CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL DISPLAY

A Guide for Teachers and for Teacher Training

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CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL DISPLAY

This booklet is intended to be of interest to teachers and teacher trainers. Its objectives are to:

- create increased awareness of display possibilities;

- develop the skills of teachers in display techniques;

- motivate and inspire teachers to create displays and use them effectively for educational, management, and other purposes;

- reflect on how classroom display can be used to promote active learning.
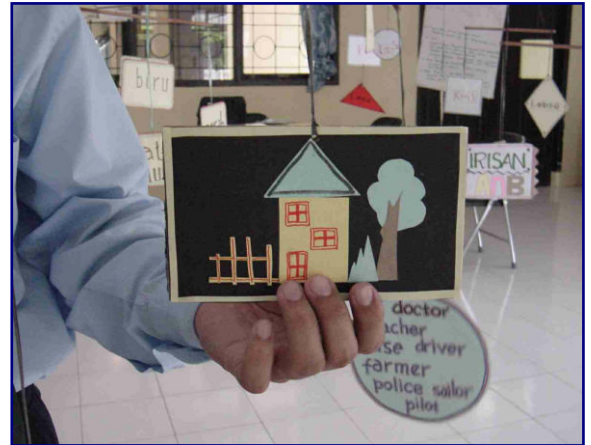
In a training workshop environment, the subject of classroom displays could usefully be the subject of a brainstorming activity in groups.

Groups could be set the task of coming up with as many answers as they can think of to the following questions. *(Groups could report back to a plenary session, if appropriate. The Guidance Notes can then be used by the facilitator to fill gaps in knowledge and provide additional ideas and inspiration!)*

- Why are there so few displays in school classrooms?

- How many **_reasons_** can you think of for making classroom displays?

- How many display **_surfaces_** and display **_methods_** can you think of?

- How many **_places_** can you think of for displaying **_pupils'_** work?

- What "tips" can you think of for successful and effective class display?

- How can classroom display be used to promote active learning?

For workshop use, this set of questions is reproduced as a **_Handout_** (See the last page of these Guidance Notes for a photocopy master).

Display Examples from Turkish Schools
Can they inspire you to produce even more-spectacular displays?

Some Reasons for Making Displays

- Displays can be merely decorative. They can make the classroom brighter, and a more interesting and stimulating place. This, in itself, can have a direct impact on pupil motivation and thus on pupil learning.

- Display materials can include useful **_direct_** teaching aids (see photo), such as anatomical models, number lines, and letters of the alphabet. They can help to make the teacher more effective.

- Display materials can include **_supplementary_** teaching aids that simply **_enrich_** or **_reinforce_** what is being taught, helping to bring the subject "to life". If a foreign country was being studied as part of "geography", a display might include pictures of the people and their costumes, famous landmarks, and so on.

- Displays can take the form of useful reference material, to support pupil learning: such as letters of the alphabet and "number lines".
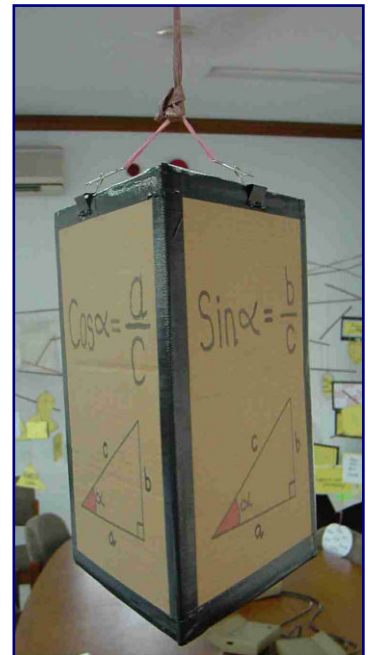
- Display material can include information that it is important for students to memorise: such as number tables, formulae (see photo), spellings and other important factual information. The display material can be used for "drills". Students will also tend to learn the material, simply because it is displayed and there to look at.

- Displays can be used to "set the scene" for a new teaching topic. The teacher can put some stimulating material on display to promote pupil interest in a topic that is going to be taught. If the theme was "volcanoes", some interesting pictures and diagrams about volcanoes might be displayed before the teaching begins: perhaps even several days before, not just immediately before the lesson.

- Displays can form the central basis of a piece of class work or a topic. They can be a means of reporting on, and recording, the work that has been undertaken. For example, the title of a display might be "What we did in Science".

- Displays can be **_part_** of some ongoing work. For example, if metamorphosis is being studied, a display might include an aquarium with tadpoles. The growth of tadpoles can be monitored and recorded on graphs that form part of the display.

- Displays can be used to stimulate and create pupil interest. Books might be displayed on a shelf, and opened at an interesting page (see photo), to encourage pupils to read. A "nature table" is another example of a display to create interest.

- Displays can be used to provide students with something extra to do, in spare moments. A "puzzle of the day" would serve this purpose well. Few students will be able to resist trying to solve it!

- Displays can be used to promote class management. They can include lists of routines, responsibilities, tasks, and rules. They can include directions, labels, and instructions.

- Displays can form part of record keeping. They can be used to record pupil and class progress, and topics covered. They might also record student awards, such as "gold stars" and bonus points.

- Displays can be used to communicate to others what the class is doing. This can include other students from a different class, other teachers, the principal, official school visitors, parents, and members of the local community.

These display shelves were improvised from scrap box lids of cardboard boxes that had previously contained photocopying paper.

The Display of Pupils' Work:

- The display of pupils' work is an aspect of display that is so important that it deserves special consideration. It is a powerful way of showing pupils that their work is valued. It creates a sense of achievement. It can vastly enhance pupil motivation.

- The display of pupils' work needs to be approached sensitively. It is important that some students do not feel excluded or failures because their work is not displayed. It should be a target to ensure that all students have a piece of their work on

display somewhere. This can be achieved by having an "all class" display that includes one piece of work from each student, or a space for each student to display his or her best piece of work.

- Displays should celebrate effort, as well as perfect work.

- Displaying pupils' work can help pupils to appreciate their own work and the work of others.

- In most cases, pupils' work should be displayed with their names visible – so that they receive recognition.

- Pupils' displayed work should always have a name on somewhere, (even if at the back) so that the teacher knows to whom it belongs: when it is marked, when it is returned, or stored for record purposes.

- Older pupils can be involved in putting up displays themselves. But they will need to be taught how to do this well, and some supervision will be necessary. This can be labour saving for the teacher. It can also increase students' sense of ownership and pride in the display. Pupils will also be able to contribute their own ideas to making a creative and stimulating display.

Display Surfaces and Display Methods

The purpose of this section is to help teachers and trainers to think creatively about the possibilities that exist, or can be created, for classroom displays.

Most classrooms, but not all, will have a notice board or display board that can be used for classroom display. But teachers should not make the mistake of thinking that a display or notice board is the only place for classroom
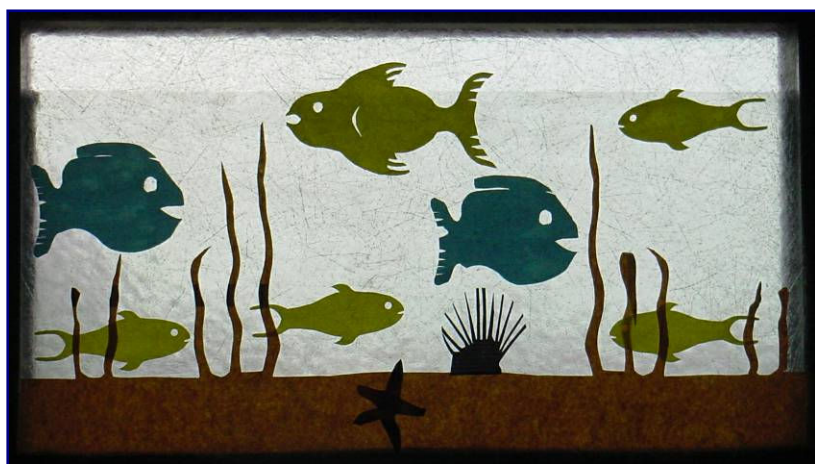
display. All of the following are potential display surfaces:

- Walls – especially if special adhesive is used which does not damage painted surfaces.
- Windows (see photo examples on previous page).
- The Ceiling – from which displays can be suspended e.g. as mobiles (as in the photo on this page).
- The Floor.
- Windowsills.
- Shelves.
- Cupboard tops.
- Backs/sides of cupboards.
- Backs of bookcases.
- Tables.
- Boxes.
- Chests.
- String "washing" lines (see the photo on Page 9 for an example).
- Display stands (which can be improvised from many things).

Where Displays can be Made

These Guidance Notes are mainly concerned with display in the classroom, but it is worth thinking about where else displays can be made - especially of pupils' work as a way of giving praise and credit and promoting motivation.

Other good places can include:

- Corridors, verandas, and staircases (as in this photo example).

- The reception area.

- The school library.

- The school dining area.

- The staff room. (Even though students do not themselves usually use the staff room, it will be a source of great pride to them if they know their own work is thought worthy enough to be displayed there).

- The headteachers/principal's room.

- Another school: perhaps even an exchange of pupils' work from a school in another country!

- Some other public place (this can be extremely motivating) such as a local library, community hall, or hotel, or other government building, such as a hospital.

- It might even be possible to get some pupils' work published. For example a story or poem in a local/national newspaper, or the newsletter of some local society.


Some Miscellaneous Classroom Display Tips

- Change displays regularly, to maintain interest and freshness.

- Displays need maintenance. Keep up running repairs if things come loose, or damaged, or untidy.

- Encourage students to bring in interesting pictures and objects to add to displays.

- If the display is aimed at the class, think about the eye level of students, including when they are sat at their desks. This is not the same as adults. This should influence the height of displays.

- Give displays titles. Include explanations and other signposts (such as pointers) if these are helpful.

- When you visit other schools and classrooms, look out for good display ideas.

- Search the Internet for classroom display ideas and help. Use key words in a search engine such as www.google.com. Try "Classroom Displays" as your key words. This will yield many results.

- Arrows for pointers can be cut from paper. It is easier to create symmetrical arrows if the paper is folded before it is cut (see illustration). Several arrows can also be cut at once.

Fold line
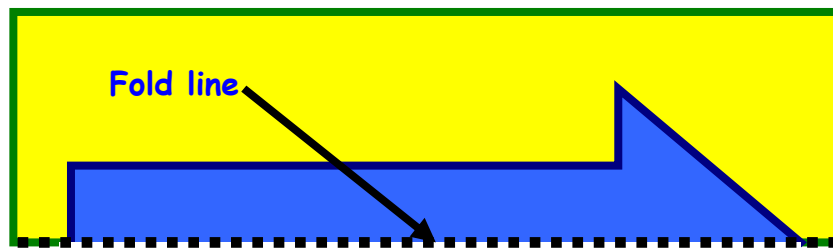
- Another good way to create pointers on a display is to use coloured string or wool connected between two drawing pins (see illustration).

Fin

Pointer, created with two drawing pins and coloured string or wool
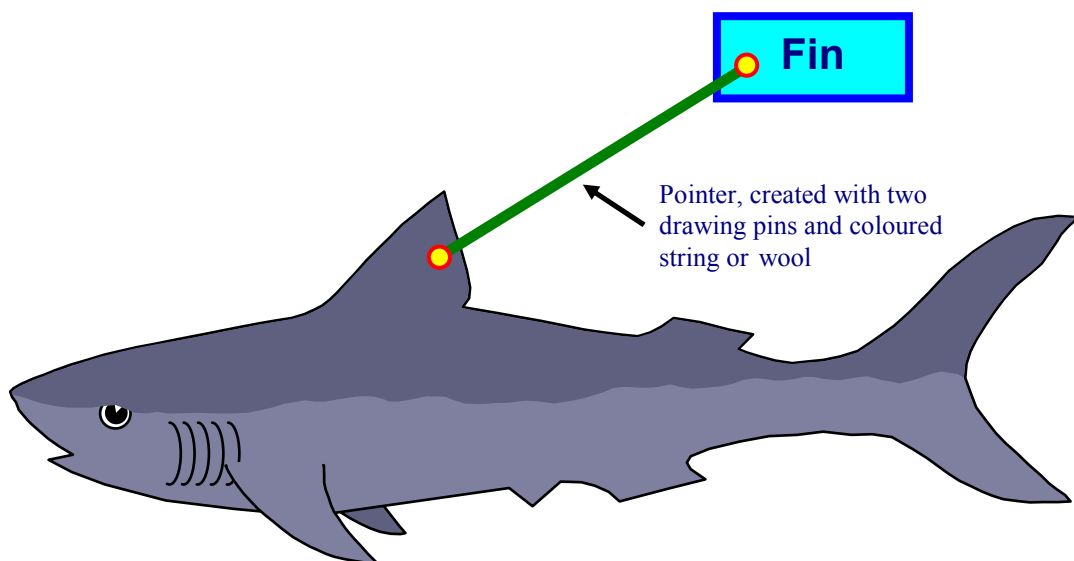
- A good way of making displays when wall space is limited is to hang display materials from a string line, attached with pegs or clips:
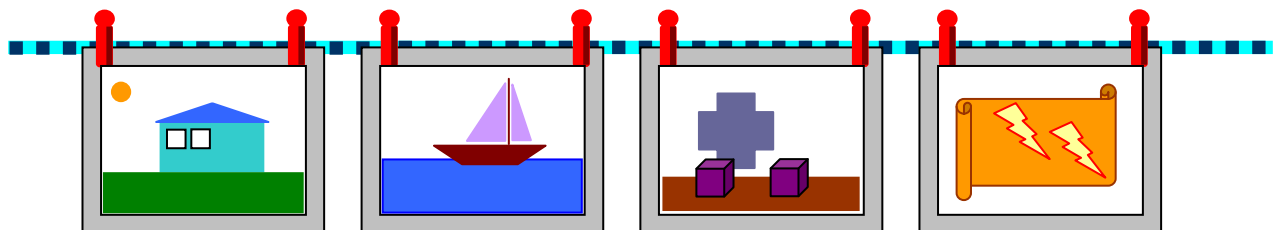
- Raffia or binder twine is an excellent material to use as the line, as it can easily be spread wide enough to use staples, saving the need to use pegs or clips. (Raffia has been used in the photo example of this display technique).

- When preparing hand-written titles and labels for displays, use guidelines (or stencils if these are available and suitable). Draw guidelines faintly in pencil and rub out afterwards. Measure carefully. See the analysis on the next page for suggestions about proportions of letters.

- If preparing titles and labels by computer, choose an appropriate font. Young children will find some fonts easier to read than others. Of the two examples on the next page, "Comic Sans MS" is better for young children than "Arial". When choosing a font to use with young children, look in particular at the letters "g" and "a". Use a font where these letters are shaped liked the hand-written form of these letters:
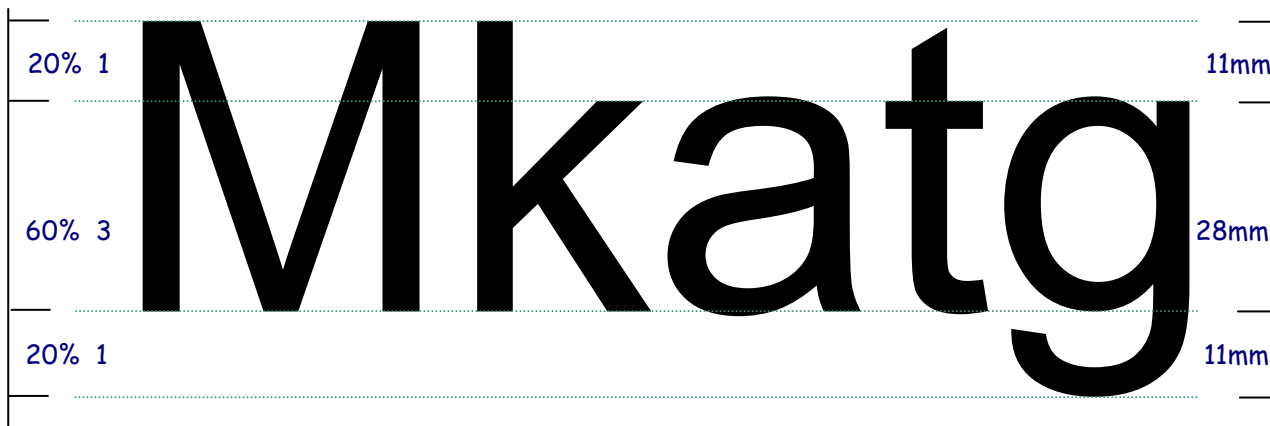
a   and   g   ✓

and not: a   and   g   ✗

An analysis of the proportions of two font types:

Arial: total letter span (highest point to lowest point) = <u>**50 mm**</u>

20% 1

60% 3

20% 1

Mkatg

11mm

28mm

11mm

Comic Sans MS: total letter span (highest point to lowest point) = <u>**50 mm**</u>

25% 1

50% 2

25% 1

Mkatg

12mm

26mm

12mm

Additional observations:

In some lettering styles, the height of capital letters is very slightly smaller than the height of tall lower case letters. (The Comic Sans MS style is an example).

The lower case letter "t" is an odd letter. It is slightly less tall than all other tall lower case letters (such as "b", "d", "k", etc).

- Use strong, contrasting, colours for display.

- A "colour wheel" is a useful reference tool for designing colour schemes:
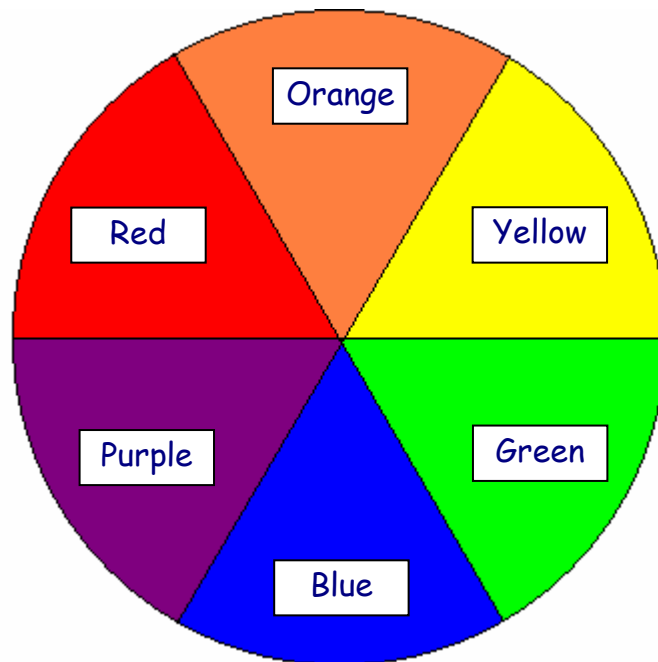
It can be used in several ways. It helps to identify "opposite" colours: those that will give a good contrast. "Yellow", for example, is the opposite of "Purple". If the predominant colour in a display were "Orange", then "Blue" would make a good contrasting colour for the background.

If it is wished to create "harmonies" – colours that seem to go together - choose any two or three neighbouring colours on the colour wheel.

An effective colour scheme, which provides both "harmony" and "contrast", based on three colours, is the use of any two neighbouring colours with any one contrasting colour: for example – blue, purple and yellow.

- **_Dark backgrounds_** often work best, especially if the material being displayed comprises drawings, text, or pictures on **_white paper_**.

- Decide on a **_scheme_** for the alignment and arrangement of display material. If display items are of different sizes, they can be aligned along a **_top edge_**, or a vertical or horizontal **_line of symmetry_**. Symmetrical arrangements are often effective. The following page provides a few examples.
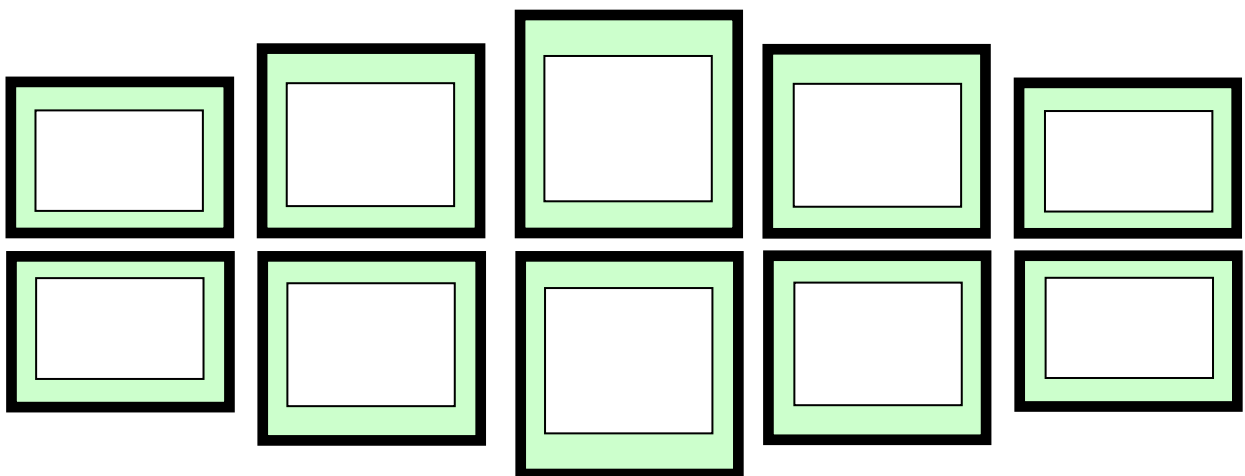
Example Layouts:

Display material of different sizes aligned with a top edge, and arranged with a vertical line of symmetry:
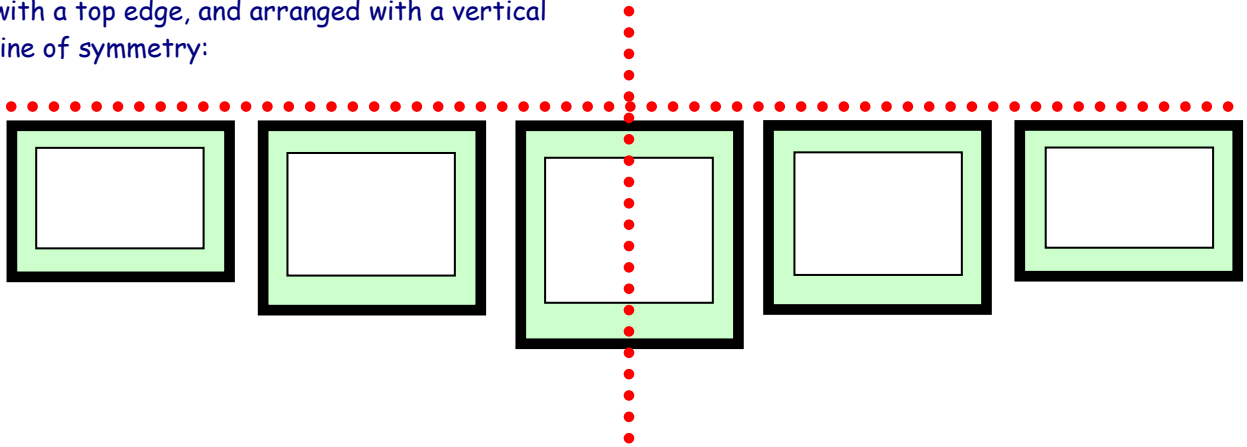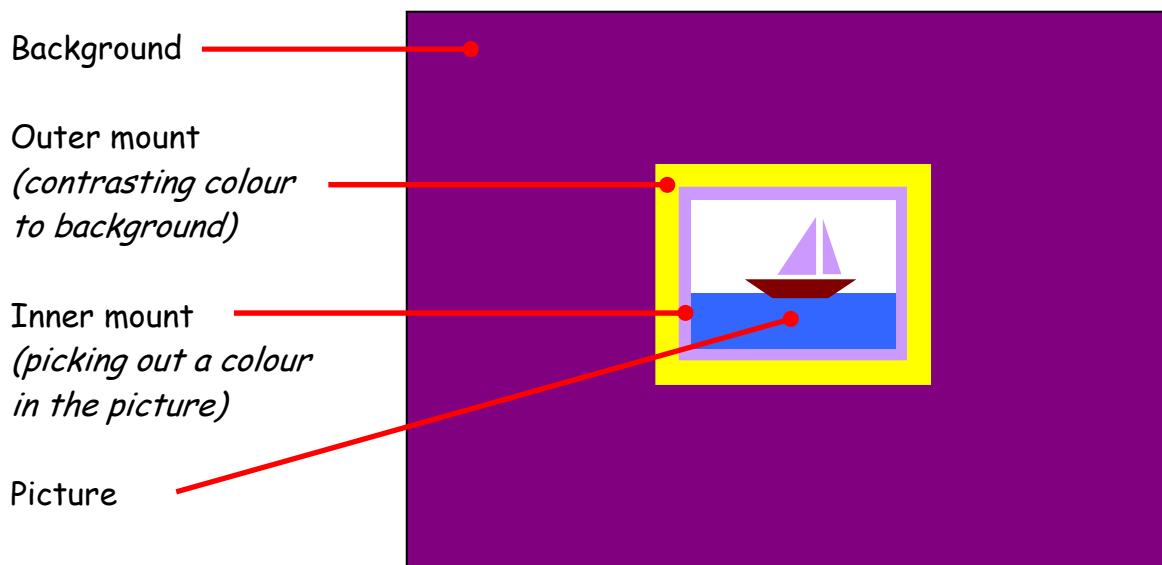
Display material of different sizes aligned along vertical and horizontal lines of symmetry:
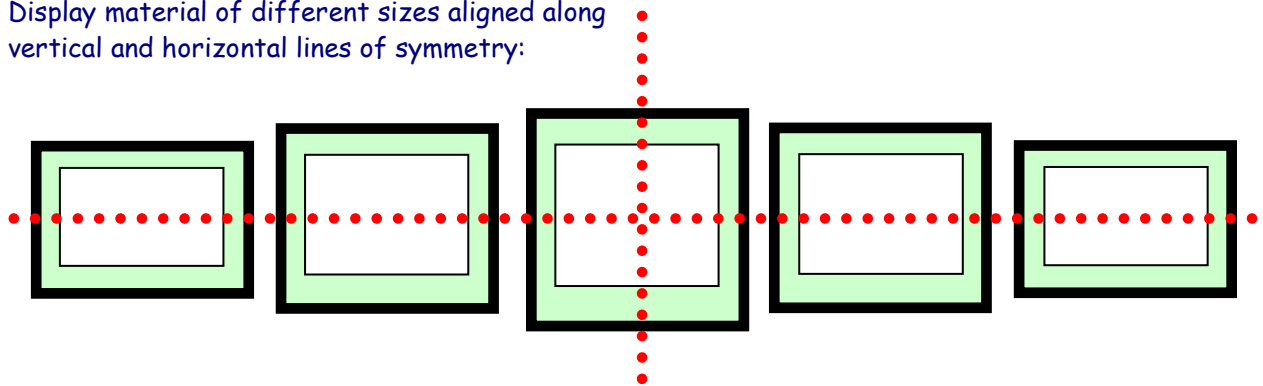
Another symmetrical display:

- Double mounting display material can add greatly to its visual impact:

Background

Outer mount
(contrasting colour
to background)

Inner mount
(picking out a colour
in the picture)

Picture

- A cheaper (and quicker) way of creating mounting effects is to draw borders with pens.

In this example, the picture
has been given a border with
a thick, dark blue, marking pen
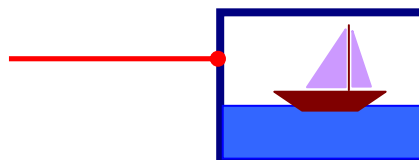
Another excellent and cheap way of achieving border effects is to stick narrow strips of contrasting coloured paper around the edges of pictures. If reels of crepe paper are available (i.e. the type used as "streamers" for parties and Christmas decoration), these can also be used to create powerful border and framing effects.

The photographs on the next page provide examples.

The Power of Borders to Enhance Visual Display and Add Impact and Contrast

In the photo shown at the top left, a teacher has made a very attractive display along the wall of the classroom. Unfortunately the impact of the display is lost completely as a result of white paper being displayed on white walls. The display is hardly visible from a distance.

In the photo shown at the top right, wooden display rails have been used effectively to provide a frame in which to set off displays attractively.

However, as the six examples shown below confirm, wonderful contrasts can also be achieved by using brightly coloured borders and without display rails. It is not even necessary to mount work on expensive coloured card. Borders have been made with strips of coloured paper.
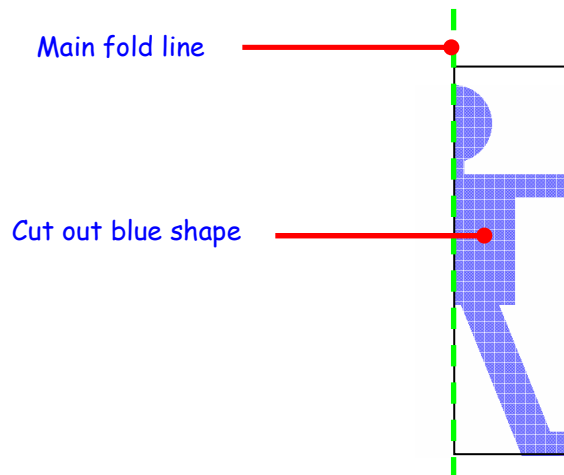
- Borders for the display area itself can also be created using repeat motifs.
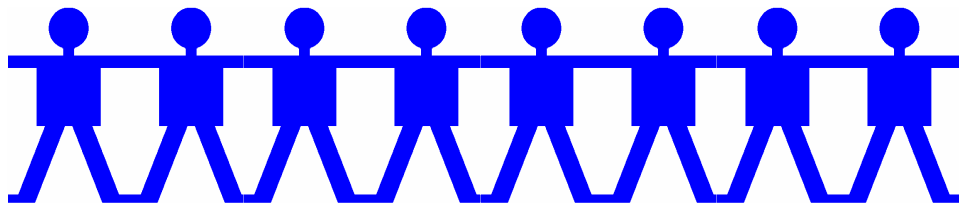
  These can be cut from folded paper (as a paper chain):

  For example:

  fold a long, thin, piece of paper into half; half again; and half again; and then cut out the following shape:

Main fold line

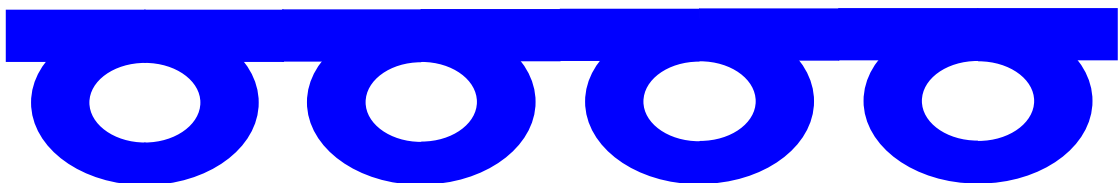Cut out blue shape

This pattern is produced: -

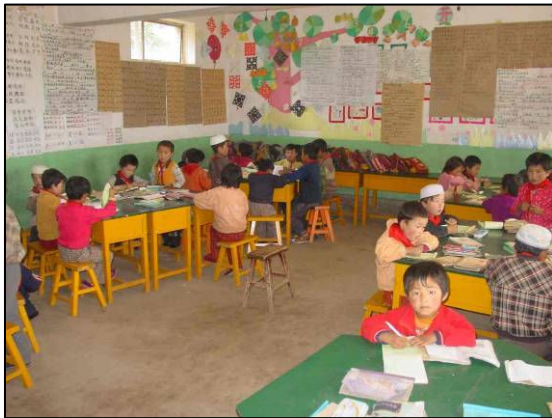

This shape:

Produces the following pattern:

And so on.

Stencils could also be used, or a repeated shape produced by photocopying.

# More Examples of Effective Display:

[These examples are from China. Notice the display of students' work and how some of the display goes beyond the decorative – to include teaching material]

Outdoor Display

The photographs below highlight the contribution outdoor display can make to creating a welcoming, attractive, and child friendly learning environment.

This kind of school decoration can often be approached as a community initiative. Parent or local businesses may be able to donate the paints. It might also be possible to use the services of a community artist.
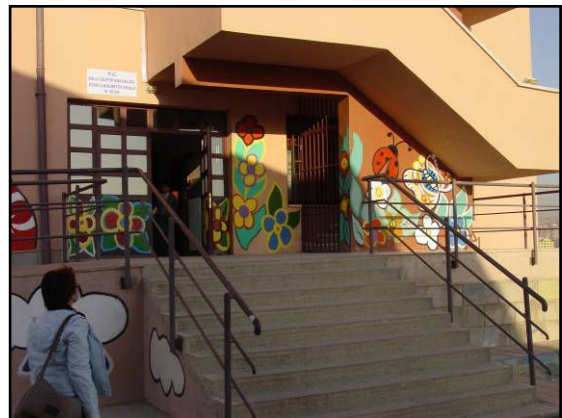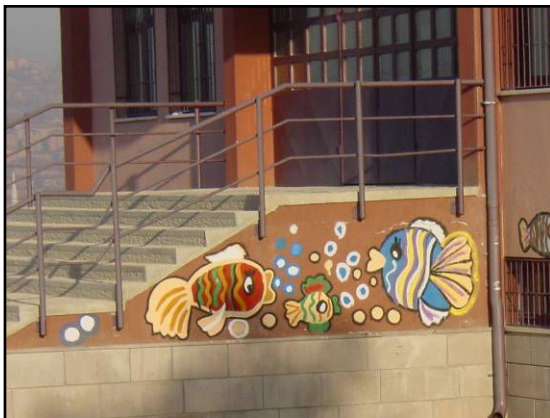
Improvising when Display Materials are Scarce

Most teachers will be confronted by a scarcity of display materials and it will probably be necessary to improvise. Here are a few ideas.

- Discarded packaging is a good source of potential display material. The **_inside_** surfaces of most packaging materials usually have no printing on them. Yet the card itself may well be of high quality. Packaging of this kind can make good material for artwork and display, if opened up carefully and cut and used appropriately.

- Make a display of interesting found objects.

- Create artworks, e.g. collages, from found material. Effective glue paste can be made from flour and water.

- Try to find a local printer. The printer will probably be willing to donate card and paper "off-cuts" for school use.

- Try to find a local timber merchant, factory, or carpenter that produces wood "off-cuts". Again, it is likely that scrap material will be made free to a school. Wood off-cuts can make good display boards and also serve as surfaces for painting and decorating. Smaller, interesting, wooden shapes can be used to create collages and sculptures.

- Investigate other factory sites that produce waste material. Pieces of cloth, leather, plastic, tinfoil, etc. All materials of this kind have tremendous potential for use in creative display.

- Write to some of the major national and multinational companies, and explain that the class is doing a topic on a related theme. Request that they try to send you some free material for use in a display. Most, if not all, of these companies will do their best to respond favourably. Some companies will even have a dedicated educational adviser and education resource section to help in this way. Many teachers will be amazed to discover what companies will be willing to send for free, and will probably wonder why they never wrote before! Writing to companies can also be a good "real life" exercise and experience for the pupils themselves. This can have educational value in itself.

Here are a few examples of the types of companies that could be approached together with a suggested display/topic theme.

Company:	Display/Topic Themes:
Oil and Oil Exploration Companies.	Rocks and Minerals, oil exploration; the story of oil.
Motor manufacturers.	Transport.
Footwear manufacturers.	The story of leather; footwear; sport.
Food manufacturers.	
Banks.	Banking services; the economy.
Timber manufacturers.	Furniture, wood processing, different types of wood.
Food manufacturers.	The story of chocolate, cocoa; coffee, tea etc.
Clothes manufacturers.	Fashion, costume.
Insurance Companies.	The story of insurance.
Electricity generation companies.	The story of electricity.

What other ideas can you suggest? This might be a good workshop "brainstorming" activity. Try looking through a magazine, newspaper or phone book for more ideas.

Another workshop output could be a list of actual names and addresses of potential free sources of educational display materials.

Think, too, about the government departments (such as fisheries and forestry), museums, national foundations and charitable trusts that might also be sources of free educational material.

Remember, too, that if any of the material sent to you does not prove suitable for display in the way intended, it can still be used in other ways.   The reverse sides of posters will probably be blank and can be used as drawing material. Photos from pamphlets can be cut out and used selectively. Glossy coloured material can even be cut into tiny squares and used to make attractive mosaics, and so on.

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[The next page includes a workshop handout that can be used in support of these notes, for training workshop activity. See Page 1 for further information.]

CLASSROOM DISPLAY:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why are there so few displays in most school classrooms?

- How many **_reasons_** can you think of for making classroom displays?

- How many display **_surfaces_** and display **_methods_** can you think of?

- How many **_places_** (other than the classroom) can you think of for displaying **_pupils'_** work?

- What "**_tips_**" can you think of for successful and effective class display?

- How can classroom display be used to promote **active learning**?

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