

## Little Minds Like Mine

### Flash Non-Fiction

Dozens of popsicle sticks, colored pencils, gluesticks, and bundles of yarn were sprawled across the table in the teacher's lounge. Christine and I frantically shoved all the supplies in giant Ziploc bags, for they were to be transported to the classroom on the fifth floor. Lily edited the PowerPoint slides for the lesson plan and told us that today's craft seemed to be the hardest out of the other days. I looked at the set of instructions we had printed out.

"Well, it says to wrap it counterclockwise, and then you—"

"No, that's the third step," Christine said. "It's clockwise the first time around."

"Yeah, then it says to weave it under, around, and up," Lily added.

I stared at the instructions, unable to move the two popsicle sticks and string of yarn in my hands.

"I don't know if I'm jet-lagged or what, but..."

"We have seven minutes," Lily said.

"Lemme see the video again," I told her.

She played the video and I spent the remainder of my time burning a hole into the screen with my eyes. I watched the instructor move the yarn one way, then another, and focused on all the moving parts. *I swore those written instructions were in Latin or something*, I thought. *This is much easier.*

"We gotta go," Lily said.

As we rushed over, I realized that when you're at an English camp in South Korea, the allotted time for "play" was the 2-minute hike from our lounge to the classroom. We hauled our

supplies up the five flights and rushed to organize the room. As we connected the HDMI cord to the TV, a stampede of kindergarten students barged into the room.

“Oh boy,” I whispered under my breath. Then louder, “Okay, let’s have a seat please.”

Christine rounded up the kids and the Korean TAs monitored them while Lily and I presented. The plan was structured in two parts: vocabulary and activity. Before the presentation, we were given a bank of words that had to be included in the lesson plan. We taught the kids words like *light*, *ornament*, *popsicle*, *shimmer*, and *accelerator*. Not to mention the theme was outer space.

When the vocabulary section was over, I went over the instructions for the craft while Lily handed out the supplies.

“Okay, guys. Listen up,” I said. I looked back at the giant blurb of instructions on the slide.

“First,” I said, “You’re going to hold the two popsicle sticks like this.” I grabbed the sample we were required to demonstrate.

“Then...”

Three-fourths of the way through, I realized none of them were paying attention. I decided to summarize the demo altogether and instead go around and show them in groups. I sent Christine to one side of the room while Lily handled another section of squirming children.

“All right guys, let’s pay attention,” I said to my group. A little boy vibrated with energy in his seat and I convinced myself that someone had given him Adderall. I pointed to a set of sticks.

“You’re going to weave the yarn around, okay?”

They stared at me with wonder.

“You go around and under until it looks like this,” I held up the finished demo.

Their blank stares confirmed that I had to try another tactic. Without speaking, I knelt and held up the popsicle sticks. I turned my hand around so that they could see every angle. Then, in silence, I slowly started weaving the yarn around the sticks. Their eyes reflected a concentration that was filled with both curiosity and understanding. I repeated this a few more times, each time faster than the last. Then I stood up and gave them a thumbs-up. I walked over to Lily.

“How’re your kids doing?” I asked.

“They’re getting the hang of it. I had to explain it a lot of times. How’re yours doing?”

I looked over and saw all of them, even the Adderall kid, holding up their ornaments with giant smiles on their faces.

I grinned. “They’re doing alright.”