

The Arts Unit Learning Hub  
On line arts education support  
wherever & whenever you need it.

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These classroom activities by Lisa Godfrey accompany the Learning Hub eModule:  
'Using wire as a sculptural medium' as part of the Learning Hub Series *Extending Practical Arts Making Skills*

**The below activities address:**  
**Professional Teaching Standards:**

2.1.2 - Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teacher activities.

3.1.2 - Set explicit, challenging and achievable learning goals for all students.

4.2.2 - Establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.

6.2.2 - Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice targeted to professional needs and school and /or system priorities

**Lesson Plan Ideas**

Blind Contour Drawing
<p><b>WHY</b> teach blind contour drawing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quietens down the part of the brain that thinks it already knows what the subject looks like.</li><li>• Simplifies the subject to its essential lines, making it a great reference for creating a wire sculpture.</li><li>• Teaches students to draw what they see. Their attention is focused entirely on the subject and not the drawing.</li><li>• Improves hand-eye coordination</li><li>• Is a great warm up activity before any observational drawing lesson.</li></ul>

### TEACHING TIPS

- If working from a photocopied image warm up with 8 continuous line drawings on A4 paper.
- For the first 2 drawings use the image right way up, with students using their normal hand.
- For the second 2 drawings use the image upside down (or if drawing from an object, turn it to a new angle)
- **Repeat** these steps with students using their opposite hand.

For younger students often the desire to look at their drawing is too great and they need some discouragement. Blinders are great for concealing their drawings. In the image below you can see it in use. It's just an A4 piece of cardboard with a pencil pushed through the centre. The cardboard rests on the hand. Consider asking the students who finish first to push their blinder down onto the page, covering their drawing. Ask students to reveal their work at the same time.

*\*You will notice a marked improvement in students observational drawings if you warm up with continuous line drawings.*

### WIRE TIPS

- It can be tempting to jump in and solve construction problems for younger students. However, if you offer suggestions and give them time and space, they will find their own solutions.
- Give a single 1meter length with no cutting to make the initial body of the sculpture.
- Consider thinner wire and coloured wire to create detail. You may also like to use decorative elements such as beads.
- For students who appear to have a natural flair for the medium, you could extend them by introducing other joining techniques apart from twisting.
- Use a contour drawing as your reference as the lines have already been simplified for you.
- You can adapt the activity to other areas of focus in KLA's. For example insects to accompany study of Minibeasts

- Do not distribute scissors until the first long piece has been used to form the main structure.
- Consider documenting the process and printing the photos as part of the projects presentation in the classroom and around the school. 'Explain Everything' is a great ipad app students can use to document and explain the process.

### **Extension activities**

#### **DRAWING EXTENSION**

- You may consider inviting your students to play with the shadows cast in their sculpture. Cast the wire shadows onto paper and draw over the shadow lines. Repeat with different angles, overlapping the lines. Combine and experiment with a variety of drawing media such as charcoal, watercolour pencil and water soluble graphite.
- **Tip:** The closer the sculpture is to the paper the sharper the shadow lines cast, and the further away, the softer and thicker the line. Students may replicate the lines cast by choosing the most appropriate media. For example, blurring charcoal for distant shadows.

#### **About The Arts Unit Learning Hub**

The Learning Hub has been developed to provide access to quality arts education support from The Arts Unit wherever and whenever you need it. Through a mixture of short, targeted, skill specific videos that demonstrate best practice and a range of interactive eLearning modules, learners are able to explore content in a way that is both meaningful and memorable. An activity record that details the time you have spent on professional learning as well as a breakdown of the teaching standards the content has been exploring ensures your investment in continuing professional development is documented.

**Link to more professional learning modules:** <https://learninghub.artsunit.nsw.edu.au>