Science Grabbers
Corn Starch Putty “Oobleck”

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What You Need:
- Aluminum pie pan, shallow container, or bowl
- 1 cup corn starch
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup water
- Green food coloring
- Light plastic, metal or wooden objects
- Scissors
- Small containers to hold individual helpings of “oobleck”
- Plastic knife

What You Do:
1. Pour the cornstarch into the pie pan or bowl
2. Add water slowly and use your fingers to mix until it reaches a gooey, fluid-like consistency
3. When the mixture will pour or drip slowly from your hand but will not splatter when hit with your flat hand, the consistency is correct
4. If the mixture is too runny, add more cornstarch

What Happens:
Examine the properties of the “oobleck”. Pat it with your fingers. Pour it and cut the stream with a pair of scissors. Rub it between your fingers until it becomes powdery. Slice it in the pie pan and watch it flow back together. Roll it into a ball and watch it flatten and drip from your hand. Place a wooden, metal or plastic object on the surface and watch it sink. Strike the putty with your flat hand. Does it splatter?

Oobleck or corn starch putty has properties of both a solid and a liquid. It is a non-Newtonian fluid which means that it does not behave as a typical fluid. It will flow like a liquid but break into pieces like a solid. Even though it looks wet it becomes powdery when rubbed between fingers. It will withstand sudden shocks but will not support the weight of a light object placed on the surface. Corn starch putty expands under stress and seems to “push back” when struck with a firm blow. Its viscosity expands when stress is applied.

Oobleck can easily be recycled. Dump it on a tray or other flat surface. Let it dry for a few days. When thoroughly dry, store it in a container that allows for air flow. If you store it while wet, it will mold. The next time you want Oobleck, just add water.

Read Bartholomew and the Oobleck by Dr. Seuss to your class as you explore the properties of corn starch putty.

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