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GREGORY GRAMBO

SANDCASTING

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Sand Casting

Sand casts bring visual and tactile information about the seashore into the classroom even if your school is not near a beach. The following methods combine art and science to help children understand the sea. If the beach is nearby, allow students to find a small spot on the shore dotted with interesting objects such as small rocks, shells, and weeds. Place wood around this spot in a 30-cm square to form a frame. Pour wet plaster into the frame until it is 5 cm deep. Allow to dry. Or, have students collect objects as they walk along the beach. After discussing the various finds, ask one student to dig a small hole in the sand. Have students place some of their objects into the sand, and fill the hole with wet plaster to a depth of 5 cm. Allow to dry and remove by digging the sand away from the cast.

In many areas of the country, going to the shore is impossible. Try bringing the beach to your students. Bring some sand, assorted shells, rocks, and other shore items into your classroom. Discuss objects found on the beach. Have students choose objects to place in a box of sand 5 cm deep. Pour wet plaster on top until the box is filled. Allow to dry and rip off the sides of the box to remove the sand cast.

Brush off the excess sand and you've created a replica of the beach. Gregory Grambo, science teacher, The Louis Armstrong Middle School, East Elmhurst, New York.

Popcorn Science

Popcorn provides a dramatic demonstration of volume change. Although not a true lesson in density, it helps children get a feel for the concept. Students begin by determining the starting mass and volume (approximately 125 mL of corn for 10 students). Have students predict the final volume. After popping the corn, each student takes a scoop with a 250 mL cup. Keep count and record the total number of

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