

Time Totem

This exercise encourages thinking about shared experience and individual interpretations of specific moments. Each child receives the same instructions but individual results will vary greatly.

Create a collective totem sculpture representing a specific amount of time.



It is recommended that the project is introduced by discussing how we measure and appreciate time. Get suggestions from the class.

Give each child a fist sized lump of white air-drying clay.

Give the following instructions:

“You will be timed for five minutes as you play with the clay. You can roll the clay in your hands, squeeze it, pinch it, imprint it with your fingers. Do not try and make a shape, just feel the clay.”



After five minutes STOP immediately.

Everyone should create a hole wide enough to thread the clay into a totem.



Restart the timer and give the class the following instructions:

“You will now be timed for twenty-five minutes as you paint the clay. Use the paint provided to decorate the clay with colourful patterns and designs, follow the contours of your fingers.”

Beads/feathers or any of the other materials provided can be added at this point too.

After twenty-five minutes everyone must STOP immediately.

Everyone now has a small lump of clay representing half an hour of their time and creativity.

String the individual moments together to create a large time totem.