

Wool In Schools Project



Introduction

We are seeking schools to participate in a trial project based around teaching children about the art and craft of hand knitting.

Through a series of guided experiences, children will learn the skills of hand knitting and gain an appreciation of crafts, building on the values of giving and sharing.

Using lesson plans for staged and skill-graded projects, children will build concentration skills, hand and eye coordination and a sense of achievement from the successful completion of items they might choose to give away as gifts.

Why Hand knitting?

Why Hand Knitting

Hand knitting has a strong history and is actively practiced in more than 40 countries around the world today.

From ancient Egypt to more modern times, it has evolved from an era where “mend and make-do” were important aspects of everyday life, to an art form displayed in galleries and on the streets with the growing trend of yarn bombing.



Why wool?

Why Wool

Australia has a long history with wool and because of the importance of this industry to the strength of the economy, for many years it was said that Australia rode on the sheep's back.

What children will learn is that Australia grows the finest wool in the world and is the world's largest and most successful producer of wool for clothing.

Teaching children about the properties of working with natural fibres like wool through hand knitting, enables connections to be made across the curriculum including history, geography and climate, science, maths and of course, art and the use of colour.



Arts curriculum in schools

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Through ACARA and its work on the national curriculum in schools, the Visual Arts component envisages children making and responding to art and craft.

A series of projects has been designed and created to deliver the objectives outlined in the curriculum. There are 4 themes that work across grade 2 to grade 5 and within each theme, there are 3 or 4 project options.

Knitting a Community Together

It is envisaged that the teacher is supported in this module by someone from the school community possibly a grandmother or a textile design student, a skilled knitter nonetheless who can help to guide the learning and keep students achieving the project milestones.

Younger students might start by making a gift for their mother whilst the older students might knit squares for a blanket, possibly to be donated to a hospital or an aged care facility in the community.

Charity Partners

Knitters, crocheters and crafters have, for centuries given items to the less fortunate. Whether they supply toys for the young, garments for the not so young, or blankets for the cold, they are a big hearted bunch who simply want to help those who need it.

ACS has helped various charities in the past with yarn, patterns and promotional support.



What's in it?

Benefits of Wool & Craft Education

For Schools

If you agree to help pioneer this trial module in Term 2 or 3 this year, we will give you the materials and resources you need to be successful. The kit will include an overall lesson plan, project sheets and images of completed projects. We will also give you a pack of tools as assets for your school, including 30 pairs of needles.

For families and school communities

Sharing the joy of knitting is a gift for life. Teaching someone a craft creates a beautiful bond – whether between mothers and daughters, grand parents and grand children or someone else. It also allows parents to show children creative ways to spend their leisure time (apart from television, play stations and i-pads), making things for themselves and others.

What's in it?

Benefits of Wool & Craft Education

For the Industry

It's about ensuring that the craft lives on in future generations. Australian Country Spinners, based in Wangaratta, is one of the last remaining wool and textile manufacturers in Australia, employing nearly 100 staff in regional Australia and the Melbourne head office.

And for Australian families growing wool, for shearers, and for fashion designers who create beautiful clothes in wool, it is important that this craft grows and prospers.

Teamwork

This project has been built on teamwork and will need your support and the support of the school community. It is also the result of collaboration between the staff of Australian Country Spinners, the Wangaratta Mill and Textile Industry leaders.



Knitting's classroom comeback: Subject set to return to lessons after school found it improved behaviour and maths skills. Teachers at Worth School, Kent, said it helped pupils learn to write. It also helped students put down their phones and have discussions. Parents and teachers being consulted on national curriculum changes

By [TAMARA COHEN, POLITICAL REPORTER](#)

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It was last taught in the classroom when throwaway fashion was unimaginable and people had to make do and mend.

But knitting, sewing and embroidery are making a comeback in design and technology lessons as children learn traditional home skills again.

Knitting has not been widely taught for decades, but after one school found it had the knock-on effect of improving pupils' maths and behaviour, it is returning for boys and girls aged up to 14.

Classroom comeback: Pupils (l-r) Tabitha and Betsy Forsyth at Worth Primary School's knitting club

At Worth Primary School, near Deal in Kent, teachers said it improved behaviour, helped pupils learn to write and encouraged them to have proper discussions with each other rather than play with their phones.

They were so impressed with the impact of a lunchtime knitting club that they started incorporating it into other lessons.

During maths lessons, pupils created a design then calculated the number of stitches they would need. In history, pupils learned

about the clothing worn in the Middle Ages and how to make it.

Changes: Teachers said knitting led to pupils putting down their phones and having proper discussions. Headmistress Lynne Moore said: 'It has dramatically improved behaviour, and it really helps communication. Instead of playing on their phones or computers, the children knit and talk to each other. They have proper conversations.'

Teachers and parents are now being consulted on a planned shake-up of the national curriculum next year. The proposed curriculum states children will be taught 'to plan, design, make, repair and evaluate decorative and/or practical objects, using a range of textiles and employing common techniques such as sewing, embroidery and knitting'. But Caroline Wright, of the British Educational Suppliers Association, said yesterday: 'These proposals will result in some fabulous knitwear but, sadly, fewer world-class engineers and innovators.'

Make Do And Mend was the title of an official booklet produced during the Second World War when wool was in short supply and women were urged to unpick old garments and reuse the wool. Knitting patterns were issued to the public to show them how to make winter clothes. After the war, girls learned knitting at school. Its popularity soared in the 1960s when people used new ranges of brightly coloured wool to emulate the latest fashions. But in the 1980s it went into decline as earnings went up and people could afford high street fashions. It was phased out of lessons completely with the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988. However there has been a revival thanks to the internet, with millions of people exchanging patterns online.

Links and Resources

Learn to videos from ACS

- www.auspinner.com.au

Information about wool and sheep for kids

- <http://www.samthelamb.com>



Australian Wool Innovation Student Resource

- <http://www.merino.com/en/our-fibre/student-resources>

Article on partnership between Australian Craft and Design Centres and the National Association for Visual Arts

- <http://au.artshub.com/au/news-article/opinions/visual-arts/crafting-up-a-new-initiative-194514>

The Guardian article about the benefit of learning to knit

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/teacher-network/2011/nov/30/power-of-knitting-and-craft-in-education>

Article on Knitting improving literacy and maths

- <http://www.cityknits.com/knittingliteracymath.html>

Videos and information Australian Merino Wool from AWI

- <http://www.woolmark.com/australian-merino-wool>



Project Partnership

Will you help us?

We would love to hear from you.

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