

## Preschool Themes Newsletter – November 2014

Hello Everyone,

Here we are in the last month of the school year and Christmas is nearly upon us. This will be the last newsletter for the year and the first one will be sent out in February once you are all back at school and well settled in the New Year. It has been fun sharing my ideas and activities with you all and thank you for taking the time to read the newsletters and respond to requests and thoughts. The Facebook page continues to grow each month and the newsletter mailing list is now over 1000. Archived newsletters can be found on the website [www.preschoolthemes.co.za](http://www.preschoolthemes.co.za). It's been a challenging year with the extended postal strike but I hope we have managed to get your books to you in good time through the courier service.

I wish you and your families a restful break, safe travels and all the best for the festive season.



### Christmas ideas

It's a great time to do a few special art activities for Christmas and to decorate your classrooms with decorations made with love and care by your learners. I have included several Christmas ideas from the pinterest board for you. All the links and instructions are found on each web site.

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/christmas-school/>



## New Year classroom planning

There are several pinterest boards with birthday charts, classroom bulletin boards and boards for all the play areas and themes. This is the general link to my boards. If you enjoy Christmas you will find lots of my personal boards for Christmas to enjoy.

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/>

## Sensory Intelligence Workshop

I have been asked to spread the word about this upcoming workshop. I am not organising it so if you have any queries please contact the names and information at the end of the section. It looks very interesting. More information is in this link or in the attachment I sent separately with the newsletter.



Parent workshop for  
JHB Dec 2014.pdf

### Sensory intelligence workshop by Dr Annemarie Lombard

02 December 2014

08h30 to 12h30

R450 PER PERSON OR R700 per couple

Address is Alberton Teachers Centre Cnr Hendrick Potgieter & 1st Avenue Alberton North Alberton

Please contact to secure a space [events@sensoryintelligence.co.za](mailto:events@sensoryintelligence.co.za)  
or visit [www.sensoryintelligence.co.za/events](http://www.sensoryintelligence.co.za/events) for more info

### Bookings to be made by 28 November 2014 please

Surprise gift draw for one lucky person who will be attending the workshop



## Graduation ideas

We are looking for any nice graduation poems or speeches you have used please.  
Send them to [rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rodandkarin@xtra.co.nz) and I will share them with you all.

## Art ideas

We have once again been creative and the children have had lots of fun. I have given a few extra activities as there is no newsletter in January.

### Bubble wrap packet painting and printing

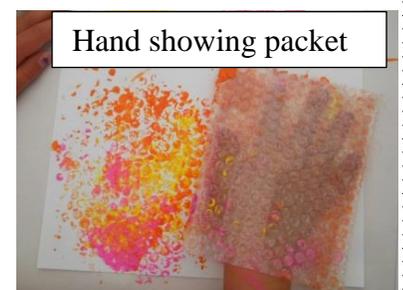
**You will need:** bubble wrap stapled into small packets, paper, ready mixed paint, brushes and something to cover the table surface

I was given some small bubble wrap packets from some items we ordered which just said "printing" to me.

The children painted the packet using three colours of thick ready mixed paint. Then they put their hand into the packet and printed the bubbles on their paper. I loved the end effect. One child used the packet as a paint brush and created an interesting effect swirling the paint on the paper.



Some children were excessive as usual and just could not help themselves. They smeared and painted with the packet until their page was completely saturated with paint! I did try and prevent this especially at the beginning of the activity, but towards the end I let them 'experiment' with the packets and paint. It is good to suggest the painting is complete before the paper is so wet it actually tears when you lift it and offer the child a new piece of paper to create another picture  
Once the art works were complete, I stapled the packet to the painting. The boys enjoyed this as much as the girls. I did this activity with the 3 1/2 to 5 year olds but the toddlers would manage it with ease too  
As it's a fairly messy activity I covered the table with newsprint before we started.



Hand showing packet

When the child decided to paint the packet in stripes and then use the packet as a paint brush instead of printing we got lovely rainbow paintings.



## Finger puppets

**You will need:** Cardboard, crayons, scissors and a hole punch with a large hole. Glue is optional



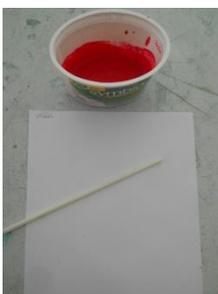
I was given some scraps of coloured cardboard and the shape of some of the cardboard was suggestive of a giraffe. I took my card making punch which punches small holes to school so we could create finger puppets. The children drew a picture and cut it out. I had to punch the holes for the children as the cardboard was too thick for the punch. If you don't have a punch you can cut small holes. Make the holes close together so the little fingers can fit in with ease. The first giraffe is mine just to show you the technique. I added some glue to the table as the children wanted to add arms and legs to their puppets.



Giraffe and tree



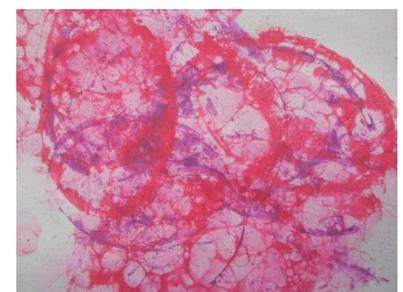
## Bubble painting /printing



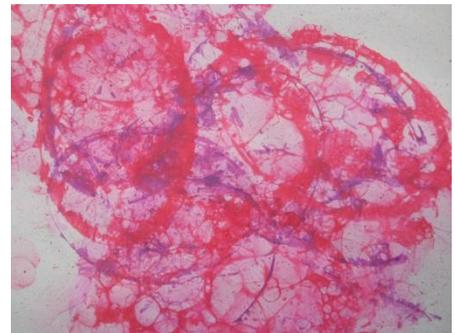
**You will need:** Straws (one per child), paper, two colours of powder paint, and containers for the paint such as yogurt containers, dishwashing liquid and a cloth to clean up.

This is a simple activity to present to the older children yet it can go quite wrong! It's really important that you get the paint and soap ratio correct. Mix a good few teaspoons of powder paint with a little liquid until it's a nice thick paste. Slowly add a bit more water and then a good amount of dishwashing liquid. You only need about 2cm of paint in the bottom of the container. **Test it out before you give it to the children!!** If there isn't enough paint the colours will be pale and if there is not enough soap then it doesn't

bubble easily.



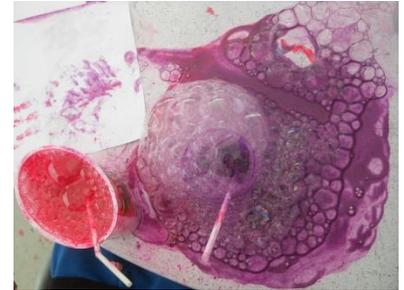
The children slowly blow into the paint until the bubbles come up above the top and then they take a print. This is



repeated till the page is filled. This activity attracted several boys who usually refuse to do the creative activity.

#### Notes:

- Some children were excessive and blew until the bubbles overflowed and made a mess. They 'forgot' to take a print!
- Some children put their hands in the paint and made a mess.
- Don't use yellow paint. It doesn't show up well.
- Rather offer a clean page when the paper is getting too wet.



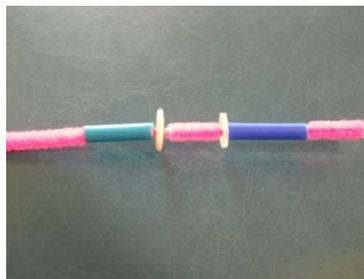
#### Buttons and Flour



This sounds like a strange combination but it was so effective. Once again I was given a few bottles of unwanted buttons (I am sure your parents can supply you with some – we all have button boxes) and school was donated a huge 25 kg bag of flour that was past its sell by date. So I combined using them.



First I offered the buttons with some cut up straws and pipe cleaners and the children threaded the buttons to make bracelets and necklaces. Pipe cleaners are great for this activity as they don't need a needle. One of the boys asked me to tie his bracelet on his ankle to make a cool ankle bracelet. He is a very popular boy so it wasn't long before I had several boys happily threading to make cool ankle bracelets. There was some great fine motor and eye hand coordination happening. You could encourage threading in a pattern. I used a sticky label to label the bracelets.



#### Flour and buttons



Later in the day I put the buttons out in a completely different context. I gave each child a plastic ice cream lid (mainly to contain the flour) and the buttons were freely available to make patterns and pictures. Simple as this activity is it attracted a lot of children and kept many of them very happy for up to an hour. You do need to stay close to supervise but in general there were few disputes. I topped up the flour as we went along. It



is a bit messy but cleans up easily. I did this outside so it wasn't an issue. The children loved scooping up the flour

and looking for 'special' buttons. For Grade R children encourage the children to draw the first letter of their name and fill it in with buttons. I don't suggest you change this to pasting buttons to paper as the buttons don't stick.



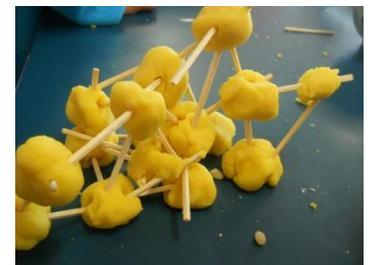
### Literacy idea

Our school recently purchased a rather expensive set of words with pictures. I think they are super but it is something you could easily make especially using the theme words.



### Fun with playdough

This was an interesting activity that either appealed a lot or not at all to the children. I set out the play dough and some matches and showed the children how to make small balls of dough and join them together with matches. It was quite challenging to work out how to create 'balance' and support so that the whole structure did not collapse. This is definitely a grade R or last year of preschool activity.



## The 16 Habits of Mind

This is a very interesting article and something to think about as you come to the end of another year of teaching. What sort of learners do you want to develop to cope with the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

Thinking dispositions offer a framework for learners of all ages to decide how they can **behave intelligently** when facing many choices, when stuck, when planning a complex task, when working collaboratively or when needing to tackle a new challenge. They provide a framework or compass for students to refer to when needing to direct the next steps in their learning. They remove dependency on the teacher and overtime become internalised, habituated approaches to taking the lead in one's own learning even when the way forward is not clear or is in unfamiliar territory.

The 16 Habits of Mind, developed by Prof Art Costa and Dr Bena Kallick are the characteristics found in independent, self-directing learners. <http://www.artcostacentre.com/html/habits.htm>

*"Habits of Mind are the characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions of which are not immediately apparent." (Prof Art Costa)*

Even if you are already highly successful in life and teaching, just one or two new ideas can make a huge difference to some of the learners in your classroom.

The 16 Habits of Mind identified by Costa and Kallick include:

- Persisting
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Managing impulsivity
- Gathering data through all senses
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Creating, imagining, innovating
- Thinking flexibly
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- Taking responsible risks
- Striving for accuracy
- Finding humour
- Questioning and posing problems
- Thinking interdependently
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Remaining open to continuous learning

Happy teaching

Regards Karin



## i AM IN PRESCHOOL

I am not built to  
sit still,  
keep my hands to myself,  
take turns,  
be patient,  
stand in line,  
or keep quiet  
all of the time.

I need:  
motion,  
novelty,  
adventure,  
and to  
engage the world with my whole body.

## LET ME PLAY.

(Trust me, I'm learning!)