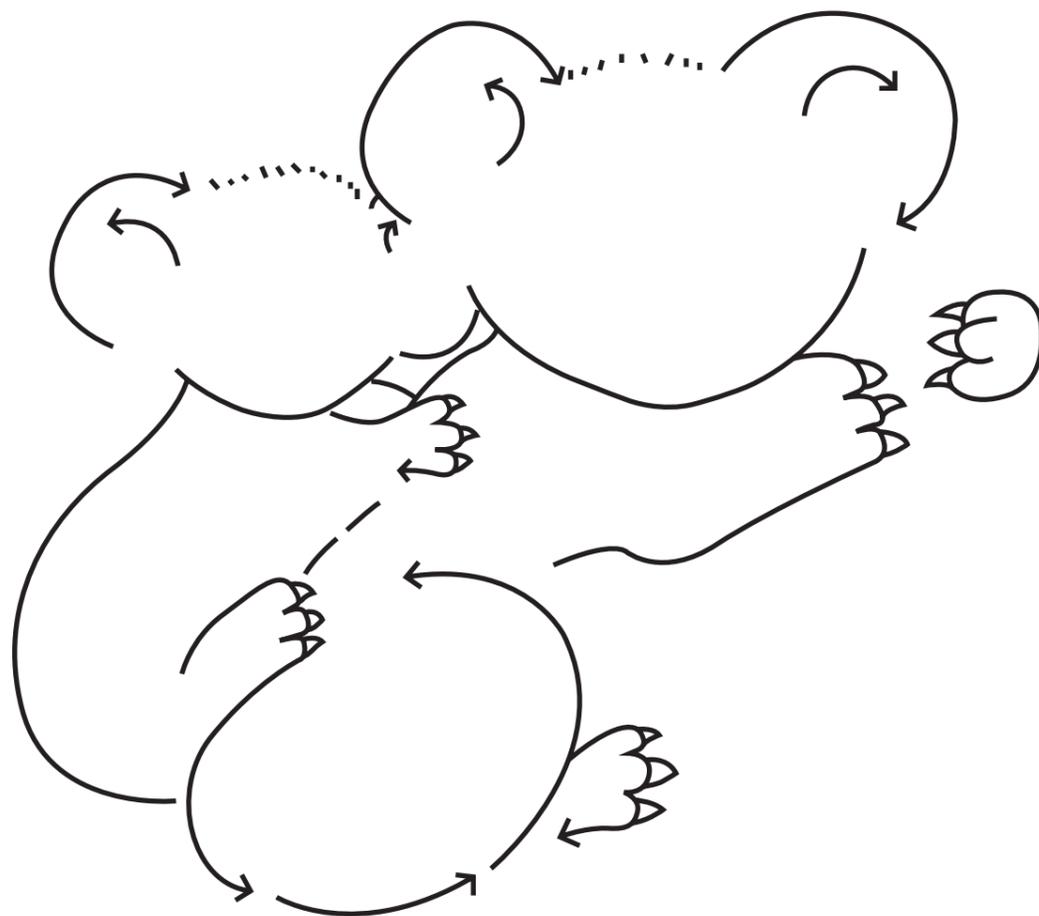
About the Artists

Mr. Loh Lik Kian is a renowned ceramist. He and Ms. Debbie Ng run a ceramics studio and conduct pottery classes for both mainstream and SPED schools. They set up a basic pottery facility for schools and offer lessons that are customized to the learning needs of their students. Mr. Loh and Ms. Ng plan learning activities which emphasise the development of fundamental skills useful in the daily living of their students.

Mr. Loh and Ms. Ng were invited to provide input on the expansion plans of an existing ceramic studio in Metta School. Through their involvement, both artists shared their passion for pottery with the school. Initially they taught skills, techniques, knowledge and critical thinking to the students in Metta School. Eventually, the teachers were learning alongside their students, making it a dynamic programme for the teaching and learning of artmaking.

More about the project

Mr. Loh believes that the potential of clay as a medium is limitless because of its flexibility characteristics. The key focus of the project is enabling students to come up with their own creations and exercising their creativity through practice. Students can also exercise lateral thinking when they manipulate clay to create their art pieces. Through various artmaking processes, students explore manipulating clay with basic hand building techniques to improve their fine motor skills.





Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Recall different 3D art forms in clay work.
- Recognise shapes and forms through working with clay.

Skills

- Practice hand-eye coordination.
- Squeeze, pinch, poke and stack clay to change the physical shape of clay.
- Use tools to assist in the development of the artwork.

Values & Attitudes

- Observe health and safety rules on page 8 when using clay.
- Attend to studio/art room cleanliness.

Recommendations

- Purchase clay from clay suppliers to enjoy cost savings.
- To achieve desired results, use traditional clay instead of air-dry paper clay.
- You will be able to recycle unfired clay indefinitely with the basic steps below. The duration of the recycling process depends on the type and nature of clay.

STEPS TO RECYCLE CLAY		
	Dried	Soft
1. Avoid working with dry clay, but if the clay has dried, don safety gear such as a respirator	✓	✗
2. Break dried clay into small bits	✓	✗
3. Add water to clay in a container, e.g. a pail, bucket or storage container	✓	✓
4. Allow the clay to absorb water over time. Note: If clay has been contaminated, a few drops of antibacterial soap may be introduced to the water	✓	✓
5. Let the clay rest until it softens	✓	✓
6. Carefully remove excess water	✓	✓
7. Allow wet clay to dry on a porous surface such as a plaster slab until it is of a suitable consistency to be handled	✓	✓



Materials you will need

1. Clay (not in image)
2. A piece of cotton-mixed polyester fabric
3. Shallow container of water
4. A sponge
5. A paintbrush to clean off excess clay slip
6. A boxwood tool
7. A needle tool
8. A small bowl of clay slip
9. A small brush to apply clay slip with
10. Mark-making tools

Remember

1. To reduce time in cleaning, clay artwork can be rested on a piece of cotton-mixed polyester fabric.
2. Not to introduce water to artwork at any time. Doing so may weaken the structure of clay.
3. To knead clay before use. Proper kneading removes air pockets that may cause the artwork to explode in the kiln because the heat causes air to expand.
4. To refer to the clean-up routine on page 8.

Examples of mark-making tools



Recycled Tools



Specialised Clay Tools



Practice making shapes



- For most shapes, start by rolling a ball.

Tips

- Shapes and parts must be thick and chunky as thin items are sharp and would break easily during drying and after firing.
- The clay shaping exercises will enable fine motor skills to be honed and allow teachers to assess the abilities of individual learners.

Cylinder



- Roll clay between palms till a coil is formed, then roll on table top for an even coil surface.



- Gently tap both ends of the coil to finish.

Flattened Shapes



- Flattened shapes can be used for parts like the eyes or to enhance other features.

Teardrop



- Gently roll one end of ball between your palms.

Feet



- Pinch a nose from the centre of ball.



- Pinch equal amount on both sides to form a rough "T" shape.

Pyramid



- Form basic shapes between fingers and gently tap to shape using flat surfaces like the table top.

Cube



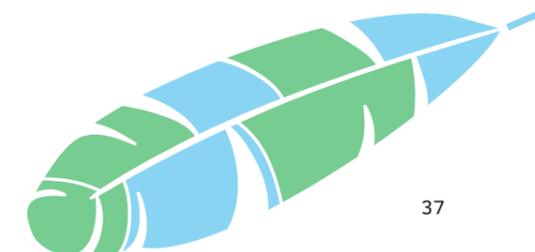
- Gently tap six sides of ball on the table top for even and flat cube surfaces.



- Even out form of feet.



- Here are examples of the completed shapes.





These are the key stages of pinching a bowl. Use them as a guide.

- The pinching technique ensures that the core is hollow and relatively light.
- When working on different parts, always rest the pinched bowl face down / upside down. This preserves the shape of the bowl.

4



- Use your thumb to indent the middle of the ball to create a well.
- Avoid tearing or changing the shape of the ball of clay.

5



- Push thumb towards the core of the ball of clay.
- Depth of well is almost to the bottom of ball (leave about 1 cm thickness at the bottom).

6



- Pinching action of dominant hand.
- Place clay between thumb and fingers.
- The pinching action of hands should be flat like a duck's bill quacking.

7



- Gently and slowly expand the bowl by rotating clay in one palm and pinching in a gradual, step-by-step manner with the other hand.

8



- Allow the thickness of wall to be slightly thicker; at least 1 cm thickness all round.

Steps 1 to 4 demonstrate how to shape an uneven wedge clay into a ball or sphere

1



- The size of the clay must not be larger than the learners' hands as they eventually need to be able to insert their thumb into the ball of clay.

2



- Round off edges by tapping, rotating and shaping in curved palm until a rough ball is formed (do not use table top).

3



- Continue to tap, rotate and shape until a sphere is achieved.





Mr. Loh and Ms. Ng have created an intermediate project for students to apply the basic technique of pinching. Pinching a ball of clay into a bowl can be used to form the body of many animals, e.g. a dinosaur. This toolkit details skills needed for the basic project (A) and how the same skill can be used in the more advanced project (B). The steps for project (B) start on page 41.

(A) Dinosaur – One pinched bowl



Here is an example of the pieces needed to form the dinosaur sculpture and the completed project.

(B) Full-bodied Owl – Two pinched bowls



Parts needed:

- Two V-shaped bowls for the body
- Two flattened pyramids for ear tufts
- Two flattened circles for eyes
- Two balls for eye balls
- One cone shape for the beak
- Two flattened tear-drops for wings
- Two feet



Clay slip is a mixture of clay and water. Clay slip is used to join segments of clay together like glue. Do not apply a layer of clay slip on the surface of clay artwork as a finish.

To make your own clay slip

1. Soak small pieces of dried clay in a container.
2. Add water to cover the clay.
3. Allow it to sit for 30mins or more (the clay will break down).
4. Drain excess water and stir to a gooey paste.
5. The consistency of slip should be like toothpaste.

Joining the parts of clay

There are two methods for joining parts of clay together.

Method 1: For large parts

1. Score clay by drawing crosses (x) with a needle tool
2. Add clay slip
3. Press firmly and give a twist to adhere
4. Reinforce where necessary by adding extra clay coil along the edges to strengthen joints
5. Clean off excess clay slip
6. Make sure work is clean and neat

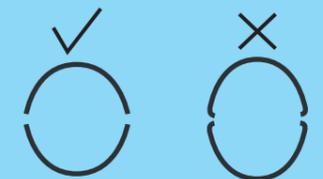
Method 2: For tiny parts

e.g. thin whiskers

1. Wet tip of index finger
2. Rub both surfaces of the clay you intend to join until they become gooey
3. Press firmly and give a twist
4. Make sure work is clean and neat

Tips

- To make a sphere, the two finished bowls should have a wide and even edge. It should resemble a V-shape and not a U-shape.
- Edges of bowl must not bend inwards:



- Do not use needle tool to scratch designs or patterns as doing so will introduce sharp serrated edges on fired artworks.

For making the main body of the owl, Method 1 is applied for Steps 1 to 3, Steps 6 to 8 and will be repeated throughout the project because it can secure large clay parts together.

1



- Draw crosses (x) along the rim of both bowls.

2



- Using the small brush, add a generous amount of clay slip on both surfaces to join.

3



- Join both V-shaped bowls by pressing and twisting both parts tightly together, trapping air in between.

4



- Use thumb and finger to blend both parts together. The air within will support and maintain the shape.

9



- Use a paint brush to clean off excess clay slip.
- Clean brush with water and squeeze out excess water.



- This is an example of a piece of work which is clean and neat.
- Step 9 should be carried out whenever a new part is adhered to the artwork.
- Pointers found under Method 2 should be applied when glueing small parts to the artwork.

5



- Balance the sphere.
- Check for cracks on the surface of the sphere.
- Clean and squeeze away water from sponge. Erase any fine cracks by gently rubbing across the surface.

6



- Start with the eyes
 - Draw crosses (x) on both surfaces.

10



- To enhance the artwork
 - Make marks with tools or found objects.
 - Press and do not scratch.

11



- Score, slip and secure, fixing on another part of the owl.
- For the eyeball, use the back of a paintbrush to create an indentation.

7



- Use the small brush to dab clay slip onto both surfaces.

8



- Fix parts together.
- Press and twist to adhere parts securely.



- Repeat Steps 6 to 10 to add body parts until the artwork is complete.

Tips

- Always ensure the surface of the finished artwork is clean, neat and smooth. Clay hardens when dried and uneven surfaces can become sharp or prickly after it has been fired in a kiln.
- Use the sponge to clean off excess clay and fine cracks on artwork.
- Always ensure the clay pieces are joined together well. Pressing firmly and twisting helps.



12



- Check the balance of the artwork after feet are added.

13



- Add texture or patterns by imprinting or pressing with tools.
- Repeat Step 10 with a recycled tool or specialised clay tool.

14



- Use a needle tool to pierce a hole at the base of the artwork.
- This is important because it allows air to escape during drying or firing.

15



- This is an example of a bisque fired clay work before glaze or paint is added.

Tips

- Consult your clay supplier on how to bisque fire the art product. Some suppliers provide firing services so it may be good to check with them.
- Do not scratch designs with mark-making tools, as doing so will introduce sharp serrated edges on fired artworks.



- The artwork must be bisque fired then painted using acrylic paint.
- The artwork is now complete.



- Here is another example of a half-bodied owl made using a single pinched bowl.



Project 7 – Sculpture from Moulding Plaster: Human Figures

AWWA School



About the Artist

Mr. Rico Ngim is a self-taught artist, a sculptural assistant to Brother Joseph McNally and part-time lecturer with LASALLE College of the Arts. He has a strong belief in contributing back to society. In 2002, he established the Sculptors' Workshop and was able to collaborate with students, adults, senior citizens and various charitable organisations. His creativity is stretched further by new fabrication processes he creates using technology, untraditional techniques and mediums.

Mr. Ngim was invited to conduct a three-dimensional Visual Arts workshop at AWWA School. The teacher-in-charge, Ms. Noriyah, felt that sculpturing would allow the students to create art using a new medium. The project introduced students to different types of materials such as plasticine, moulding plaster and paint. This activity encouraged independence which led to many meaningful engagements that spanned a number of weeks. The workshop provided the students with many opportunities to express themselves.

More about the project

There was an exchange of learning between the teachers and the artist. Teachers provided and shared their knowledge in pedagogy while the artist provided tips and methods for artmaking. There was a student who was initially reluctant to participate. However, after much support and encouragement, the student began looking forward to subsequent sessions. By providing clear and simple instructions such as providing clear steps visually, students gained a better understanding of the learning expectations in artmaking. Furthermore, the students were able to integrate mathematical concepts such as ratios, when mixing parts of water to plaster-powder in their preparation of moulding plaster.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

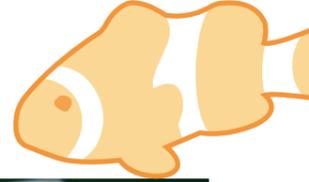
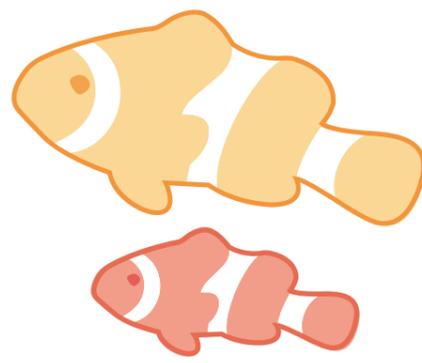
- Recognise the changing state of materials.
- Select geometric shapes to form 'human-like figures'.

Skills

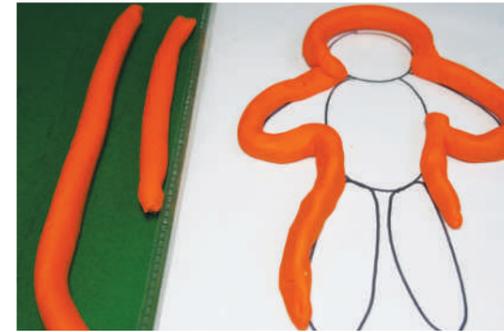
- Apply different materials to create a single product.
- Create a mould with plasticine, using a drawing as a template.
- Pinch and secure the walls of the plasticine mould to the surface of the drawn image.
- Measure and mix plaster powder to the required consistency.

Values & Attitudes

- Accept that artmaking is a process that takes time.
- Acknowledge that trial and error are part of artmaking.

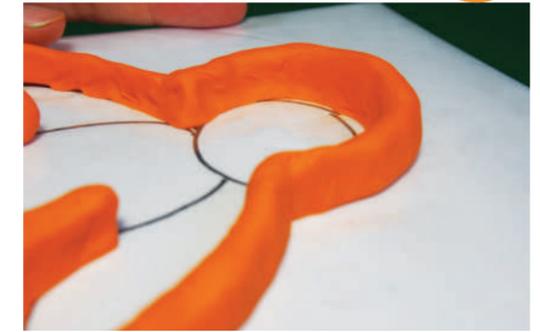


1



- With rolled plasticine, create a well in the shape of the drawn figure.

2



- Press plasticine firmly onto the plastic surface to prevent plaster paste from seeping out.

Steps 3 to 5 demonstrate how to prepare moulding plaster

Tips

- Different plaster brands and mixes will produce pastes of different consistencies.
- Start small with shapes no larger than 12 cm x 7 cm.

3



- Add water to mixing container.

4



- Sieve powder plaster to water in a 1:1 ratio.
- Gently fold both components together.
- Do not stir.

5



- Mix well and ensure there are no lumps of powder plaster at the base of the container.
- Check that the consistency is smooth and runny.

6



- Pour plaster into plasticine well.
- Leave it until the powder plaster is completely dry and has hardened. (NB: The time taken to harden differs depending on the type of powder used.)



Materials you will need

1. Flat plastic surface such as a plastic sleeve or a disposable plastic plate
2. Drawn image on a sheet of paper or on disposable plastic plate
3. Plasticine
4. Moulding plaster powder
5. Water (Note: Ratio for moulding plaster to water is 1:1)
6. A large container for mixing moulding plaster with water
7. Spade

For decoration

1. Acrylic paints
2. Brushes
3. Shallow palettes
4. A container of water to clean brushes between colours

Before we start

- Draw figures in different poses, or break down the figures into geometric shapes.
- Create coils of plasticine by rolling with palm on a flat surface. A plastic sheet can be used to minimise cleaning.



7



- Using a spade, smooth out any excess paste.
- Tap on the table to raise any air bubbles trapped.
- Let it dry for an hour or so.

8



- After an hour or so, use spade to slice along the plasticine.

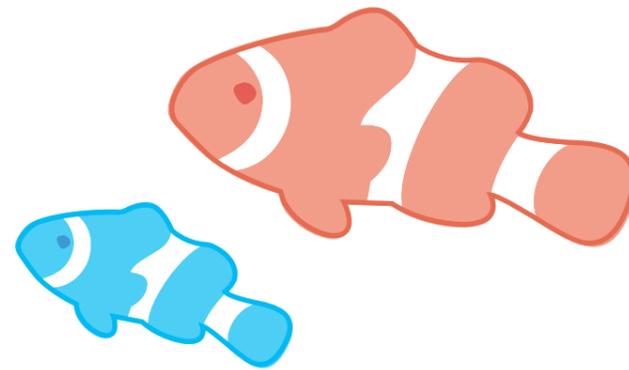
Tip

- Tidy uneven surfaces or edges using a pair of scissors or a sheet of sandpaper.

9



- Gently peel plasticine away from the plaster mould.
- Allow it to dry completely. Depending on the plaster and surrounding temperature, this may take a day or two.
- The plaster should be light and firm when dried.



To create a base with the same material



- Once the sculpture is dry, create a plasticine well of a geometric shape e.g. a circle as the base. The example (left) is a fish-shaped sculpture.
- Insert the dried sculpture while the plaster paste is still soft and runny.
- Repeat Steps 8 and 9.



- Add colours to decorate.
- These are examples of sculptures with base attached.



- Decorate sculpture with acrylic paint.
- The artwork is now complete.

- Here are other examples of possible sculptures.



More Project Ideas By Ranae Lee-Nasir

Idea 1 – Colour and Water Droplets: Flowers

This project allows students to familiarise themselves with mixing colours and the range of tones they can create. The guiding principle for this project is ‘experimentation’. As students will be using a dropper instead of a paint brush, the fine motor skills required in this project, along with one’s awareness of the task, are different from the other projects featured in the toolkit. Students can experiment further by varying the ratio of water to paint i.e. more water but less paint, or less water but more paint. This changes the opacity or translucency of the final artwork.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Recognise that different types of splatter are achieved when
 - the paper is dry or wet.
 - there is more, or less paint mixed with water.
 - the dropper is placed above the surface of paper or is raised higher above.
- Recall the different effects achieved when colours are diluted.

Skills

- Use a tool to paint with or create texture.
- Clean a palette, paint brushes and tools.
- Keep washing area neat and dry.

Values & Attitudes

- Acknowledge the use of simple and few materials in artmaking.
- Observe cleanliness in the workspace and classroom.



Materials you will need

1. Watercolour paper
2. Watercolour paint in tubes
3. Droppers
4. Three containers with different levels of water to mix different concentration of colours
5. A round tip paintbrush
6. A container of water to clean brushes and droppers between colours
7. Palette with mixing wells

1



- Start with the lightest or the brightest colour.
- Add the same amount of paint to three different containers with different levels of water.

2



- Use the dropper to apply small drops of coloured water.

3



- Repeat Step 1 using different colours.

4



- With a round tip brush, paint the foliage.
- Let the paint dry overnight.

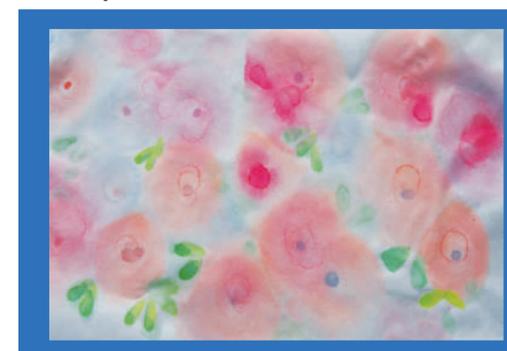
Drawing Paper



Watercolour Paper



Rice Paper



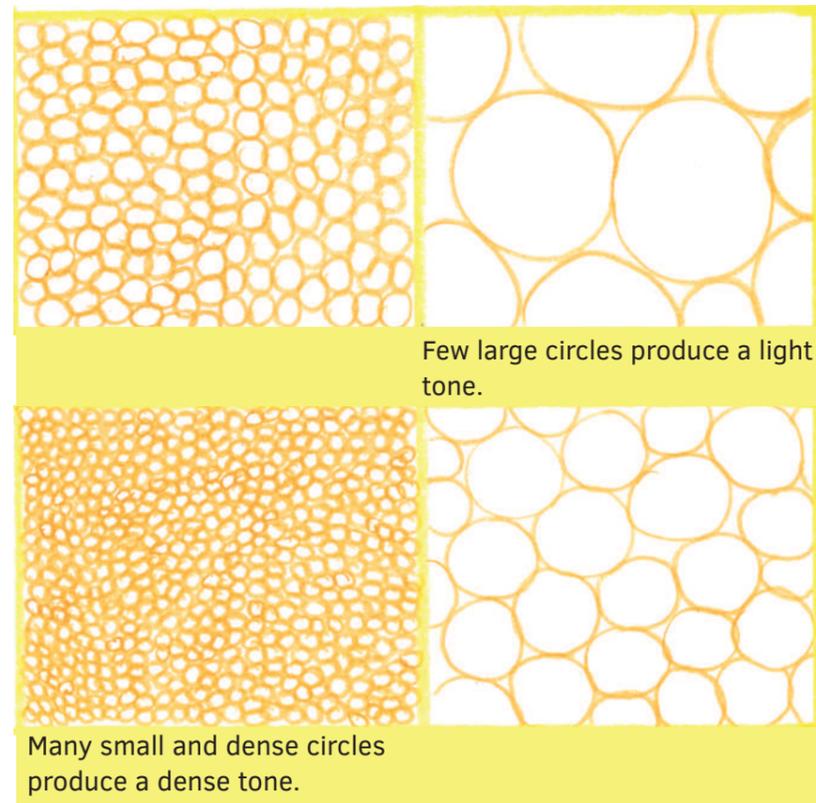
Tips

- Trays and flat drying areas will be useful.
- Try the same process on different types of paper. Examples of the end result of paint and water on different types of paper are shown in the two images above and the one on the left.

Idea 2 – Scale and Repetition: Ice Kachang

This project explores variations of density through circles. It can be used as a lead up to drawing techniques such as hatching and cross hatching.

We apply the following guiding principles:



Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Recall drawing circles to represent concentration and density.

Skills

- Demonstrate attention to composition as well as to quantity and scale (size) of circles.

Values & Attitudes

- Acknowledge that they need to be attentive in drawing a set of consistent circles.
- Acknowledge the importance of stamina in repeated pattern-making.

Materials you will need

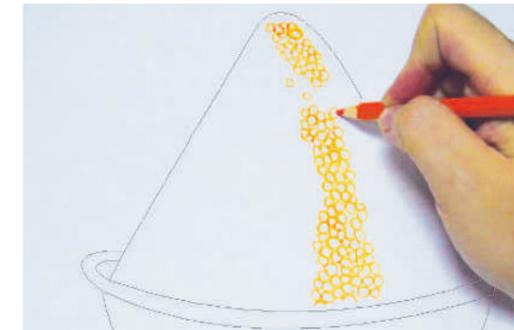
- Drawing paper
- Colour pencils or any drawing medium

Tip

- Use the template on page 54 to prepare an outline for students to work from.

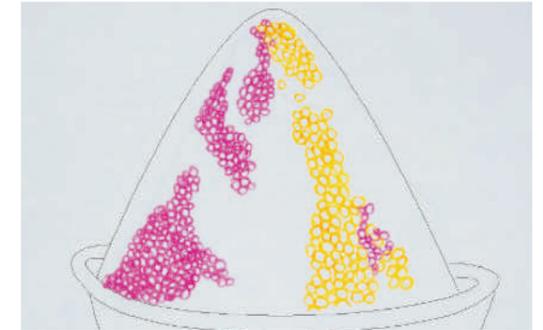


1



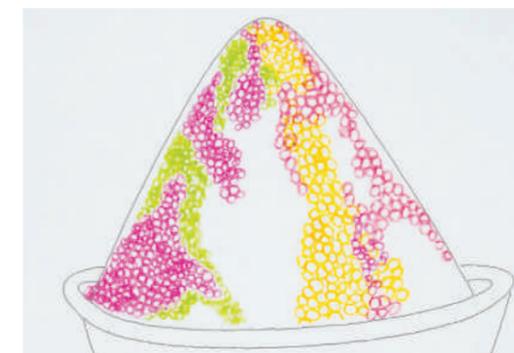
- Place a printout of the template beneath the drawing paper.
- Begin by drawing medium-sized circles in yellow or another lighter colour.

2



- Add slightly smaller circles using different colour.

3

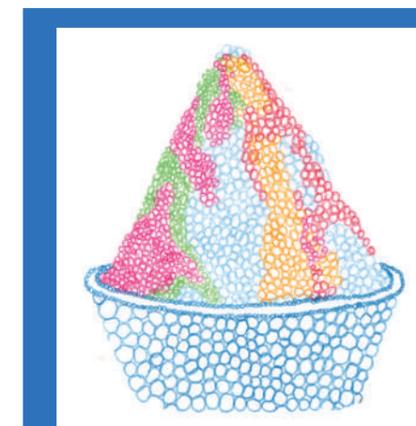


- Continue to draw circles of different sizes and colours.

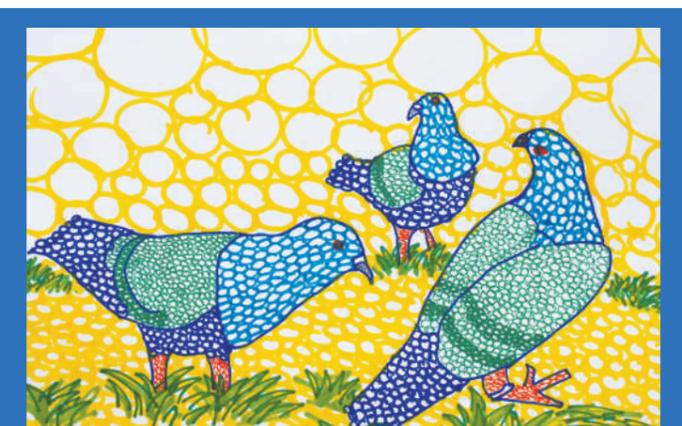
4



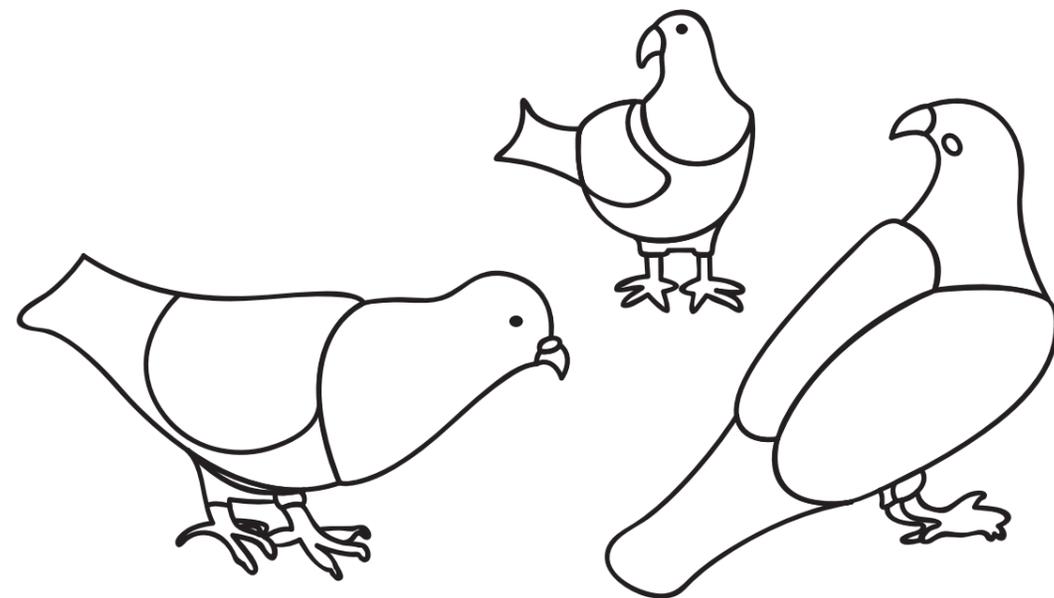
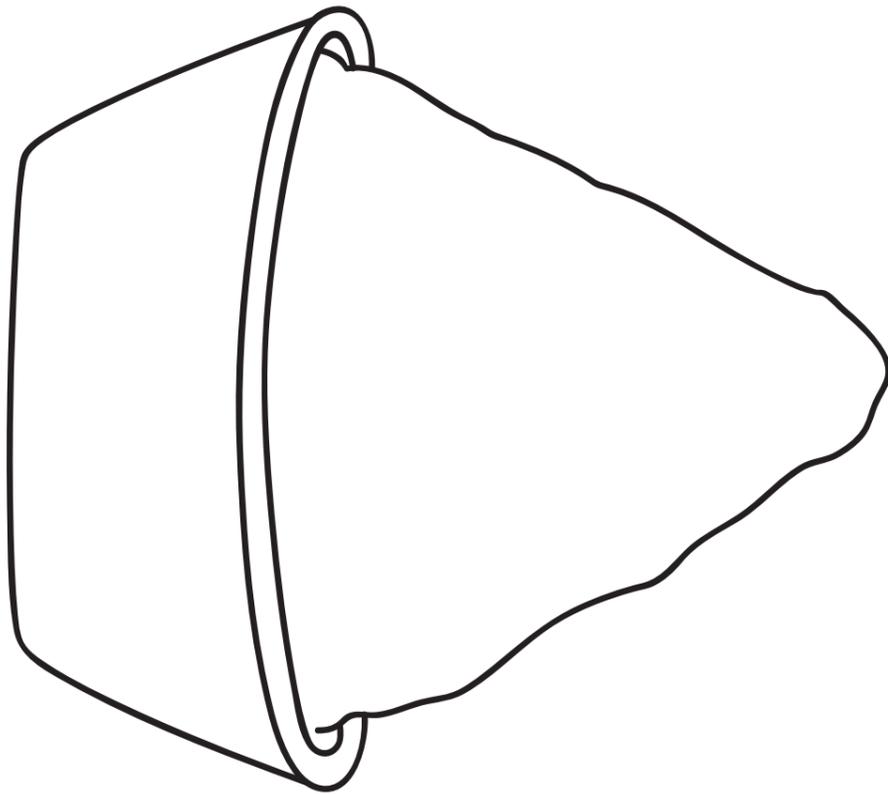
- Keep going.



- The artwork is now complete.



- Here is another example of a drawing made using markers.



Idea 3 – Collage, Making Marks and Texture: Cable Cars

In any art project, texture can spruce up a flatly-coloured surface easily. Texture is fun to create. However, it might seem a little challenging to explain the method to the students. As there is no one correct technique, the way to learn is to keep on trying new and innovative approaches.

Instructional Objectives

The students will

Knowledge

- Select colour combinations to create texture.
- Choose different materials/mediums to create texture.

Skills

- Use tools to make marks.
- Break down subjects into segments and simpler shapes.
- Form a composition from cut segments.

Values & Attitudes

- Seek new combinations of materials to work with.



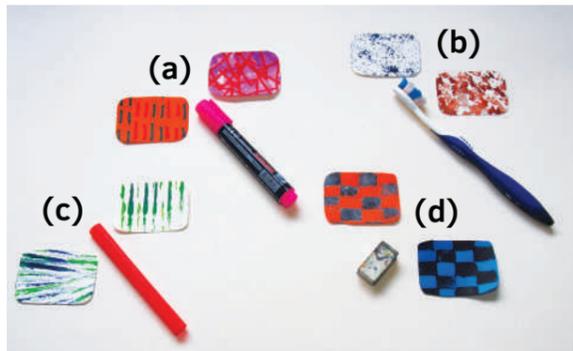
Materials you will need

1. Drawing paper
2. Shallow palette
3. Acrylic paints or watercolours in tubes
4. Coloured markers
5. Oil pastel or wax pastels
6. Paint brush
7. Assortment of tools to make marks such as comb, toothbrush or straw
8. Scissors
9. White glue
10. A template or pre-drawn image is optional

Tip

- Place drawing paper on newspapers or a large sheet of paper to keep the work station clean.

Here are some ideas on how you can make marks and texture



(a) Coloured paper and markers
 (b) Watercolour and toothbrushes
 (c) Acrylic paint and straws
 (d) Acrylic paint and erasers



(e) Acrylic paint and combs



(f) Acrylic paint, sponges and object with holes



(g) Oil pastels and scissors



Background

There are three parts to the background: Sea, Moon and Night Sky.

Sea. Materials: Acrylic paint and one flat wooden peg



• Squeeze paint on drawing paper.



• With a flat tool, spread the paint across the page.
 • You can repeat this action more than once.

Moon. Materials: Acrylic paint and objects with a flat and round surface



• Squeeze paint on recycled paper.



• Ink a flat and round object.



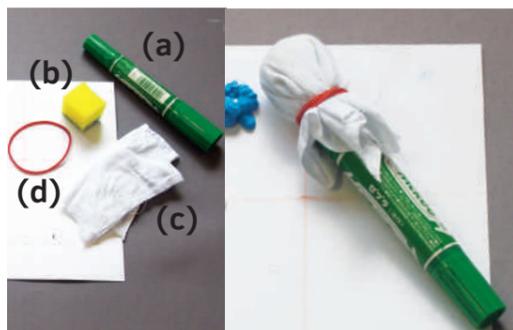
• Position and print on drawing paper.



• Remove object.

Night Sky. Materials: Acrylic paint, a broad marker, a piece of sponge, a piece of fabric and a rubber band.

7



• Assemble hand-made stamping tool from four items:

- (a) A broad handle, e.g. a marker
- (b) A piece of sponge
- (c) A small piece of fabric
- (d) A rubberband

8



• Ink the tool with paint and stamp over the night sky.

9



• Add different colours without replacing or washing tools.

Completed Background



Getting the composition ready

10



• Draw or use the template from page 60 to prepare the cutouts from different colours and textures.

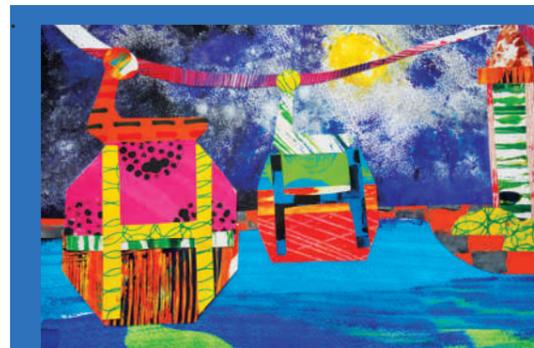


• Arrange pieces and paste.

11



• Repeat Step 10 and paste the pieces down.



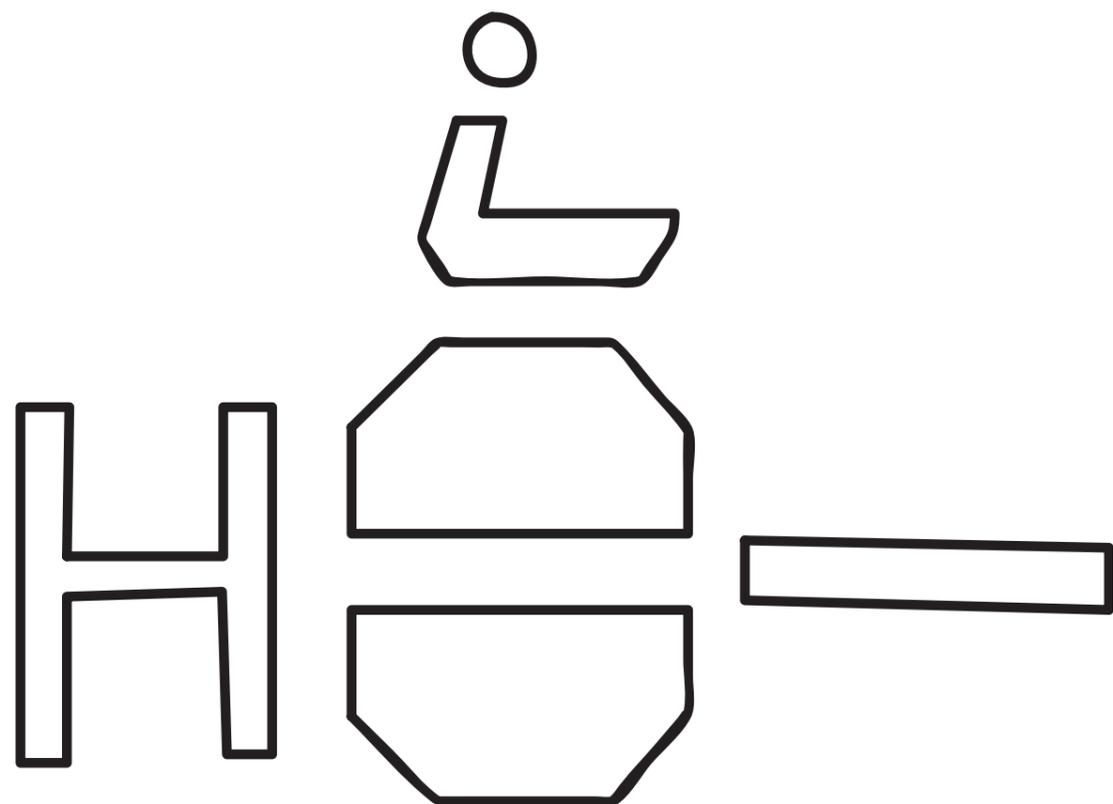
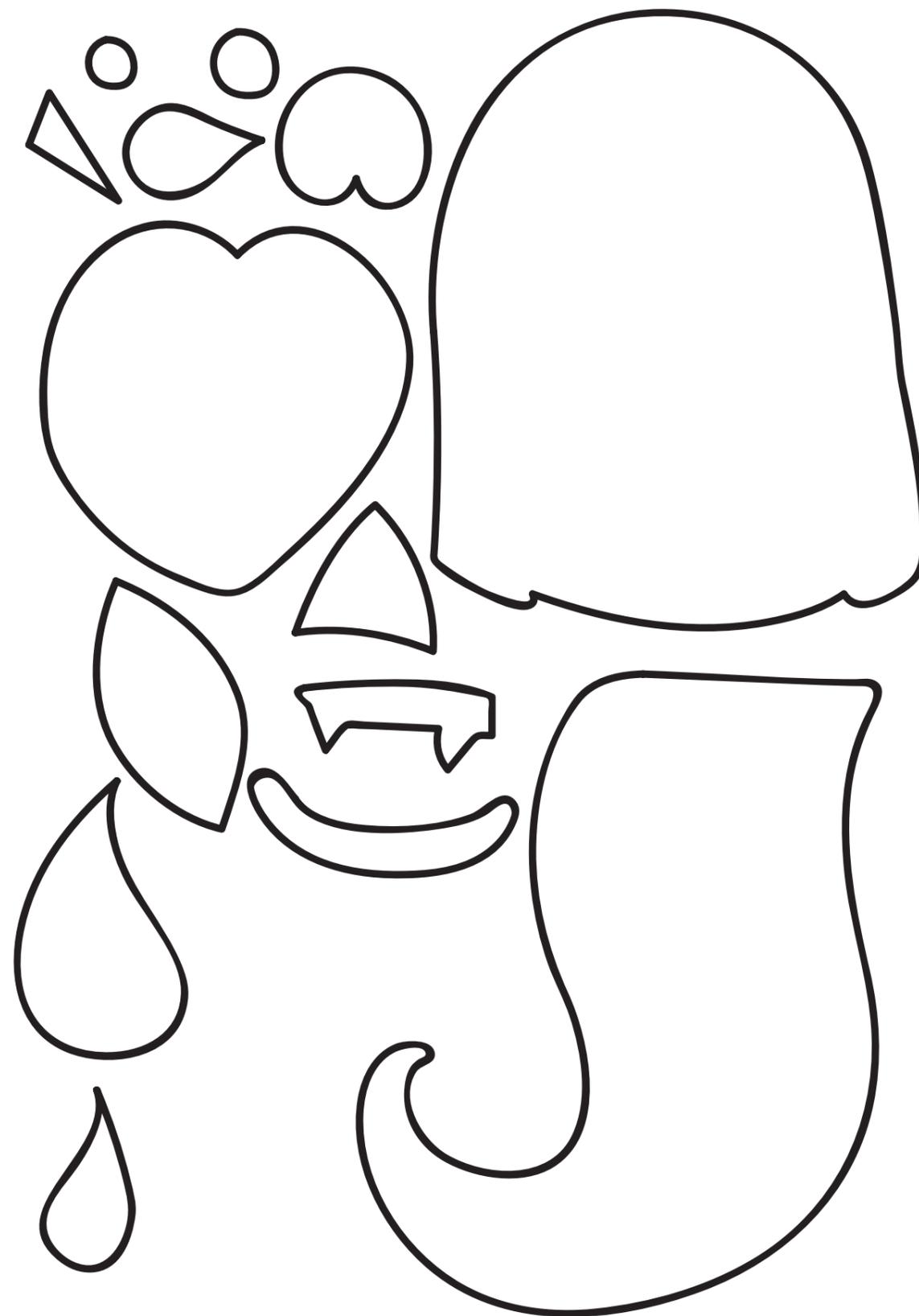
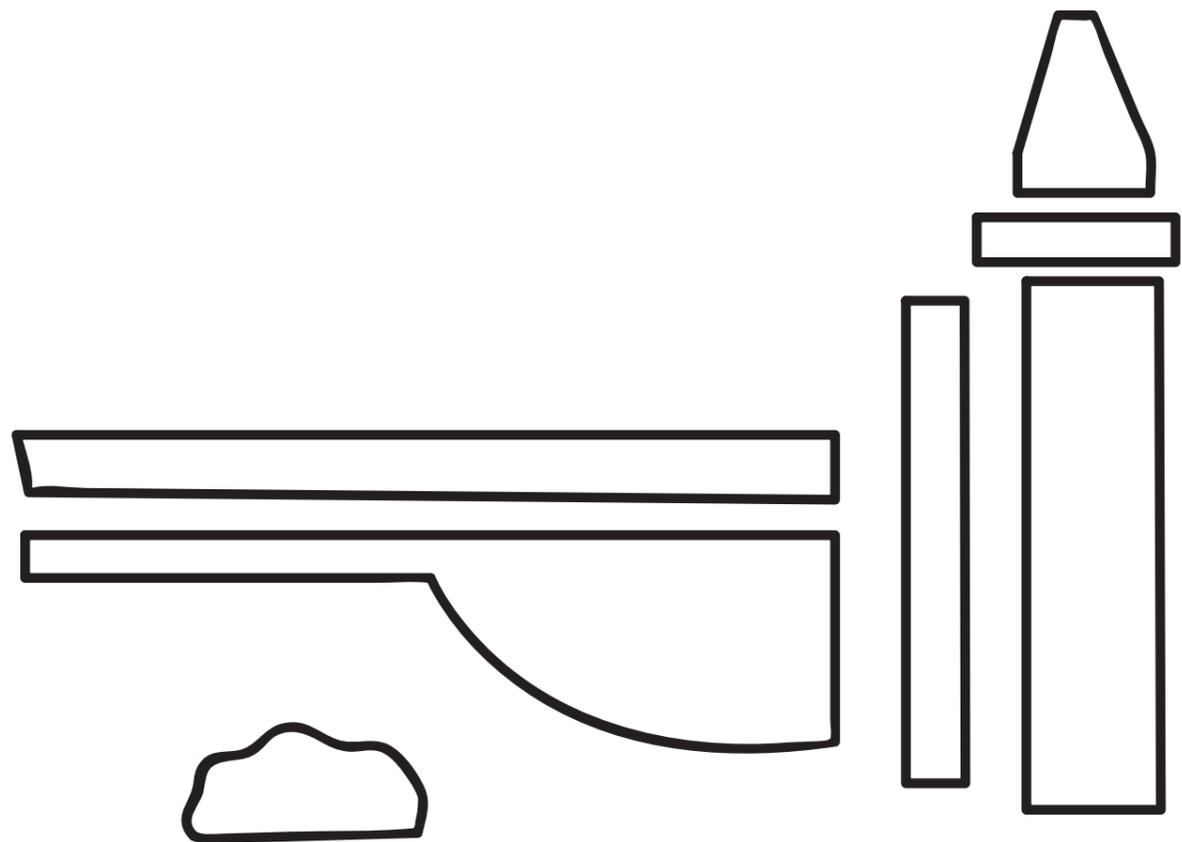
• The artwork is now complete.



• Here is another example of a completed project. The template is on page 61.

Tips

- Work backwards by starting with the largest shape or part.
- There are many opportunities to recycle different types of textured paper.



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Acknowledgements

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Special Education Schools

APSN Katong School
AWWA School
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore School
MINDS Fernvale Gardens School
MINDS Woodlands Gardens School
Metta School
Rainbow Centre – Margaret Drive School







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