

margarine containers to represent the flat roofed buildings of their school – and with hindsight the use of representational modelling rather than accurate scale modelling would have been as successful for the majority of these year 4 children.

We had both been enthused by a teaching pack called 'Planning for Real'

<http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/method100.htm>

Planning for Real Community Pack

Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation. Revised 1999.
Provides the materials for a group to make an adaptable 3-dimensional model of an existing or new neighbourhood.

The pack provided small models of buildings to fit on a 1:300 scale map. I initially felt I could adapt this idea and provide a net for a scale model of the school. My thinking was for the children to work collaboratively on producing several large models of the school site.

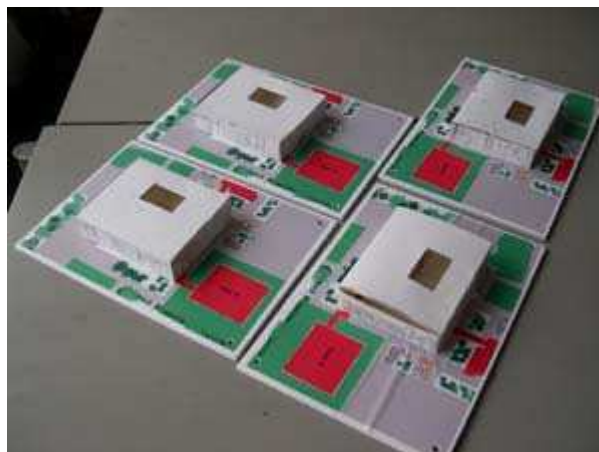
I provided the basic template of the main school building, which needed to be cut out and folded into a basic box shape. I asked the children to use photographs of the school to draw in the details on the outside of the building.

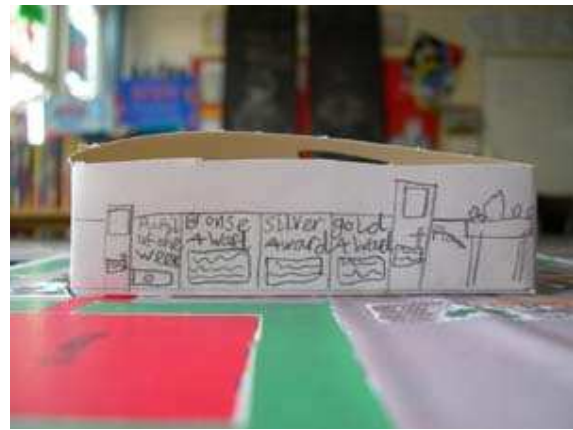
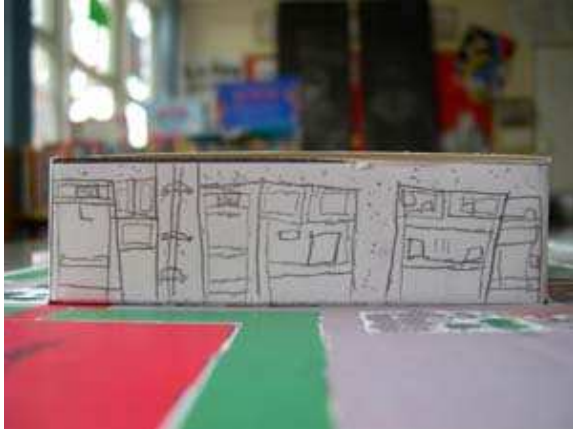
Evaluation: My thinking was far too ambitious for a number of reasons:

- the majority of the children had not developed the appropriate cognitive understanding of maps, plans and scale to enable them to understand what I was asking them to do;
- while some were able to draw the building features very successfully others did not have the close observational skills or concentration needed to complete the detailed drawing of the outside of the building;
- and many did not have the physical manipulative skills, i.e. the cutting out and precise folding skills necessary to create the finished model.

What succeeded

- A less ambitious plan for each child to create a model of the main building. This was facilitated with the provision of a printed base-map that had been coloured coded to show the school grounds.





- The drawing of details on the outside of the school building was successfully undertaken by a small number of children, mainly boys. Kev (above) chose to show an inside display wall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I would have helped more children to succeed if I had:
 - set this up as a small group activity, run over the course of one week, while other members of the class were undertaking different activities.
 - asked many of the group to create a model of the school using found materials such as margarine containers. Assembling the school model from the `net' could then have been an activity for the more able.
- A model of the school environment is a very valuable addition to help children to visualise the reality behind the map – a parent volunteer might help to create such a model.
- We need to build in lots more opportunities for drawing, model making etc. These can help develop fine motor control, greater powers of observation and concentration and the `sticking power' to sustain a project to completion. If we neglect the hands-on manipulative and drawing skills we do not help children to develop the range of competencies needed to become fully competent adults.