Prep Woven artworks: Term Three
How to get there. Our challenging journey.

The art lesson

1. We began by studying an expert. Looking at woven artworks and discussing how it might have been made and what it had been made from, noticing the patterns, looking closely (art appreciation).
2. We practiced the technique with paper strips on a cardboard loom (Teacher lead skill building)
3. We watched Linda demonstrating the same technique using threads and a needle only this time continuing on each row.
4. We discussed the learning pit and what to do if you are stuck at the bottom of the pit.
5. We worked hard for three art lesson using a variety of materials to weave with.
6. After the intense preciseness required for weaving, we were free to embellish our work however we wanted. (Student lead art making)
**Bounce back in action**

**The life lessons:**

*It looks like weaving when you look at our work but it’s as much about learning how to face challenges and be resilient as it is about art.*

Overheard during the prep art classes.....

**Linda**” Learning to weave can be challenge. I think you might find this art job bit hard. What are some of the things people do when they get stuck?

---

*Student responses.*

They sook.

They get frustrated.

They give up.

They muck around because they can’t do it.

They annoy their friends.

**Linda** All these things will keep you at the bottom of the learning pit and stop you from getting to the fantastic feeling you get when you achieve a super challenge like learning to weave. How can you get yourself to the top of the pit to the.... “Oh yeah! I did it!”?

You listen.

You watch.
You try.
You concentrate.
You persist.
You stop sulking.
You are positive.
If you get it, you help others.
You ask for help.
You try again next week.

Looking on the Bright Side in the face of a super challenge.

WWW What went well?

We practiced using positive thinking and positive tracking.

A snap shot of one pupil.....

**Student.** “This is going to be easy....actually it’s a bit hard. “

**Linda** “Is school usually easy for you?”

**Student.** “Yes.”

**Linda** “So I can help you learn what to do when things get hard. You are stuck at the bottom of the learning pit. (We walked over to the graphic on the wall.) How can you get to the top?”
**Student** “Keep trying, ask a friend, be patient, don’t give up try again next week “

“Hey Linda I did it!”

“Is it over or under next? This is really hard.”

“I’m an expert now, I can help my friends.” (Student led teaching)

“Hi Linda, I can’t wait for art, are we doing our weaving again? I get it now, I want to finish it. I’ve got a plan for decorating it.”

“My mum will be so proud of me”

“I’m turning my weaving onto a shield.” (Transforming ideas, student lead art making, creativity and imagination)

“I want to use the silver and gold thread but it’s really hard and a bit tricky and talks a long time.”

“I’m ready for the next super challenge, tying knots I have done my weaving, I want to learn to tie knots.”

---

At Kensington Primary School, teachers practice differentiating the curriculum, in a variety of ways, in an effort to meet the needs of all the diverse range of abilities, learning styles, personal strengths, aptitude, attitudes interests and personalities that are what makes up any group of learners. **The aim of this work is to take each student from where their skills currently are to the next step in their learning.** This is true whether the students are in a same age cohort such as the prep classes or in a multi age group such as a composite class. I would like to use the prep art lessons to
explain how this was recently achieved. The skill taught here was weaving, however with a little imagination, I hope you can transfer the approach I am outlining to any other skill your children learn here at KPS be it comprehension, writing poetry, understanding, how division works, learning an over arm throw, holding a harmony, hypothesizing, making and keeping friends etc.

1. A challenge was set and immediately supported with a conversation about “The Learning Pit” and how to meet challenges.
2. Support was offered through group demonstration, visual cues and samples, one to one direct assistance, breaking down the steps, demonstrating again in a small group setting known as a teaching clinic, using materials designed to build immediate success. (paper weaving)
3. An open ended next step….Students were encouraged to transform their paper weaving into another art work thereby taking control of their learning and creating opportunity for consolidation, exploration and extension of the skill.
4. The next challenge set. Same skill, different application, a range of materials offered ranging from hardest, silver and gold thread and wool using a needle or bodkin towards easier materials, ones more aligned to the paper weaving experience, pipe cleaners, straws and sticks. Providing for a range of successful applications of the one skill- weaving. Further demonstration and consideration and one to one and small group clinics. Students were all encouraged and supported to attempt the challenge of using the wool and needle.
5. What you can’t see from the exhibition of this art work or in your child’s work books, is the way teachers differentiate their expectations and communicate this to each child as they progress in their skill development. By the end of the first lesson in paper weaving I had a very clear picture which students needed more support, which students were needing extension and further challenges, which student were inclined to give into frustration, which ones were showing signs of patience and willingness to persist, which ones needed easier materials, which ones could use harder materials but couldn’t be bothered, so need new ways to engage with the challenge. As the classes progressed, I communicated my individuated expectation for “your next
step or challenge” and celebrated alongside the students as they each worked towards achieving their own mini goal in learning to weave. The result of this is not on the wall or in their books, but in the hearts of your children the amazing feeling of achieving a new skill, of progressing to their next step. On the spot individuation, different strokes for different folks, same skill.

Linda Weisser

Visual Arts teacher.