

TAPESTRY WEAVING PROJECT ~ ROBERT FROST SCHOOL

2 YEAR PROJECT ~ 2004 - 2006 ~ HYL A SKUDDER ~ ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE



Three third grade students weaving on the loom.

This project was started as a third grade project, and continued through 4th grade. Students learned the traditional art of tapestry weaving: working small areas of color into a detailed picture. Students voted on a theme, and worked collaboratively on the drawing, called a "cartoon" that is taped to the back of the loom as a guide for weaving. Students worked with Mrs. Skudder in small groups during recess and silent reading times.



A group working on drawing the "cartoon" for the loom.



Three friends weaving during recess.



The loom with the "cartoon" taped up behind it so students could use it as a weaving guide.



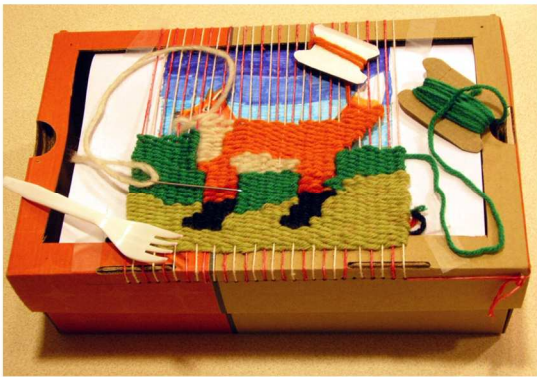
The loom with weaving about half way completed. Students did an amazing job of following their background "cartoon" faithfully.



The weaving is almost done!



Mrs. Skudder weaving with students.



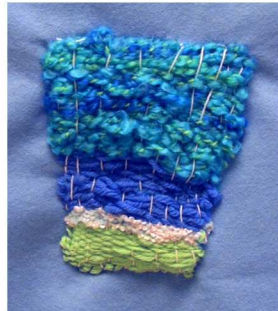
Details from students' shoebox weavings.

THE SHOE BOX WEAVING PROJECT:

Before doing the large tapestry, students first practiced their skills on small shoe box looms. This was so popular, that it continued alongside the big tapestry.



Tierra & her finished weaving.



Dwayne and his awesome turtle.



Shoe Box Weaving

A fun and inexpensive way to practice tapestry weaving is to make a shoe box loom. You can string it either horizontal or vertical. Use a craft knife to cut the center out of the lid.

MAKING THE HOLES FOR THE WARP:

To make the holes for the warp threads, draw a straight line on the edge of the box lid about an inch from the top. Mark this off at 1/4 inch intervals. Do the same on the other side. Poke holes through the lid at your marks with a nail or heavy yarn needle.



A sketch is taped behind the warp as a guide for weaving.

TIEING THE WARP ONTO THE LOOM:

You will want to use a stiff thread like packaging or garden twine for the warp. Regular yarn is too stretchy. Thread a long piece of twine onto a heavy yarn needle. Poke the needle into the first hole on one side of the box, and bring it back out the next hole. Tie a knot so the twine does not pull out. Now wrap the twine up over the top of the lid and poke the needle back into the first hole on the OTHER side. Pull through to the inside. Now poke the needle out the very next hole on that side, pull, and wrap the twine back over the top of the box lid to the side you started on. Continue in this way until all holes are strung. Tie on new string if you run out before you are done. Be sure knots are at the sides so they don't show in your weaving.



WEAVING TIPS:

Using 2 alternating colors of thread for your warp will make weaving much easier to keep track of! Or color every other one with a permanent marker.

The warp threads will pull tighter as you weave, so start by inserting a ruler under the warp at the top of the box. When you get near the top, pull it out and the warp will loosen up a bit to make weaving easier again.

WEAVING TOOLS:

There are several weaving tools that work well for small shoe box looms. Cut **small cardboard "shuttles"** and wrap them with small amounts of yarn. You can have several colors going at once. (See photos).

You can also use a **heavy yarn needle** with a long piece of yarn. This works well to get into small color areas of your weaving when a shuttle is too big to fit. You can also make your own needle by carefully drilling a hole in a **popsicle stick or tongue depressor** (careful -- they split easily!) and using a long thread. Use a **plastic fork** to pack down your weaving rows.

USE YOUR BOX TO STORE YOUR WEAVING STUFF!

MAKE A SKETCH BEFORE YOU START:

It is helpful to make a small color sketch with crayons or markers of your idea before you begin. Keep it simple! You can't get much detail on a shoe box! You can tape your sketch to the inside of the lid beneath your warp threads, so you can use it as a guide while you work (see photo at top).

Materials developed by Hyla Skudder

Tapestry Weaving Technique

THE WARP THREADS:

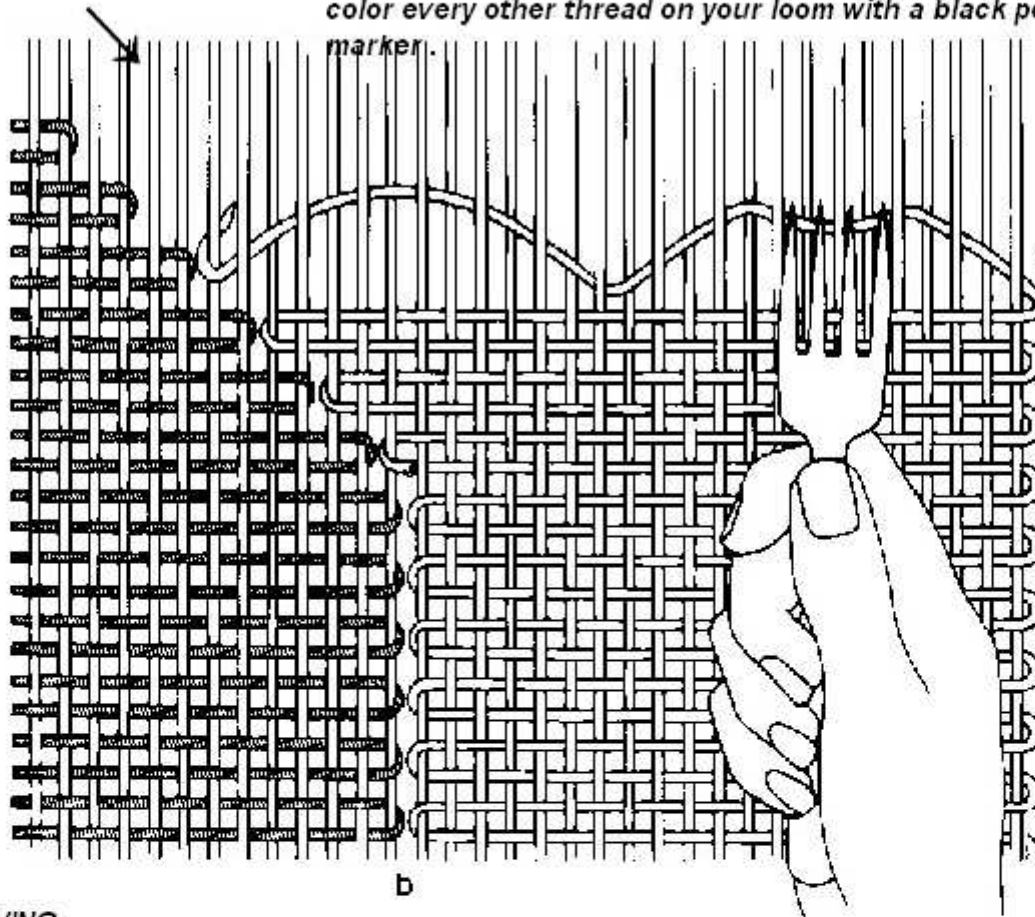
these are the up and down threads that are tied onto the loom.

HELPFUL HINT:

It is helpful to have two different colors of warp threads alternating across the loom. It is easier to remember which set of threads you are going over or under. Or you could also color every other thread on your loom with a black permanent marker.

THE WEFT THREADS:

These are the across and back yarns that you use to weave your picture with. →



← **MAKING HILLS** with the weft and packing down with the fork.

BASIC WEAVING:

Weave over and under alternating threads. When you reach the end of your row, turn around and weave the opposite way this time: under the ones you went over last time, and over the ones you went under last time. Keep changing back and forth for each row you weave.

USING THE FORK:

When you weave, don't pull the yarn tight or the edges of your tapestry will be pulled into a curve. Leave the yarn in "hills" across the warp and then gently pull it down and pat it into place with a plastic fork.

WHEN ONE COLOR MEETS ANOTHER ONE:

When one color meets another one, it turns around and goes back. In tapestry weaving you don't have to go all the way across the loom each time. You can build up single areas at a time and then fill in around them. Long vertical areas will leave "slits" that are sewed shut from the back later on. You can be using several colors at once, each on a separate needle or shuttle.

STARTING NEW COLORS:

When you start a new color, or run out of a color you are using and need to start another string, just let the last few inches of the old string hang down the back of the tapestry. It is better to end in the middle of a row rather than at the edge. The new string will start in the next slot, just as if you were continuing to weave with the old string. Let the first few inches of the new string hang down the back too. There is no need to tie a knot. After another row of weaving, you shouldn't be able to see where the old string stopped and the new string started.