Brain gain

Setting the context

It's 3010 and humankind has evolved beyond all recognition. Humans are now New-Humans. They have electronically programmed joints, bullet-proof skin, computerised muscles and brains filled with nano-machines that speed up thoughts, increase memory and enhance logical thinking. Some humans even opt for expensive upgrades that improve these skills further. These are the super-logical New+ Humans. Everyone wants to be a New+ Human. Everyone that is, except the Holo Humans. They are not happy with all these level-headed enhancements. They think it is boring and insist on being upgraded with wacky, creative brain extras instead. Certain backstreet scientists will upgrade a brain with enriched creativity but it is illegal! The most infamous clinic is run by Dr Rebecca Neuron. In Rebecca's lab, a Holo Human can have a new wacky brain fitted. But it's a dangerous business...

The challenge

Dr Neuron needs to persuade the Holo Humans to visit her for a brain upgrade. Help her to create a new super brain, the Holo Brain 3000. It must be imaginative, weird, fun and creative.

Objectives

To develop decision-making skills: making choices about materials and resources that best represent an idea.
To work creatively and collaboratively to strict time limits and with limited resources.
To explore how the brain is used for original thinking, creativity, imagination and emotions as well as logical thinking.

You will need

Copies of Dr Neuron's advert for her new Holo brain from photocopiable page 22, alternatively create one enlarged version to show to the whole class; drawing materials; coloured A5 card; safe access to scissors; a variety of materials such as junk modelling material, paint, sequins, feathers, buttons, coloured pipe cleaners, balloons, colour supplements; glue and sticky tape. You will also need a visible way to count down 50 minutes such as a classroom clock, a sand timer or LDA's 'Time Timer'.

Preparation

If you choose to role play Dr Neuron for the lesson you will need to prepare your costume, for example, a futuristic-type lab coat with wires poking out of a pocket. You could even wear dark glasses or ski/welding goggles. Gather together the tools and materials for the children and place them in plastic dishes or in a central resource area. You might like to prepare a 'Holo Brain 3000' as an example for the children. Prepare a 'Levels of success' chart to display on a whiteboard or flipchart, incorporating the success criteria outlined in the 'What to do' section. The success of the Holo brain will depend on how many criteria each child includes in his/her design.

What to do

- Explain the context and problem to the children and show them photocopiable page 22.
- Tell the children that they will have 50 minutes to make a brain for Dr Neuron.
- Ask them what their Holo Brain 3000 has to include, referring back to the advert. Invite them to ask questions about the advert and then make sure that you all agree on the following success criteria for building a Holo Brain 3000. It must: