



## LESSON PLAN:

# Making Connections Between Art, the Natural Environment and Mindfulness

by Margit Moezzi and Rory Angus

The goal of this lesson is to have students learn basic crochet stitches and have the end result be a granny square. Students will have gained a better understanding of how to utilize plastic in an environmental-friendly manner, in a way that gives them a new skill that can both function as a useful tool and a meditative practice.

### Objectives:

Students will:

- Gain a better understanding of their carbon footprint and where their plastic bags go and come from.
- Make connections between crocheting and mindfulness: a way to create an activity to help with stress and meditation.
- Foster a connection between science and art: talk about the impact that plastic bags have on the climate, they always end up in landfills.

### Grade level:

Middle School/Junior High Level

### Duration:

40 minutes – Learning times among participants may vary

This project could essentially go on, in a classroom setting, for however long the teachers want it to. It could be used as a meditation activity before class everyday for 5-10 minutes or could be done as a quick class project where the students are then encouraged to continue the practice at home if it is something they enjoy.

**Materials:**

- Plastic bags: 1 plastic bag goes a long way, so to start out 1 bag per student would be great
- Crochet hooks, recommended 10mm size
- Stitch holders
- Ribbon: under a ½ inch wide

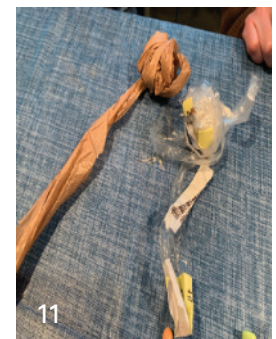
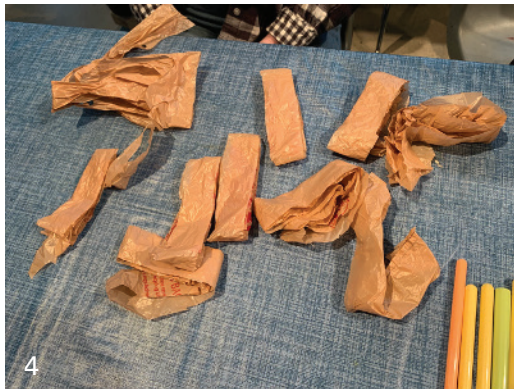
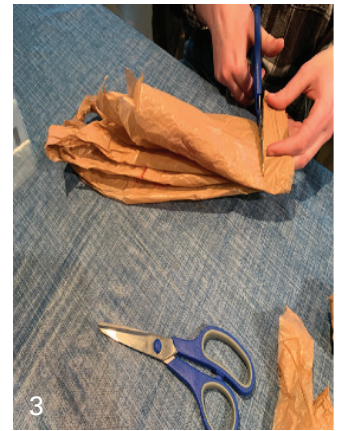
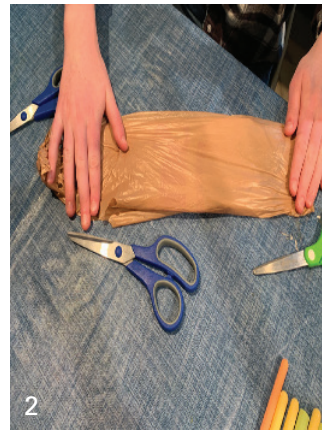
**Vocabulary/Key Terms:**

- Mindfulness – The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment to moment basis.
- Crochet – Needlework consisting of the interlocking of looped stitches formed with a single thread and a hooked needle. Key terms include: single-crochet, double-crochet, half double crochet, chain, slip stitch, magic circle, etc.
- Repurpose – Using things that already exist to create something new.

## Activity

**Prep Plastic Bags into Strands:**

- First step of the activity is to have the plastic bags made into strands, to do this the bag must be folded and cut into strips. Retaining the loops and discarding the handles and very bottom.
- To tie the bags together you will do a slip knot. To make a slip knot, take one plastic bag loop in the left hand and one in the right. Put the left side of the right loop through the right side of the left loop. So the loop in your left hand is going to be underneath the loop in the right hand. Then you will take the right side of the right loop and put it through the previous loop from this strip that you made and pull it tight.
- Be careful when pulling the bags tight, they break very easily.
- When all of your loops are connected, wind the bags into a ball.
- Optional for teachers to complete this step ahead of time or have students do it.
- Here is a great video breaking down this process: [How to make a ball of yarn out of plastic grocery bags](#).



**Crocheting:**

- Please note that there are different ways and methods to crochet. Depending on the individual, some can be easier to pick up than others. There are many wonderful videos and resources that help break this down and offer visual references. These have been used in this lesson throughout these steps.
- First step is to make a simple loop at the start of your strand and tighten it onto the crochet hook. Video: [How to crochet for Beginners](#)
- Demonstrate how to do a basic bike chain. The next further steps and stitches can be shown when students feel confident enough to move forward.
- Give a step by step on how to make a granny square. Go through each stitch: single crochet, double crochet, slip stitch, half double crochet, chain. Video: [How to crochet a granny square](#)
- Talk about what granny squares can be made into and present examples such as sweaters, pot holders, blankets, etc. (see below images). Video: [How to crochet a bag out of plastic bags](#)
- While working teach and discuss about plastic bags and reusable resources for crocheting and the impact that these materials have on the environment when thrown away.

**Methods for Assessment:**

Assessment before the lesson:

- Prior to lesson students should have a discussion about how plastic (primarily plastic bags) has a negative impact on the environment.

Assessment during the lesson:

- One of the goals of the lesson itself is for it to also be a meditative process, so throughout this practice remind students of this
- Gain dexterity

Assessment after the lesson:

- Small group discussion of how, after gaining this new skill of being able to crochet, students can use this in other ways (things like tote bags, lanyards, etc.)

## Additional Resources

**Resource Videos: (same as above)**

- [How to make a ball of yarn out of plastic grocery bags](#)
- [How to crochet for Beginners](#)
- [How to crochet a granny square](#)
- [How to crochet a bag out of plastic bags](#)



**Resource Links:**

- [Environmental impact resource](#)
- [Granny square sweater vest](#)
- [5 DIY recycled plastic bags](#)
- [Miscellaneous granny square items](#)
- [Granny square jacket](#)
- [Granny square sweater vest](#)
- [Granny square tote bag](#)



### State Core Links:

- **Create: Standard 7–8.E.CR.4:** Structure and critique ideas, plans, prototypes, and production processes for media arts productions, considering intent, resources, and the presentation context.
- **Perform/Present: Standard 7–8.E.P.4:** Demonstrate adaptability using tools and techniques in standard and experimental ways to achieve an assigned purpose and to communicate intent in constructing media artworks.
- **Respond: Standard 7–8.E.R.3:** Compare, contrast, and analyze how various forms, methods, and styles in media artworks manage audience experience and create intention.
- **Connect/Analyze: Standard 7–8.E.CO.3:** Explain and demonstrate how media artworks expand meaning, knowledge, and cultural experiences.

### Artwork Spotlight:



Drunell Levinson (born 1951) *Fort Knocks*, New York City, 1998. Aluminum-wrapped condoms with embroidery thread. Collection American Folk Art Museum, New York Gift of the artist, 2018.18.3.

*Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts* was organized by the American Folk Art Museum, New York and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC



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