



### THE HUMAN LOOM

Make a human loom with the students being the loom warp beam, heddles, and shuttles. Use two colors of crepe paper strips, fabric strips, or wide ribbon for the warp and the filling (weft).

1. Begin by attaching the long strips (10 to 12 feet) of warp to a large round shipping tube, which becomes the warp beam of the loom. Attach strips in multiples of four, using at least twelve. (Sixteen is better if you have big enough tube.) Two students will hold it during the weaving activity. At the other end, place a student for each two (2) warp yarns (one for each hand). Number the warp yarns with stickers or tape, numbering them 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. The numbers actually identify the heddle number.
2. Meanwhile, have about 50 to 60 filling yarns cut about two feet wider than the shipping tube. Have some students hold the filling yarns and some students be the shuttles, placing the filling yarns between the warp yarns as the heddles are rotated. It will only take about eight (8) filling yarns or so to see a weaving pattern. Be sure to start weaving adjacent to the warp beam.
3. The instructor will probably need to call out the weaving patterns as the activity progresses. For example, for a plain weave, the 1s and 3s are up and the 2s and 4s are down for one filling thread to be put in. Then the 1s and 3s are down and the 2s and 4s are up, etc. All weaving patterns are based on multiples of four, so it isn't too difficult. At some point (when the loom is full), the filling yarns can be pulled out and new weaving patterns completed.

A brief diagram of this is shown below. Although this activity takes quite a bit of floor space, it is really fun and the students truly begin to comprehend how fabric is woven.

