

## Student Voice and STEM Take Away Activity

Dr Stephanie Smith

# MYSTERY BOX

This is the activity which changed my  
classroom practice.



I had a student in my Year 2 classroom who really struggled. He found all aspects of literacy challenging, and would often cry in the morning when being dropped off.

I had started running a simple play-based learning program on Fridays which included a Mystery Box activity. This little boy was immediately drawn to the recycled materials and stationary supplies associated with the activity.

He made the elephant shown above during one of the sessions, but it was 'trunk heavy' as he described it. He asked to fill the legs with something to weight them down, so we filled them with rice. On another occasion he made a set of goggles (see page 2) but it was raining outside so he covered the openings with cling wrap to stop the rain filling the cups while he was wearing them.

## Play-based Learning Activity

# LET THEM PLAY

### Instructions

Students are able to use the materials available to create anything they can imagine. They can work independently or in groups to complete this activity.



### Materials

- Gather a variety of recyclable materials for students to create with.
- Add in additional supplies like sticky tape, glue, texts and crayons.
- Added extras (I would only have a couple on offer at a time to change up the experience week-to-week) coloured paper, patty pans, glitter, foil, plastic cups, paddle pop sticks, feathers, google eyes etc.

### Extension Activities

Set a challenge for students. I would occasionally offer the option for students to participate in a challenge if they were interested.

- Build a bridge to hold a weight (an object available in the classroom to test their structure)
- Create a toy, vehicle or animal using the materials.
- Float a boat - create a boat to test on the water.

Student Voice in STEM

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**Guest: Dr Stephanie Smith**

Dr Stephanie Smith is the Manager of Learning at the Museum of Australian Democracy, Canberra. She has experience working in primary classrooms and a variety of cultural institutions across the country. Her research explores inquiry learning, professional development and play-based learning in primary settings.



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