

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Visual Assignment

Have Students Build an Epidermis Model

Learning the layers of the skin and the basics of cell turnover are a fundamental part of esthetics training, but understanding these concepts can be challenging. This activity will help students visualize and understand the skin structure, epidermal cell turnover, and when and how to exfoliate and moisturize the skin.



Supplies Needed:

- Glass jar with lid such as a mason jar or pickle jar (you can purchase these cheaply at a thrift store or have students each bring in their own for this activity)
- Fake grapes (real grapes may be used but will not keep)
- Raisins
- Corn flakes

Instructions

1. Fill the jar with a layer of grapes followed by a layer of raisins and topped with a layer of cornflakes, using enough ingredients to fill the jar to the top. Secure the lid. This represents the epidermis.
2. Discuss with students what is happening in each layer:
 - Grapes—Young, hydrated cells, (stratum germinativum and stratum spinosum)
 - Daughter cells are produced
 - Process of differentiation begins
 - Raisins—Aging, dehydrated cells (stratum granulosum, stratum lucidum)
 - Cells undergo keratinization
 - Cornflakes
 - Dead, flaky cells (stratum corneum)
 - Desquamation

Information/Ideas Exchanged

- Moisturizer applied to “cornflakes” results in a mushy mess.
- Exfoliate the cornflakes first to reach the raisins and hydrate them.
- Consider what happens when raisins are rehydrated.
- Consider what happens when exfoliants are overused or never used.