



## The Beginnings of the ECF5 Atelier August - October 2021

The atelier or the studio is a place where new languages of expression are discovered, it is a place where children encounter new techniques and materials and have time and space to explore and perfect those techniques. The children in ECF5 have had a chance to work with new materials, engage in making observational drawings and get to know the room and materials that have been curated for them. At ISP we have adopted the concept of an atelier from Reggio Emilia to suit our needs and context. In addition to encountering materials and processes the atelier and myself the atelierista (an artist teacher) runs a year long project with the children.

In the 2020-2021 academic year while exploring sunflowers the children learnt a plethora of new skills, one that was brand new for most of them was hand sewing. A question a child posed in the previous academic year was - **"What else can you do with a thread?"** This question became my personal guiding question as the current year's project was envisioned. The hope was to build an atelier of weaving, this learning story takes you through the beginnings of our weaving journey.



**CHILDREN:** Brooks, Nika, Daniel.E, Daniel.G, Antoan, Juliet, Umar, Gul, David, Misa, Everly, Rozalie, Cornelia, Elizabeta, Wawrina, Abi, Patric, Natan, Isabelle, Harper, Sara-Maria, Miali, Kristian, Bjorn, Ellie, Sawyer, Gefen, Niv, George and Benji.

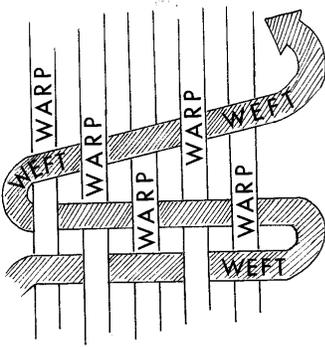
**ATELIERISTA:** Akshoya Krishnamoorthy

**PEDAGOGICAL + TECH SUPPORT:**  
Elizabet Perry

**BOOKS :** Weaving without a loom

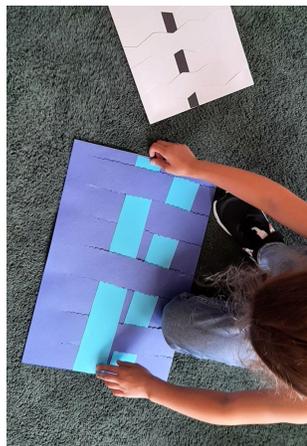
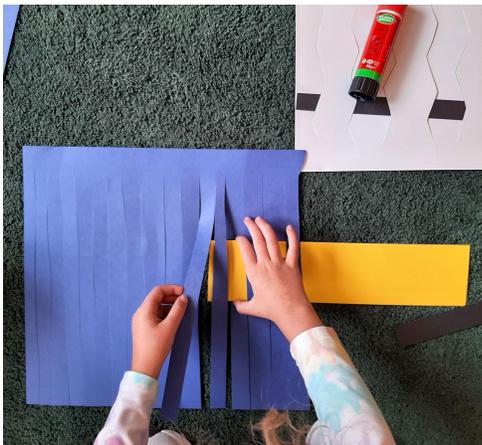
## PAPER

Sarita R. Rainey, the author of weaving without a loom, has been instrumental in the beginnings of this journey. Her book is evidence of how complex undertakings can be made accessible to children as we build their motor skills.

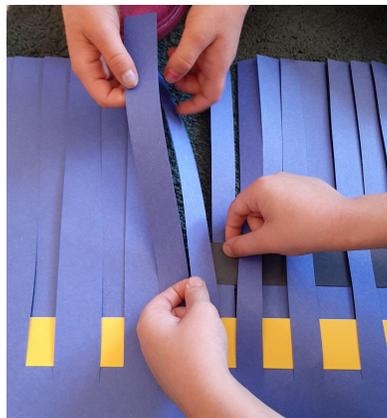


Weaving follows one basic skill going over and under the warp threads of a loom. It sounds simple but requires a lot of fine motor skill. I adopted one of the ideas from Sarita's book to begin this learning process - paper weaving. Compared to the slippery nature of yarn and how complex it can be to manipulate and maintain the over-under movement paper became an accessible way to learn the skills we needed.

We started with variations of paper cut vertically that served as our loom. Strips of paper were offered as the "weft" that could be woven into the paper looms.



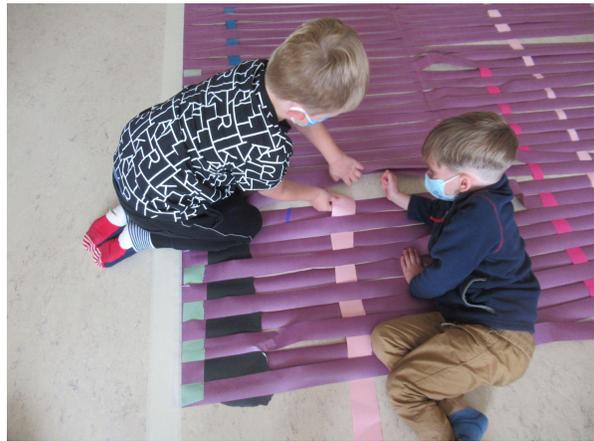
A few children soon realised it is much easier if they collaborate with a friend. One handles the warp and the other handles the wefts. Watching this collaboration unfold was beautiful to witness. I wanted to give them all an opportunity that would allow them to collaborate and work together as a team while they weave. This wish to facilitate collaboration helped me figure out the next provocation I offered.



## SCALING UP



Scale is a great way to facilitate the learning of new skills. One day the children came into the atelier and saw the image on the left. A loom this size would require them to work as a team, it would require them to think of what they are doing in relation to the large loom and how it would affect someone else who is weaving on it as well. Having spoken to the homeroom teachers I knew that the children need additional practice with cutting. Knowing this I made a decision not to pre-cut the strips of paper and offered that as a step they need to undertake. The following selection of images show the children working collaboratively on our loom.



The children were trying to use pieces of yarn in addition to paper to weave into the loom. Noticing this and knowing that yarn is too skinny for something this size I offered textile in addition to paper and yarn. Attempting to cut textile with scissors challenged what they knew about cutting a piece of paper and added to their motor skills.

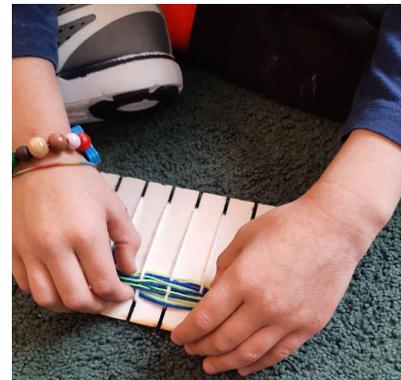
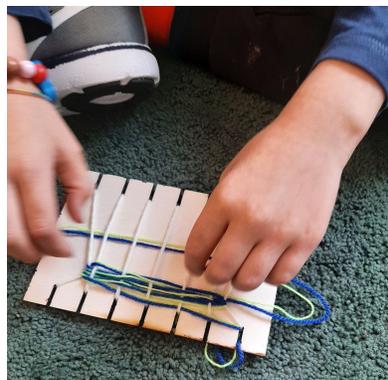
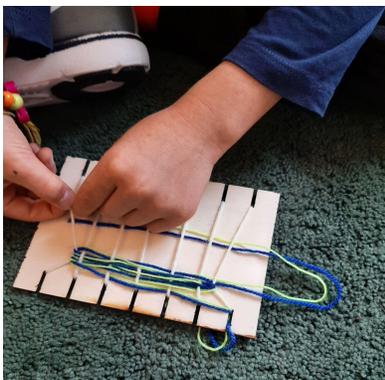


After a few weeks of weaving with mainly paper on the big loom and on the smaller pieces of paper loom it was time to offer another variation. Possibly one that would allow them to use yarn.

## VARIATIONS

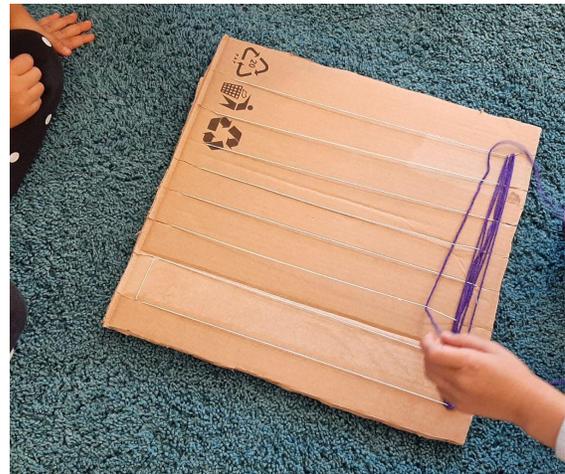
When weaving with strips of paper the children use individual strips of paper serving as wefts that get glued on to the edges of the paper loom. Although weaving with yarn is not the same. It involves knowing how to turn around at the end and weave with the yarn in the opposite direction.

I wanted to scale down this time around and give them the opportunity to weave with yarn to learn this skill. The Idea Lab at ISP and our technology coach who happens to be a weaver herself helped us out. Dr. Perry used the laser cutter in the idea lab to cut us mini handheld looms. The children took to this instantly and finally got a chance to use all that colourful yarn.





We have some beautiful examples of finished pieces and I noticed children making connections to what they were learning about patterns in math class. The ideas of how to use the finished pieces are plenty - a carpet for a dollhouse or maybe even a blanket for a hamster. As we continued working with yarn I noticed how some children loved the small laser cut looms while others found it uneasy to manipulate. Weaving on a loom with a solid back is a lot simpler when learning how to weave, so I created some weaving boards with cardboard. The children now had size variations to weave on as they worked with yarn. They have been getting creative with mixing jute ropes and textiles in addition to yarn.



## LEARNING FROM EXPERTS AND OUR FINAL SCALING UP



In addition to learning from each other, looking at the images in the books and looking at weaving samples the children have had the opportunity to watch a weaver on her youtube channel - *Spruce & Linen*. As a beginner weaver myself I find myself experimenting with my small loom and from time to time watching videos online. This opportunity to learn from a weaver online was offered to the children as well. They sometimes watch what she does as they weave on their looms in the atelier.



Finally after weeks of weaving with yarn on looms with a solid back the children were ready to take turns and weave on a loom without a solid back. The children work in partnerships and pick up where the previous group left off. This process has been recorded as a time lapse, some days we like to come together and watch the progress of the weaving.



You can watch four weeks of our weaving journey [here](#).



Learners persist with  
**relevant and rich**  
challenges.

“SO I DON’T LIKE THE PART THAT IS SO HARD, BUT THE PART I DO  
LIKE IS, IT IS SO PRETTY WHEN YOU FINISH IT”

- SAWYER (6 YEARS 1 MONTH OLD) 2ND SEPTEMBER 2021