Indigo Dying With Amy Deveau's Chemistry Class

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Indigo Dying with Amy Deveau’s Chemistry Class
I collaborated with several faculty during the semester to hold class “drop-ins.” These were class sessions where I worked with the professor and their class to incorporate art into the topic, including building a wave machine with physics students, mold-making with aquarium science students, exploring perception with students studying the brain, and working with marine science students on “critter collaborations” (art incorporating marine life information).

One of these “drop-ins” involved indigo dying with Professor Amy Deveau and her chemistry students.
I brought in natural indigo dye, which comes from a plant and is used to color blue jeans. The students mixed the dye with soda ash and thiourea dioxide to reduce it. Amy pointed out the difference between the molecular structure of organic and synthetic indigo.

The students used rubber bands, sticks and clothes pins to create patterns on white fabric which they then dipped into the indigo dye, observing that the green dye oxidizes and turns blue before their eyes as it hits the air.
We hung them on a line to dry, then created a fiber art installation in the main stairwell of the Harold Alfond Center for Health Sciences.