

NIZHÓNÍGO ‘AJIIL’O

The Environment & The Five Senses: Engaging Young Minds with A Holistic  
Approach to Learning

Nizhónígo ‘AJiil’o Beautiful Weaving

Florida Peshlakai

Indigenous Early Childhood Educators Professional Development Fellowship

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## Introduction

Yá'át'ééh, my English name is Florida Peshlakai, and my Navajo name is "the girl with the long hair." I am Navajo and of the Bitterwater People clan born for the Black Sheep People. My maternal grandparent's clan is of the Near the Water clan, and my paternal grandparent's clan is the Mexican People clan. I was born in Tuba City, Arizona, and raised in Black Mesa, Arizona. My mother's family is from Black Mesa, Arizona, and my father's family is from Navajo, New Mexico. I am currently residing in Page, Arizona, where I teach preschool at Page Unified School District. I graduated from Monument Valley High School in 2011. I received my Bachelor of Psychological Sciences in 2015 and my Master of Education in 2017 from Northern Arizona University. This is my first year as part of the Indigenous Early Childhood Educators Professional Development Fellowship. My father died at the age of 5; therefore, I was raised by various mother figures, including my grandmother, aunts, and eldest sister. Of my mother's nine children, I am the third youngest. I am now a mother to a seven-year-old. Additionally, I am an aunt to ten nieces and nephews. I hope my paper provides some background information to you and can be a resource in your classroom.

## Context

### Classroom Demographic

Page Preschool is part of the Page Unified School District located in Page, Arizona. The school district services about 90 percent of Native American (majority Navajo) students. The school is right on the border of the Navajo Reservation, and Lychee (a Navajo community) is adjacent to the town. Some students travel on the bus anywhere from Inscription House, Arizona, to Coppermine, Arizona, both about an hour drive from Page.

The students at Page Preschool are mostly Navajo students (my guess would be about 96 percent Navajo), and most students are on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) with some typically developing peers. The preschool program operates Monday through Thursday. Fridays are used for planning curriculum, sanitizing, and professional development training for the staff.

There are three teachers, and each teacher holds a full-day session unless the student is three years old. The class sizes vary from 15 to 18 students each. Additionally, there are also two paraprofessionals in each classroom. The preschool program also has an outdoor classroom which the three teachers share. The outdoor classroom has been a huge asset to the program, especially during the pandemic, where outdoor class time was safer than in the building with little ventilation.

Page Preschool is a four-star rated Quality First program in our town. In-Page, we are not the only preschool; we have several churches affiliated-preschools and the Head Start program. Head Start is the free or reduced preschool in our town, so it fills up fast; we come in second in terms of cost, so we are next to fill. The church-affiliated preschools are costlier; therefore, their enrollment usually takes longer to fill.

## **Rationale**

I chose to do the lessons centered around weaving, a form of art, because we have different modes of learning, and this is one the students can do hands-on and see visually. Most importantly, weaving is becoming an extinct form of art in our Navajo culture. Learning about this art form gives the young ones an introduction and hopefully inspires them to learn more. I see this as planting a seed of knowledge to encourage them to seek additional information from their family and others.

Growing up, I participated in weaving by helping to shear sheep, cleaning, and spinning the wool. I also chose this topic because my aunt, who raised me weaves, my grandma, who also took part in my upbringing, also used to weave, and my family is known for being able to do intricate designs that only belong to our "clan" group (the Bitterwater people). This art has many childhood memories tied to it, and I wish I knew more about weaving myself, but at a young age, I was too stubborn to listen to the elders show me the art form. Now I am paying for this by trying to learn it as an adult. It is difficult to learn as an adult because I am working around my time to learn.

Most importantly, when I see rugs, I often think of my late grandmother, who used to have me sit by her loom while she weaved. She was often in deep thought, so she would give me a big lollipop to prohibit me from disrupting her as a preschool-aged child. Once the lollipop was finished, she would allow me to ask any questions I had; my questions were often not related to weaving; they were more like "I am hungry, when will we eat?," or "Can I go out to play now?"

When I think of weaving rugs, I can almost see and feel the hard work that went into its completion. I notice how much wool is used in the rug and how much time it must have to shear, clean, and dye. I imagine the smell and the deep echo sound of the loom. I imagine the finished product, how the designs cannot be duplicated, the weight of the rug, and the texture of the finished product. I also imagine the colors, how some rugs are more vibrant, and others are more natural. I see the variations in the designs, how each design incorporates geometric shapes and how our elders were intelligent to do symmetrical designs. I also see some stories tied to the designs, and some are about our creation stories, others about our environment and protection. I hope the young ones can gather a few important concepts of what I see and feel when I see a finished rug displayed.

## **Content Objectives**

### Weaving to Diné

Weaving is expressed as an art form that is becoming extinct. If one is not familiar with weaving, it uses wool or yarn to loop between the weft and warp to create intricate designs. These designs cannot be duplicated and are often unique to the weaver and their clan group. Like the Tree of Life, some rugs are used to tell cultural stories and teach life lessons.

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In Navajo culture, we are currently living in our fifth world. Weaving was introduced to Spider-Woman (a being and not a spider) at the beginning of the third world. I was taught that because Spider-Woman is female, only females are allowed to weave, but that is not the case in today's society. I know many successful male weavers. But to continue on, the Holy People instructed Spider-Woman to weave a pattern of the universe and teach it to the Navajo people to represent harmony and beauty (Ornelas & Pete, 2019). Spider-Woman ventured to the four sacred mountains to gather some items to make the rugs which included plants for the dye, sticks for the loom, and songs and prayers for ceremonial purposes (Ornelas & Pete, 2019). Gathering the tools and items for the weaving process is a sacred time period, therefore when it is raining outside, it is inappropriate to weave (Tyrell, 2021). Another time that weavers cannot weave is at night and if the female weaver is on her menstrual cycle. If someone decides they want to weave at night, they have to put ash on their face. Because the process is sacred, elders often say a prayer before they begin weaving. The elders thank Mother Earth for providing the dye and sticks, and Father Sky is thanked for the air to sustain life. An important step for weavers to do when there is a solid border around the designs is to leave a small opening from the design called a "Weavers Path," so the weaver does not get stuck in the design (Brown, 2019).

Weaving a rug is a long process which is why the art form is becoming extinct. The process begins with shearing a sheep in the spring. The sheep's thick winter coat is usually dirty from sand and plants; therefore, after shearing the sheep comes the cleaning process. The cleaning process involves washing and brushing the fibers repeatedly. Afterward, it is time to spin the wool on a tool called the spindle. The spinning of the wool happens only in a clockwise direction, and the spindle should not be used as a toy. Next is the dying process. This process involves a hike; during the hike, berries and plants are collected, and offerings are given back to Mother Earth for providing us with the berries and plants. When it is time to dye the wool, a big pot of boiling water is placed in front of you where you place the berries or plant into the pot (not together, it would be one pot per color). Next, you place the wool in the pots until you get it to the correct color. While the wool is drying, the loom can be set up now. The loom is another long process of creating a frame and wrapping the loom hundreds of times to the correct size.

Rugs have multiple purposes for the Navajo people. They have been used as blankets, doors, and outfits, nowadays, it is used as wall art and fancy graduation outfits. Another item that is woven is the Navajo sash belt. The sash belt should only be worn by women who have had puberty. The sash belt is used when a woman goes into labor. It is usually hung from the ceiling, and she uses it to help push, or it can be wrapped around her legs to assist in pushing with her contractions. The sash belt is wrapped snug around the woman's waist; the purpose is to help the woman's figure. After labor, the woman is instructed to wear it to get her figure back, just as a postpartum belly wrap would do.

Boarding Schools

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Native American boarding schools were used as an attempt to eradicate the culture and language through assimilation during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. At the boarding schools, the Native American students were prohibited from speaking their language, dressing in regalia, growing their hair, and practicing any part of the culture. Steineker (2017) reported patterns of mistreatment, abuse, incompetent administration, and inadequate treatment were found to be the norms at these facilities. If students ran away, they usually did not get far before being caught or dying due to harsh weather conditions, being lost, or having no food and water.

My mother recounts the experience of being forcibly pulled from her mother and taken to a boarding school with other Native American students (E. Lake, personal communication, July 10, 2021). When they first arrived, they were forced to stand in a line to get their hair cut and given a new name. She added that when they spoke their Native language, they were either physically beaten or their mouths were washed out with soap. In addition, my mother said they were fostered to White families during school breaks; her foster family was Christian in California, she did not add any further details about them. The traumas of these boarding schools have contributed to a large part of why the language and culture are not being revitalized.

### What Cultural Revitalization Looks Like

Early childhood education is the prime time to incorporate information into the young ones. If given the proper skills and consistent repetition, young ones can learn about their language and culture just as they absorb other information in today's society. For example, we now sing and recite nursery rhymes and how to count to ten in English, but they are unable to carry out this task in the Native language. Romero-Little (2006) reported that literacy is not a new concept to Indigenous people; culture was passed down through meaningful daily interactions with those in the community for centuries. Traditionally, Navajos told many stories in the Navajo language. Still, with the shift to a predominant English culture, the young ones are not listening to these stories in Navajo anymore, which has caused a small number of young children to be able to speak or understand the Navajo language (Bia, 2011).

Young Navajo children often learn about our culture through songs; the songs that are sung include teachings about our creation stories, cardinal directions, crops, animals, mountains, and our spiritual beings (Bia, 2011). Another way young Navajo children learn about the culture is through socialization by taking part in ceremonies and listening to oral stories (Bia, 2011).

I can attest to these teachings because, at a young age, I remember growing up in a Navajo Hogan with no electricity and running water. We would gather around the fireplace in the wintertime and listen to coyote stories about hilarious mischievous acts. Another fond memory of mine is sitting by my grandmother and watching her weave while talking to me about the importance of praying with corn pollen, the design meanings in the rug, and our family history.

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Everything I know about weaving a Navajo rug is all from my family and what they had to show me through observation and oral teachings.

Romero-Little's (2021) research has emphasized the importance of allowing our young Navajo students to learn about our culture. At a young age, they are curious. The students want to be involved; they want to see their identity and their representations in actions. Romero-Little (2021) spoke on a Pueblo community being able to revitalize their language and culture by (a) peripheral and active participation of the child; (b) imitation and symbolic play; (c) direct instructions and guided practice, followed by independent practice; and (d) reflective guidance and mentoring. An example of Romero-Little's (2021) research in play would be allowing a young one to have a drum at a young age, freely beat the drum, attempting to imitate the sound of someone else drumming, and practicing themselves. This one engagement would influence the child to practice this skill to become better, and it allows the child to be a scientist by experimenting with the cause and effect of the sounds. In the classroom, this would look like introducing a new song or chant with finger play and continuously singing it to give it meaning to the young ones. In this manner, it will be repetitive and add meaning for them to learn the language. Additionally, skill sets can be introduced and practiced in centers of the classroom for practice. An example would be adding a drum to the dramatic play center, creating drums in the art center, singing songs in the literacy center, and noticing the different sounds of drums in the science center.

A major benefit of cultural revitalization is the opportunity for the young ones to be bilingual or even trilingual if they pursue to learn another language. Incorporating dual languages into the classroom has major benefits for our young students. The prime time to teach the students to be bilingual is now because the brain is active and flexible (Too Smart to Fail, 2021). Those who are bilingual have an easier time understanding math concepts and solving problems compared to their monolingual peers. Another benefit to being bilingual is being able to focus while also increasing critical thinking skills (Too Smart to Fail, 2021).

### Weaving in the Classroom

Weaving comprises multiple steps and approaches which can be shown to the young ones through visuals, hands-on learning, stories, and more. Ukala (2017) reported that children need to do more than listen to learn. The children learn by touching, seeing, smelling, exploring, and being engaged with their experiences. This introduction to learning greatly influences their future because it teaches techniques such as social-emotional skills, language, math skills, and critical thinking and listening skills.

Weaving in the classroom can be an age-appropriate unit. It is simply an introduction, and we do not require the little ones to create their own loom or rug. Weaving should be introduced in a fun manner to hold the little one's attention and draw them in to learn more. The introduction can

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begin with a book read aloud by *The Goat in the Rug* (1990). Not many Native American books or age-appropriate shows and movies help these students see themselves represented. Reading books like *The Goat in the Rug* (1990) would expose the students to their culture and develop a positive and healthy sense of racial identity (McNair, 2008). Furthermore, Ashiabi (2007) brought up an interesting point as to why acknowledging diversity in reading and introducing diverse cultural pieces of the class is important because it would provide more details and information of the differences between us all in an appropriate manner so those in the classroom that do not identify with being Navajo, can see why it is important for the culture. Book reading can be a valuable introduction piece because it introduces meaningful new vocabulary and new pictures and can help build skills for comprehension and predicting (Monhardt & Monhardt, 2006).

Indigenous culture revitalization is important because it is on the verge of becoming extinct. If we do not teach our young ones, who will? Now is the time to start this process. Ukala's (2017) research made a few recommendations to early childhood teachers and others alike, which included more research and funding in Indigenous cultures and early childhood education programs, as well as incorporating more Indigenous toys and materials into the classroom settings.

While introducing weaving to the classroom, you can bring your materials into the classroom for them to feel and see. There are developmentally appropriate weaving toys for young preschools on *Amazon* and *Lakeshore* where they can weave ribbon-like materials into a loom that requires no setting up. If a loom is not feasible, weaving can be done on fences as well. Weaving in the classroom can be done through play, where exploration of the items increases awareness of the tools and techniques. This exploration increases the child's curiosity to ask questions and to explore cause and effect with materials. Research has shown that play builds and extends their knowledge as they interact with the environment on their own (Ashiabi, 2007). Therefore, when we incorporate the items in the classroom for play and engagement, the students will feel confident in learning more about the actions and tools because they are not concerned with the outcomes and are doing it for pleasure (Ashiabi, 2007).

### **Alignment with Standards**

The standards that the unit will cover are from the Arizona Early Learning Standards. The classroom activities will each have their standards they will meet, but a general overall theme of each lesson will include the following: (a) social-emotional standard 1.1 self-awareness; (b) social-emotional standard 1.3 self-regulation; (c) approaches to learning 1.2 curiosity; (d) approaches to learning 2.1 attentiveness; (e) language and literacy 1.1 receptive language understanding; (f) math 2.2 patterning; (g) math 4.1 shapes; (h) science 1.1 exploration, observations, and hypothesis; (i) social studies 2.2 rights, responsibilities, and roles within the community; and (j) fine arts 1.1 improvises and connects with visual arts.

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### Social-Emotional Standards

Self-awareness and self-regulation will align with the unit because they will learn more about themselves and recognize that two cultures are different. They will practice their self-regulation skills during the classroom routines and events and decide the appropriate actions for the classroom activity. While practicing self-regulation, they will also be introduced to the appropriate actions of caring for the weaving tools (not playing with it like a toy) and properly identifying the dos and don'ts of designs to make.

### Approaches to Learning Standards

Curiosity and attentiveness allow for the students to show interest in a new art form. With the new interest, they should focus on the age-appropriate task and ask questions as they see fit.

### Math

While weaving, the students will be introduced to shapes and patterning techniques. They will use their sense of sight to see the rugs and intricate designs made using common shapes and transformed into a new product. The patterning in rugs is symmetrical, and the students will see that the patterns are not often complex.

### Science

While reading and learning about the process of weaving, there will be opportunities to introduce the concept of a hypothesis and outcomes related to the changes. Asking critical thinking questions of “what do you think will happen” can assist in the creation of a hypothesis. Additionally, the students will be using their five senses to identify during the rug-making process. An example would be the smell and feel of the sheep wool and the sound of the loom.

### Social Studies

Rights, roles, and responsibilities within a community are important in this unit because after identifying that the culture is unique, the students should feel inspired to revitalize the culture and teachings. This unit should allow the students to see their families as resources to connect to this identity piece. Using their senses will effectively engage with their peers and family members to recognize other cultural components of the language and Navajo culture.

### Fine Arts



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The students should improvise and connect with the visual art form of weaving because it is unique to their culture. While creating age-appropriate rug designs, they should feel like their ideas are represented and personal to themselves. They will be using their hands to create an age-appropriate rug design from the examples shown to them.

### **Teaching Strategies**

The execution of the lessons will follow a holistic approach. Holistic education is when educators support the whole child's development socially, emotionally, ethically, spiritually, and the academic needs of the students (What is Holistic Education? 2020). Holistic education allows students to reflect on the community, what they can learn from it, and how to solve problems using their critical-thinking skills in a safe and supportive environment. In this manner, holistic education would increase the students' self-confidence and build a strong student-teacher relationship.

Some holistic education methods are pre-planned lessons to initiate an open-ended discussion and a deep connection to nature (Exploring Holistic Approaches, 2012). This learning style will take one interest of the child to bridge it to many other aspects of the item. This curriculum unit is about weaving. The student's interest or background knowledge may stem from animals, more specifically a sheep. After introducing this one major piece of background knowledge, we can lead into scissors, how it is used to shear the sheep, and brushing how most of us brush our hair every morning, and that's how we clean the sheep's hair. Therefore, this curriculum will begin with think, pair, share, critical thinking questions and include some engagement of families using whole group and small group instruction.

#### Whole Group Instruction

Whole group instruction will occur during circle time, where the entire class is gathered on the carpet or designated area with the teacher and their peers. During this time, everyone will be getting the same instruction and will be used as an introduction before the small group instruction. Whole group instruction will be the time to use, think, pair, and share as we introduce the book, tools used, new concepts and ideas, and reflect on our own lifestyles outside of the classroom to see what they can reveal to the discussion.

#### Small-Group Instruction

Small group instruction will occur during center time with the student(s) or in a designated area. These small group instructions can be anywhere from one to three preschool-aged students with one adult. Small group time is a time to practice the skills introduced earlier and build on their prior knowledge. This will be the time to ask critical thinking questions specific to the student

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and topic. These lessons will include fine motor projects like art and science projects of wool-dyeing.

### Family Engagement

Family engagement should be enjoyable and attainable to our students and their families. Family engagement in this unit will include asking families to submit video or pictures of (a) them singing a Navajo (or Indigenous tribes) song; (b) the family talking about their livestock and their care; (c) a read-aloud of a Native American book; (d) bringing their favorite dish to our family luncheon. If either of these engagement ideas is not attainable, exploring other ideas they can contribute to the classroom environment should be explored.

### Classroom Activities

#### Morning Questions

Objective:

The students will be able to answer a question using four or more words with increasing vocabulary.

Standards:

- LL1.1 The child demonstrates understanding of directions, stories, conversations, and nonverbal cues.
- LL1.2 The child uses verbal and nonverbal communication for a variety of purposes; to share observations, ideas, experiences, problem-solve, reason, predict, seek new information, and make connections.
- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.

Materials:

- Printed questions
- Yes, No, Maybe response cards
- Pocket Chart
- Name Cards

Every day of the unit, I will ask the students what they know about weaving: or any of the tools we will see. The questions will be asked after greeting the child at check-in. I put up my questions on the wall to locate their name to answer the daily question. After placing their name card in the column, I will ask an extension question based on their previous response. This will be done in a yes or no "Morning Question" format to any of the following questions:

- Have you read *The Goat in the Rug* (1990)? Extension question: what do you think it is about?
- Have you seen a Navajo rug before? (Can attach an example to the side of the question.) Extension question: where have you seen it? Or What do you think it is?

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- Have you seen this before: (picture of spindle, carding tools, shears, dyes, loom, or wool)? Extension question: what is it used for?
- Do you know someone who weaves?
- Have you sheared a sheep before? Include a picture of someone shearing.

Other questions to ask if students are above the yes and no “Morning Questions:”

- Describe how the rug might feel to you (terms: soft, hard, tough, loose, heavy, light).
- What sound do you think the loom makes (terms: echo, loud, quiet, imitation of noises)?
- (Picture of a pattern AB, ABB, AABB, or ABC) What comes next in the pattern?
- What color would you get if you mixed \_\_\_\_ (primary color) and \_\_\_\_ (another primary color)?
- What else can you use to make white wool become a \_\_\_\_ color? Problem-solving, it does not have to be an accurate representation of the dyes needed. Example: cranberries for red color or sand for brown color.

### *The Goat in the Rug* (1990)

Objective: The students will be able to listen to a story and answer some comprehension questions in a complete sentence.

Standards:

- LL2.1 Seeks Information in printed materials.
- LL2.2 The child demonstrates how to handle books appropriately and with care.
- LL2.5 The child demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure through storytelling, questioning, and recall.
- S1.1 The child observes, explores, and interacts with materials, others, and the environment.

Materials:

- The book *The Goat in the Rug* (1990)
- Or watch the *YouTube* reading of the story <https://youtu.be/nCek0vg9Fys>

We will read the book *The Goat in the Rug* (1990). While reading the book, we will either show pictures or, if possible, show the real tool used in the class. We will discuss the process of making a rug and what we would see, feel, and hear using comprehension questions to build on.

A few examples of these comprehension questions are:

- Have you sheared a sheep before? Have you seen anyone shear sheep?
- How do you think the sheep wool feels?
- Has anyone seen this tool before (show a picture of the spindle or carding combs)?
- What do you think this tool does? Let's find out and continue reading. So, what did we find out about this tool?

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- Have you gathered berries? Do you see any of these berries around your home too?
- Oh no, the sheep ate all the berries! How do you think their owner is going to feel? Would you feel that way too?
- Have you mixed two or more colors to make a new color before? What colors did you use, or what color did you make?
- Wow! They counted over a hundred wraps around the loom; how far can you all count to?
- Look at these patterns and shapes; what do you recognize here?
- The rug is complete! Have you seen a rug before? I have seen them hung up in stores and in people’s homes, how about you?
- A long time ago, these rugs were used as blankets and doors; do you still see them as blankets and doors?

### *The Goat in the Rug* (1990) Retell

Objective:

The students will retell the story of *The Goat in the Rug* (1990) using five different picture cards with 80 percent accuracy.

Standards:

- LL2.5a Takes an active role in reading activities
- LL2.5b Identifies characters and major events in a story
- LL2.5e Identifies events and details in the story and makes predictions
- LL2.5i Retells or reenacts a story in sequence with pictures or props
- LL2.5f Gives an opinion about liking or disliking a book or story.
- LL2.5g Begins to understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction.

Materials:

- Picture cards (see appendix)

Display the book *The Goat in the Rug* (1990) and ask the students if they remember the book.

Explain that they will be given some pictures, and their job is to put the story back in order.

When they are done, they will retell the story to the teacher. The students who need additional help will be given visual cues or prompts to assist in the story retell. Encourage the students to retell the story to their families at home.

### *YouTube* - Virtual Field Trip

Objective: The students will watch a video on *YouTube* of someone weaving and using think, pair, share, they will reflect on the new knowledge.

Standards:

- SE1.1 The child demonstrates an awareness of self.
- SE1.3 The child manages the expression of feelings, thoughts, impulses, and behaviors.

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- SE2.2 The child displays positive social behavior.
- ATL1.2 The child demonstrates an eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and activities.
- ATL2.1 The child demonstrates the ability to focus on an activity.
- ATL3.1a Expresses opinions or ideas.
- ATL5.1c Connects prior experiences with new learning.
- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps.
- LL1.2 The child uses verbal and nonverbal communication for a variety of purposes; to share observations, ideas, experiences, problem-solve, reason, predict, seek new information, and make connections.
- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.
- S1.1 The child observes, explores, and interacts with materials, others, and the environment.
- SS1.1c Describes/discusses own cultural or familial traditions.
- SS1.1e Develops an awareness of their personal and family history.
- SS3.1b Understands the events that happened in the past and how these events relate to one's self, family, and community.

### Materials:

- <https://youtu.be/5L858S1Ct6E>
- Think, pair, share picture cues for each of the students affixed to a Popsicle stick (see appendix)
- Timer

On *Youtube*, the students will watch a Navajo rug being made. The teacher will pass out the cue card for each of the students. They will be partnered up, so they each have time to share what they saw and learned with a classmate. Some questions to generate some thinking are: what do you know about weaving? Do you know anyone who weaves? What are the steps that need to be taken before someone weaves? What type of shapes did you see? Would you want to learn how to weave? What is something new that you learned? When the students are done speaking with their partners (about two minutes each), a few students will be asked to share what they learned with the class or what they found interesting.

### Planning a Design

Objective: The students will plan a design for a rug and use a complete sentence to discuss the meaning behind their design.

### Standards:

- SE1.1 Demonstrates developmentally appropriate cultural curiosity and responsiveness.
- SE1.2d Expresses feelings of satisfaction in independent activities.

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- SE1.3a Understands and follows expectations in the learning environment.
- ATL1.1c Exhibits flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness when attempting tasks and activities.
- ATL1.2 The child demonstrates an eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and activities.
- ATL2.1 The child demonstrates the ability to focus on an activity.
- ATL2.2c Establishes goals, generates plans, and follows through to completion.
- ATL3.1 The child demonstrates self-assurance, motivation, and stamina in a variety of circumstances.
- ATL4.1a Uses imagination to generate innovative ideas.
- ATL5.1c Connects prior experiences to new learning.
- LL1.1 The child demonstrates understanding of directions, stories, conversations, and nonverbal cues.
- LL1.2 The child uses verbal and nonverbal communication for a variety of purposes.
- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.
- M2.2a Recognizes patterns in the real world.
- M4.1b Uses the names of geometric shapes when describing objects found in the environment.
- PH&S1.2a Uses fingers, hands, and wrists to manipulate a variety of tools and materials.
- FA1.1 The child uses a wide variety of materials, media, tools and digital tools, techniques, and processes to explore, create, respond to, and connect with visual arts.

### Materials:

- Marker
- Markerboard
- Eraser
- Flute instrumentals ready to be played - can be found on *iTunes* or *YouTube*
- Picture of the following shapes - diamond, square, rectangle, triangle, lines, zig-zags (see appendix)
- Pictures of some rug designs to show

The students will begin the lesson by looking at pictures of rugs. One rug that can be shown is the Tree of Life rug design. The teacher, if knowledgeable, can discuss the meaning behind the corn stalk and other depictions in the rug. Next, the students will practice drawing some shapes often found in rugs (diamond, square, rectangle, triangle, lines, zig-zags) on the marker boards. Afterward, the teacher will have them think about their own rug design. The students will be asked to pretend they are getting ready to weave, and they cannot sit down and weave just yet because they need to plan. So we are planning our design, have the students think of what they want it to look like, and draw it for you. While this is happening, play some flute instrumentals in the background at a low volume. When the music stops, do not have them erase their boards yet. Have them discuss what they drew on their boards with the class, explaining why they chose that design.

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### Loom Weaving

Objective: The students will be able to intertwine their ribbon or yarn onto the loom with 80 percent accuracy.

Standards:

- ATL1.1c Exhibits flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness when attempting tasks and activities.
- ATL1.2 The child demonstrates eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and activities.
- PH&S1.2a Uses fingers, hands, and wrists to manipulate a variety of tools, and materials.
- FA1.1 The child uses a wide variety of materials, media, tools and digital tools, techniques, and processes to explore, create, respond to, and connect with visual arts.
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps.

Materials:

- Loom
- Yarn or ribbon

The students will be shown a loom. If a loom is not feasible, the students can weave ribbons on a chain-link fence, or a loom can be ordered on *Amazon* or *Lakeshore*. If these are not feasible, a "loom" can be made onto cardboard square cutouts. The students will be provided the materials; shown how to lace the yarn or ribbon through the warp in a front-to-back motion. This will be introduced during a whole group setting, and the skill will be practiced in a smaller group setting of one to three students at a time. In addition, the loom and materials will be placed in a center (dramatic play or literacy center) to continue to practice these skills.

### Symmetrical Painting

Objective: The students will be able to paint a symmetrical painting and use 3 -5 words to tell about their painting.

Standards:

- LL1.2a Communicates needs, wants, ideas, and feelings through three to five-word sentences.
- LL1.2e With modeling and support, the child uses language that includes social rules, e.g., pragmatics, appropriate tone, volume, and inflection, to express ideas, feelings, and needs.
- S1.2b Makes predictions and researches hypotheses through active investigation.
- S1.3b Identifies cause and effect relationships.
- S1.4c Conducts further investigation based on prior experience and information gained.
- FA1.1 The child uses a wide variety of materials, media, tools and digital tools, techniques, and processes to explore, create, respond to, and connect with visual arts.

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- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps.

Materials:

- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Paper

The students will be shown several rugs (examples can be shown online). The teacher will introduce the term symmetrical to the whole group. The teacher will discuss with the whole group how if the rug is folded in half, the pattern is usually the same on the opposite side. During a small group activity, the students will be given the materials, fold the paper in half, and paint only one side. Afterward, they will fold their paper over and unfold the paper to see their new product. They will tell the teacher about their painting, what they see, what they like about it or dislike, and what else they can paint. The items will be available for the students in the art center or literacy center for an extension.

Practice Carding or Using the Spindle (if tools and materials are available)

Objective: The students will attempt to card and spin some wool.

Standards:

- S1.1 The child observes, explores, and interacts with materials, others, and the environment.
- S1.2 The child reaches their own predictions and the ideas of others through active exploration and experimentation.
- SS1.1c Describes/discusses own cultural or familial traditions.
- SS1.1e Develops an awareness of their personal and family history.
- SS1.2a Demonstrates responsible behaviors.
- SS1.2d Describes the purpose of rules.

Materials:

- Carding combs
- Spindle
- Wool or yarn

The teacher will show the students the tools, introduce them. And demonstrate how to care for them in a whole group setting. The teacher will emphasize that these are not toys; it is prohibited to use them carelessly and leave them lying around. The teacher will show the students to card and spin the wool. In a small group setting, the teacher will have the students try out the tools. For further learning, the tools will be available in the dramatic play center or science center.

Make a Rug Pattern

Objective: The students will identify and name basic shapes then use the shapes to copy, extend, and create a pattern with at least one pattern containing four repetitions.



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### Standards:

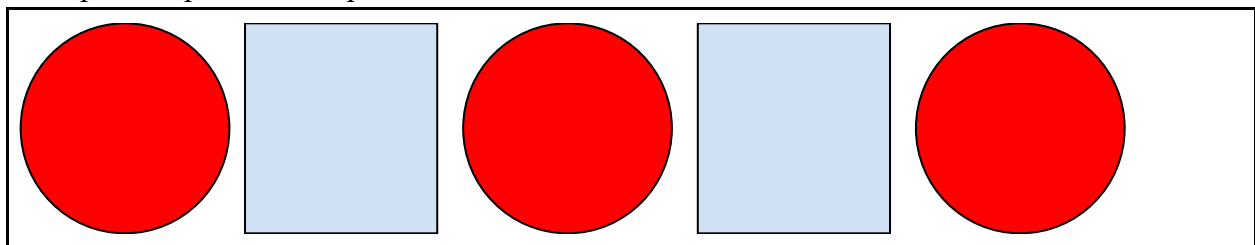
- M2.2a Recognizes patterns in the real world.
- M2.2b Fixes simple patterns.
- M2.2c Duplicates simple patterns.
- M2.2d Extends patterns.
- M2.2e Creates patterns.
- M2.2f Describes similarities and differences in patterns.

### Materials:

- Simple pattern examples
- Pre-cut shape pieces (circles must be the same color, squares must be the same color, and so forth)
- A strip of black paper
- Glue stick

The teacher will show the students what a pattern is in a whole group setting. The class will do several examples together. In a small group setting, the teacher will give the students a strip of black paper and put out a few colored shapes. The students will construct their patterns and tell the teacher what their patterns are before gluing them down. The students should be encouraged to make their patterns in four repetitions or more to understand. To practice this skill, the items should be available in the art center.

Example of a pattern. The pattern can be AB or ABC.



### Wool Dye Experiment

Objective: The student will use inquiry skills to predict the correct color the dye will make while dyeing a piece of white wool with five out of seven predictions correct.

### Standards:

- S1.1c Describes changes in objects, living things, and natural events in the environment.
- S1.2a Uses a variety of tools and materials to investigate.
- S1.2b Makes predictions and researches hypotheses through active investigation.
- S1.2c Adjusts their approach if results are different than expected and continues testing.
- SE1.1e Demonstrates developmentally appropriate cultural curiosity and responsiveness.
- ATL1.2a Shows interest in learning new things and trying new experiences.
- ATL5.1b Recognizes relationships between cause and effect.
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one-step, two-steps, or multiple steps.

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- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.

### Materials:

- Warm water
- Clear cups
- Spoon
- *Kool-Aid*
- Teabag
- Beets or berries
- Any other item you wish to use to dye the yarn
- White yarn
- Scissors
- *Post-Its* or paper labeled
- Tape

This will be done in a small group setting to ensure participation. The teacher will pour warm water into three or more cups. Mix the warm water with one of the dye items (*Kool-Aid*, beets, tea bag, other). The teacher will say, "this cup has warm water and blue *Kool-Aid*; what color do you think our white yarn will be when it comes out of the water?" After the student makes a prediction, the teacher will write down the prediction on a *Post-It* or piece of paper. Afterward, the teacher will give the white yarn to the student to place inside the cup. The yarn will stay inside the cup for more than one hour. When the students return to the cups, they will use the spoon to bring out the yarn to see if their hypothesis was correct. The student will then tape the white yarn onto the *Post-It* or the paper to take home to share their experience with their family. To continue their experience, the items will be available in the science center, and students will be encouraged to try this at home with their families.

An example of the labeled sheet of paper is in the appendix.

### Memory Game

Objective: The student will recognize the tools used in weaving and match the pictures playing the memory game.

### Standards:

- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps.
- SE1.2d Expresses feelings of satisfaction in independent activities.
- SE1.3a Understands and follows expectations in the learning environment.
- SE2.2b Initiates and sustains positive interactions with adults and other children.
- ATL2.1b Sustains attention when engaged in an age-appropriate activity.
- LL1.3 The child understands and uses increasingly complex vocabulary.

### Materials:

- Pictures of the weaving tools (two sets - see appendix)
- Can use pictures of geometric shapes to either add to the set or use it in another game.

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The teacher will introduce the game to the whole group. The teacher will play a short round using four sets of pictures to go over the rules and expectations of the game. The cards will be laid face-down, and the player will only be allowed to flip two cards over to see if they match. When the cards are turned over, the student must name what is on the picture cards. If the pictures do not match, the player turns the cards back over and waits for another turn. If the cards match, the player names what the picture set is and keeps the cards. When all the cards are matched, the game is over, the student with the most sets of matched cards wins.

In a small group setting of two or three students, the teacher will watch the students play the game and assist in naming the cards. After everyone has played, the game cards will be placed in the literacy center so students can continue to play until they master the naming of the new vocabulary.

If the students have an IEP or belong to a younger age group, the teacher can change the number of sets to shorten the playing time, thus differentiating instruction for the students.

### Sound Experiment

Objective: The students will tap to a sound pattern using drums with 4 out of 5 correct.

Standards:

- M2.2a Recognizes patterns in the real world.
- M2.2c Duplicates simple patterns.
- M2.2d Extends patterns.
- M2.2e Creates patterns.
- M2.2f Describes similarities and differences in patterns.
- LL1.1a Demonstrates understanding of a variety of finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories.
- LL1.1c Demonstrates understanding and follows directions that involve one step, two steps, or multiple steps.
- LL2.3f Identifies and discriminates syllables in words.

Materials:

- Drum
- If drums are not available, Lummi sticks can be used

The teacher will introduce the drum or Lummi sticks. The teacher will go over the instructions for the activity and have the students experiment with tapping the sticks or drum before getting started. Each student will be given a drum or Lummi sticks to do the following (a) syllables to our new terms and our names, (b) sing a song, (c) imitate the sound a loom would make, and (d) create a sound pattern. When creating a sound pattern, the teacher will create one first. The students will copy the sound pattern together. Afterward, the students will each be given a turn to create a sound pattern for the rest of the class to follow. The drum or sticks will be part of the literacy center or block center so the students can continue to practice their new skills.

### Gathering Items Scavenger Hunt

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Objective: Students will collect natural items during a walk and then create a way to display them. Students will describe the display to another person in complete 3-5 word sentences.

Standards:

- SE1.3a Understands and follows expectations in the learning environment.
- ATL1.1b Demonstrates independence during activities, routines, and play.
- ATL1.1c Exhibits flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness when attempting tasks and activities.
- ATL1.2c Asks questions to get information.

Materials:

- Scavenger Hunt List or paper with squares to paste scavenger hunt items in (appendix)
- Bag or something to hold their items in

The teacher will remind the students that Navajos had to hike to gather berries and plants for their dyes long ago. Today, we will gather some items on a walk around campus (about 10 - 15 minutes). The teacher will hand out a bag for the student to put their items in and their scavenger hunt list. The teacher will go over what is on the list and expectations on the walk. When the scavenger hunt is done, the students will come back to class and tell their peers what they found outside on their hunt.

### Family Engagement Flashcards

Objective: The families will help with home learning activities at home by reviewing the Navajo word cards.

Standards:

- SE1.1e Demonstrates developmentally appropriate cultural curiosity and responsiveness.
- ATL1.2a Shows interest in learning new things and trying new experiences.
- LL1.2c Makes culturally relevant responses (both verbal and nonverbal) to questions and comments from others.
- LL1.2f Uses culturally relevant responses such as eye contact, turn-taking, and intonation while having conversations with adults and peers.
- M1.1a Shows interest in and awareness of counting.

Materials:

- Flashcards (see appendix)

The students will be given a few different sets of flashcards to practice the Navajo language at home with their families. The cards will also be put in the literacy center so the students can practice the language in the classroom and see it in both environments.

### Family Engagement Show and Tell

Objective: The students will discuss how their family celebrates their heritage through pictures, videos, objects, or a story using complete sentences.

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### Standards:

- SS1.1c Describes/discusses own cultural or familial traditions
- SS1.2f Describes their role at home, at school, and in the community.
- LL1.1b Engages actively in finger-plays, rhymes, chants and songs, poems, conversations, and stories.

### Materials:

- Video recording or pictures can be used but necessary
- Any necessary item they need to show (example: attire, food, jewelry)

The students and their families will be asked to share how they practice their culture or heritage at home. The sharing of this information will be done during the whole group time. I would suggest one family coming in a week or a day, so the students are not sitting for a long time. At the end of the sharing period (about ten minutes or so), the students will be encouraged to ask the family questions.

### Student Assessment Plan

Most of the activities will either be pre-assessment or a formative assessment type based on repetition of the activity. The unit is an introduction unit to weaving, so students are not required to be proficient in the weaving skills but to be proficient in the academic parts of the tasks like recognizing patterns and incorporating new vocabulary into their daily interactions. The assessment format for the activities is *Teaching Strategies GOLD* because that is what the Page Unified School District Preschool program uses. An example of what the checklist would look like for a few activities is attached in the appendix. Teachers from other districts can cater the checklist to something they would need to report their data.

<b>Learning Goal</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Assessment Format</b>
Morning Question Objective: The students will be able to answer a question using 4 or more words with increasing vocabulary.	Pre-Assessment	Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist Ability to use and understand the new vocabulary terms.
<i>The Goat in the Rug</i> (1990) Retell Objective: The students will be able to listen to a story and answer some comprehension questions in a complete sentence.	Pre-Assessment	Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording. This checklist measures the ability to answer the comprehension questions and refer to the text as background information for the unit.

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<p><i>YouTube</i> - Virtual Field Trip Objective: The students will watch a video on <i>YouTube</i> of someone weaving and using think, pair, share, they will reflect on the new knowledge.</p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist Ability to reflect on text read earlier in the week to new information learned in the video.</p>
<p>Planning a Design Objective: The students will plan a design for a rug and use a complete sentence to discuss the meaning behind their design.</p>	<p>Formative</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording. This checklist measures the ability to recognize that rugs have patterns and reflect on their rug design. This checklist measures the ability to communicate their reasoning to their peers.</p>
<p>Loom Weaving Objective: The students will be able to intertwine their ribbon or yarn onto the loom with 80 percent accuracy.</p>	<p>Formative</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording. The checklist measures the ability to connect their experience to prior background knowledge from the video and book. The checklist measures the ability to do the motions of weaving with 80 percent accuracy.</p>
<p>Symmetrical Painting Objective: The students will paint a symmetrical painting and use 3 -5 words to tell about their painting.</p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or picture of the final product. The checklist measures the ability to create a symmetrical painting and recognize that a rug is similar to their painting designs.</p>
<p>Practice Carding or Using a Spindle Objective: The students will attempt to card and spin some wool.</p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording. Simply an introduction to the weaving unit, giving the students the experience of</p>

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		doing part of the process. The checklist measures the ability to follow along and remain interested in the learning topic.
<p>Make a Rug Pattern Objective: The students will identify and name basic shapes then use the shapes to copy, extend, and create a pattern with at least one pattern containing four repetitions.</p>	Formative	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or picture of work Keep the work in a student folder to show growth and development compared to earlier or later work. The checklist measures the ability to make an AB or ABC pattern in four or more repetitions.</p>
<p>Wool Dye Experiment Objective: The student will use inquiry skills to predict the correct color the dye will make while dyeing a piece of white wool with five out of seven predictions correct.</p>	Pre-Assessment	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording Ability to formulate a hypothesis based on what they see and know about dying wool.</p>
<p>Memory Game Objective: The student will recognize the tools used in weaving and match the pictures playing the memory game.</p>	Formative	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording Ability to stay on task and avoid distractions while showing the teacher their cognitive skills in recall and interacting with their peers.</p>
<p>Sound Experiment Objective: The students will tap to a sound pattern using drums with 4 out of 5 correct.</p>	Assessment	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist or video recording Ability to recognize sound patterns using an AB or ABC pattern. The checklist measures the ability to connect the experience to the sound of a loom and patterns in a rug.</p>

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<p>Gathering Items Scavenger Hunt Objective: Students will collect natural items during a walk and then create a way to display them. Students will describe the display to another person in complete 3-5 word sentences.</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist or video recording Ability to find items in nature and connect it to their prior knowledge on the weaving process.</p>
<p>Family Engagement Flashcards Objective: The families will help with home learning activities at home by reviewing the Navajo word cards.</p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: <i>Teaching Strategies GOLD</i> checklist Family report of what they see happening. Ability to stay on task at home avoiding most distractions. Ability to recall events at home and at school.</p>
<p>Family Engagement Show and Tell Objective: The students will discuss how their family celebrates their heritage through pictures, videos, objects, or a story using complete sentences.</p>	<p>Pre-Assessment</p>	<p>Observation: Teaching Strategies GOLD checklist Family report of what the child’s ability Ability to listen and engage in conversation with peers.</p>



## Resources

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**Appendix**

*Goat in the Rug* (1990) Story Retell

Add pictures to the following cards:

\*No pictures are included due to copyright issues

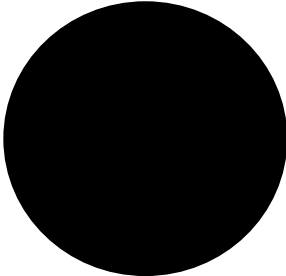
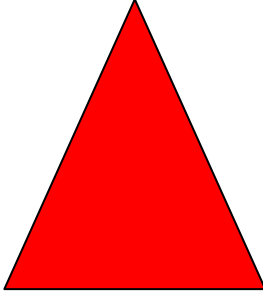
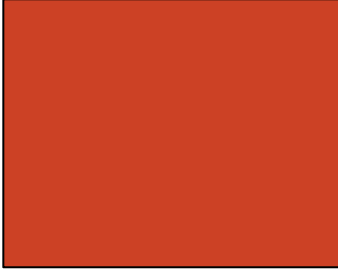
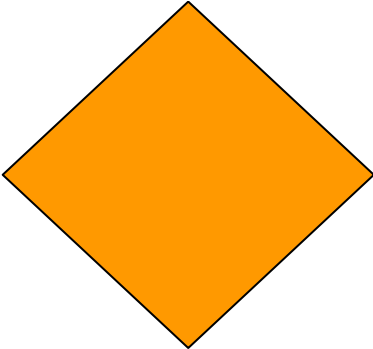


Picture of sheep getting sheared	Carding combs used to clean wool
Finished rug	Set up loom to begin weaving
Dying Wool	Blank Card

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Picture of ears (listening cue)	Picture of lips (talking cue)	Picture of light bulb (thinking cue)
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\*No pictures are included due to copyright issues.

## Planning a Design

## Wool Dye Experiment

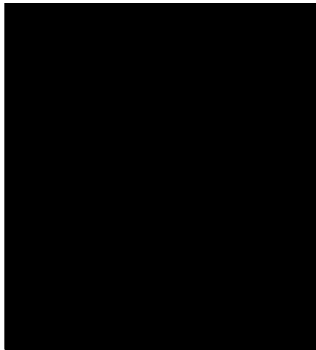
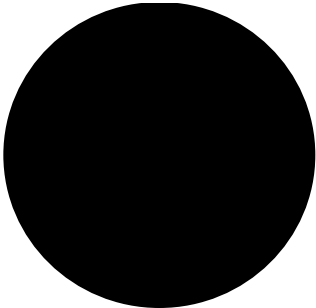
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<p>Kool-Aid I think the yarn will be _____. One hour later, my yarn is _____.</p>	<p>Tea I think the yarn will be _____. One hour later, my yarn is _____.</p>
<p>Beets or Berries I think the yarn will be _____. One hour later, my yarn is _____.</p>	<p>Other _____ I think the yarn will be _____. One hour later, my yarn is _____.</p>

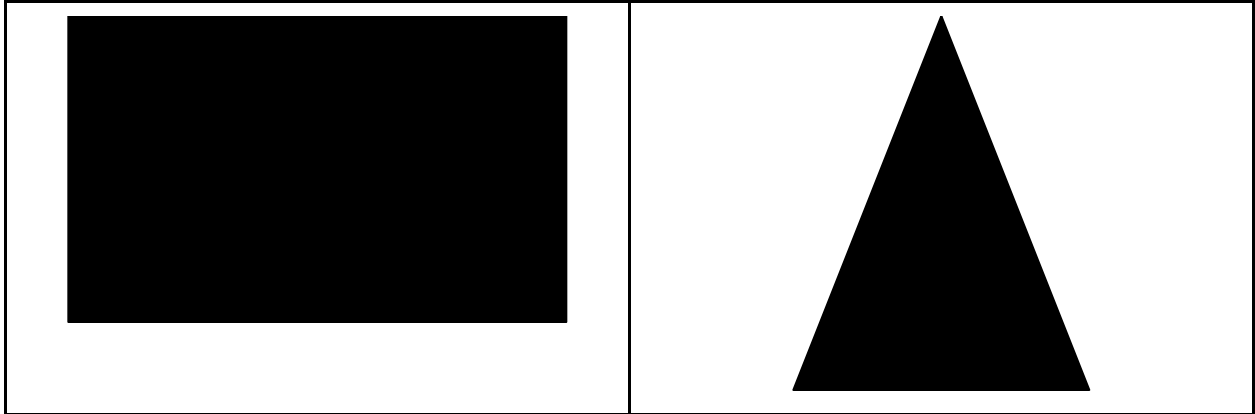
Memory Game

<p>Loom</p>	<p>Comb</p>
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<p>Carding combs</p>	<p>Shears</p>
<p>Spindle</p>	<p>Wool</p>
<p>Rug</p>	<p>Berries/plants for dye</p>
	

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Gathering Items Scavenger Hunt

Something green	Something yellow	Something soft
Something rough	Something round	Something heavy

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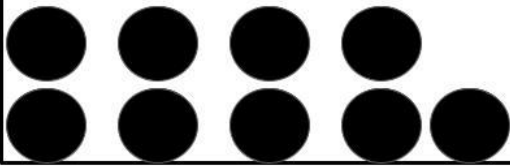
Something light	Something small	Something brown
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Flashcards



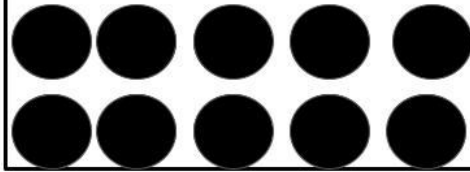
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9



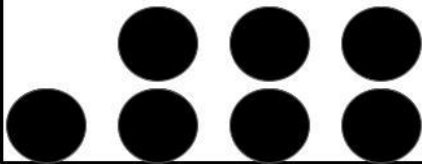
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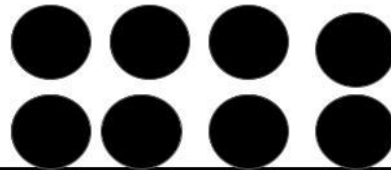
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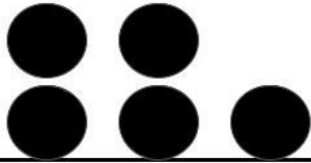
Eight  
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8



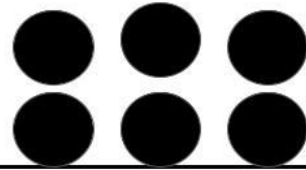
Five  
ashdla'

5



Six  
hastaqa

6



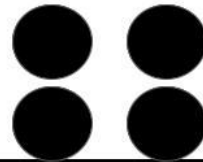
Three  
taá'

3



Four  
dij'

4



One  
t'ááŁá'í

1

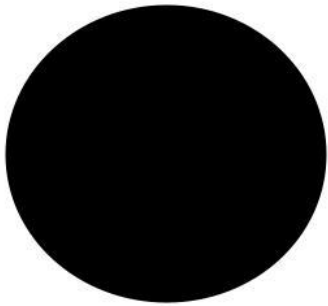


Two  
naaki

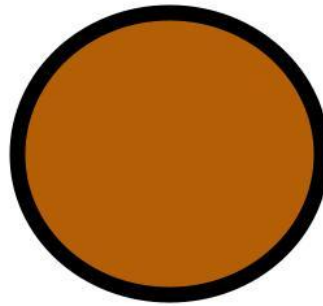
2



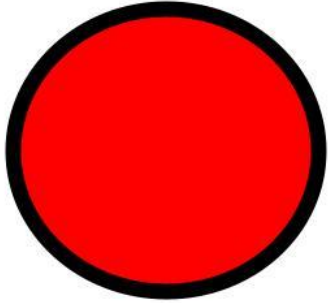
Black  
Łizhin



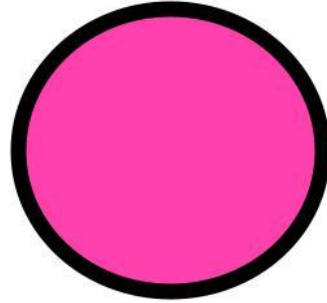
Brown  
DibéŁchí'í



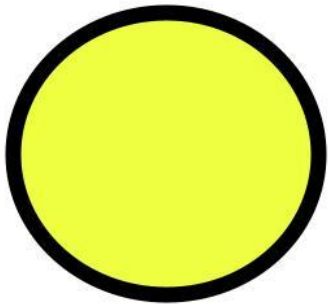
Red  
Łichxíí'



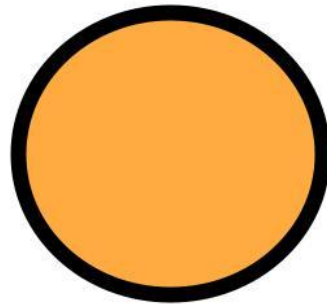
Pink  
Dinilchíí''

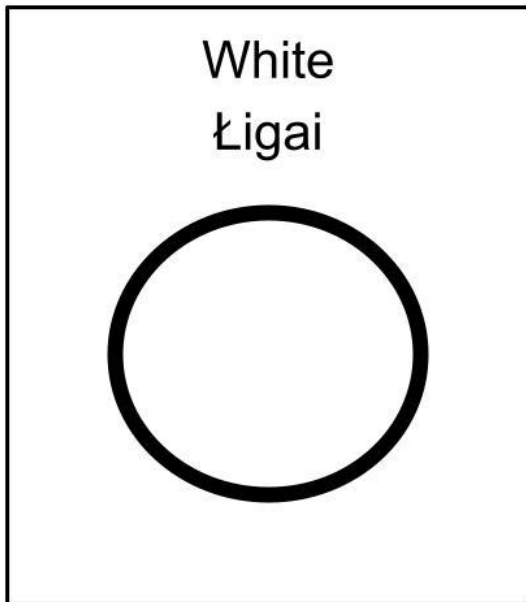
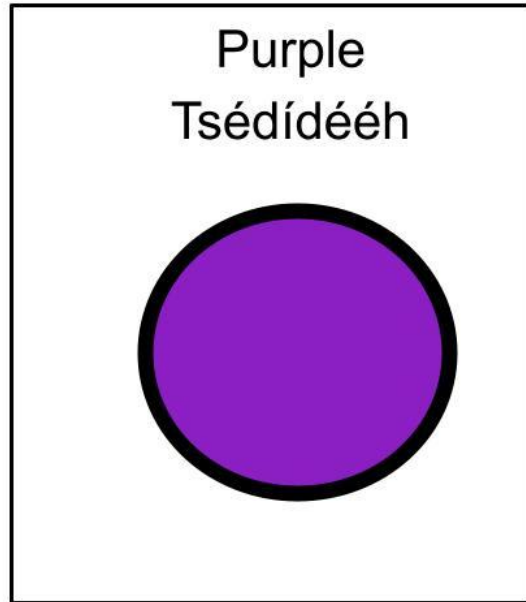
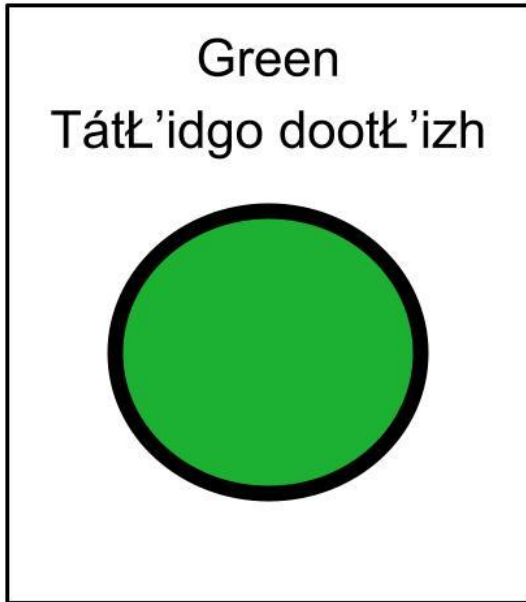


Yellow  
Łitso



Orange  
Łitsxo














# NIZHÓNÍGO 'AJIŁ'Ō

## Rug Patterns – The Goat in the Rug

Date

Student	understands shapes 21b	Copies AB pattern 23	creates AB pattern 23	Copies advanced pattern 23	creates advanced pattern 23	Comments:
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	
		w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	w/help w/o help	