

Preschoolers Take Tech Outdoors

“Look at this rock. It has sparkles!”

“Hey, I found a rock with white lines.”

“My rock is shaped like a heart.”

As the snow melted and spring returned, the preschoolers enthusiastically noticed changes in the natural materials on the playground. They discovered rock formations and compositions. Their consistent, serious interest in rock collecting led to a weeks-long study of using natural materials to create works of art. The teacher integrated technology use into the study to enhance and expand learning opportunities.

Why integrate technology and interactive media?

The intentional use of technology and interactive media can extend and enrich the curriculum. Children can learn about people, information, and experiences that might otherwise be inaccessible. They can learn to use new tools to observe more closely, reflect on their work, share ideas with others, and

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learn about other perspectives. Each child learns differently, so providing a range of learning options ensures learning for all.

Natural art exploration

- 1. Discuss the activity at circle time.** Introduce the environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy, the concept of “temporary art,” and the steps involved in the exploration.
- 2. Explore websites.** Share previewed websites that include an opportunity to see the artist, examine his artwork, and hear him speak about his work.
- 3. Create temporary works of art.** Invite children to gather and then use natural materials such as rocks, flowers, twigs, and grass.
- 4. Document work.** Have children use a digital camera or tablet to photograph, either independently or with an adult, their temporary art.
- 5. Share images and inspiration.** Plan time for children to share photos of their temporary art at circle time. They can explain their thinking, what inspired their work,



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and learn about the viewpoints and works of others in the group.

During this activity

- One child thoughtfully balanced larger rocks as bases for smaller rocks. He was inspired by the complexity of the work he viewed. After his work got too high and tumbled, he used photos of an earlier stage of construction as references to recreate it.
- Another child was inspired to create a circular enclosure with a surprise hidden inside. When it came time to photograph her sculpture, she learned

about taking photographs from different angles so she could document her interest in both the circle of rocks and the objects inside.

- The children used a tablet to document their work. This made photos and documentation available immediately for review and group discussion.

Each child's individual needs are addressed by creating art that reflects unique interests and abilities. Their perspectives and individual artistic styles become visible through their documentation and explanation.

To extend the experience, use children's dictated comments to create a display—real and/or virtual. Share the display with families and others in the community. This can inspire new creations with natural materials, both temporary and permanent. **TYC**

Vocabulary

Temporary, permanent, natural, stability, balance, center, angle, inspired, arrangement

Questions

Use these questions to get children thinking about this technology activity.

1. Why would some natural artworks be temporary?
2. What natural materials would you use to create a temporary artwork?
3. How did we use technology to learn about Andy Goldsworthy?
4. How did you use technology in your work?

Andy Goldsworthy resources

Book *Andy Goldsworthy: A Collaboration With Nature*

KQED www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4157

Creativity Fuse www.creativityfuse.com/2010/10/andy-goldsworthy-sublime-and-beautiful-environmental-art

K-6 Art www.k6art.com/2012/08/19/andy-goldsworthy-art-in-the-garden



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