

Creating Spaces for Playful Inquiry

Thinking with Charcoal

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How do authors and illustrators use charcoal to amplify their messages or metaphors?

What experiences might students have had with charcoal?

What connections might they make?

How can you use an eraser with charcoal to play with the ideas of dark and light?

What different textures can you create by using charcoal?

What is the language of charcoal?

Quelle est la langue du fusain?

What ideas and metaphors do you think of when working with charcoal?

What colours live inside of black?

Quelles couleurs retrouve-t-on dans le noir?

What words can you think of to describe the values you find?

What can charcoal do?

Qu'est-ce que le fusain peut faire?

Actively engage with the material and its different forms.

What do you notice?

What do you wonder?



Watch this video of a dancer playing with the material of charcoal.

What is your reaction?

How does this challenge you and your thinking?

Using the large piece of paper posted on the wall, play with the idea of a more embodied experience with charcoal.

About the material of charcoal:

Charcoal is a form of carbon and is a solid or residue made through the process of pyrolysis. Pyrolysis is the heating of an organic material with the absence of oxygen. It is considered a thermochemical decomposition process involving changes in both chemical composition and physical phase and is irreversible.

Charcoal comes in different hardnesses and forms.

Charcoal is a naturally occurring material. Graphite is also a naturally occurring material and is a carbon-based mineral found in some rocks.

Natural charcoal sticks

Compressed charcoal sticks

Charcoal pencils

Kneadable erasers

Gum erasers

Textured paper

Spray fixative

Stumps, tortillons, tissue (for blending)

Resources:

The Art of Land-based Early Learning (Volumes 1 & 2) by Sophie Anne Edwards

The Organic Artist by Nick Neddo

The Language of Art by Ann Pelo

(Chapter 6 – Growing a Culture of Inquiry Through Art)

A selection of picture books with charcoal, graphite or similar looking illustrations:

Wave by Suzy Lee

The Storm by Akikdo Miyakoshi

The Tea Party in the Woods by Akiko Miyakoshi

Jumanji by Chris van Allsburg

Zathura by Chris van Allsburg

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi by Chris van Allsburg

The Arrival by Shaun Tan

Small Things by Meg Tregonning