OUTREACH EDUCATION

Grenfell Art Gallery on Grenfell Campus, Memorial University is the public gallery for Corner Brook and the Western Newfoundland region. The gallery engages in collaborative partnerships with like-minded local, regional, national and international artists, organizations and institutions. Part of the Grenfell Art Gallery’s mandate is to respond to the specific context of Western Newfoundland, by critically engaging local, national and international interests that are resonant with our current moment socially, culturally and politically.

Grenfell Art Gallery celebrates and shares the unique nature of Newfoundland and Labrador by hosting public programs, residencies, visiting artists and curator programs, and other outreach activities that amplify the specificity of our place. The gallery focuses on serving the public while remaining aware of and responsive to the needs of our cross-cultural community.

My name is Lorna and I’m a current graduate student with Memorial University of Newfoundland who is working for the Grenfell Art Gallery. I have developed the following “lesson” for students (and adults too) that can be used to provide an educational opportunity that aligns with Grenfell Art Gallery’s mission to support community. Included at the end are some learning outcomes, from the NLESQ curriculum guide, that the following activity meets.

Learn to Crochet a NAN BLANKET or GRANNY SQUARE BLANKET

When Newfoundlander, musician and CBC host, Tom Power, recently began hosting the show “What’re You At?” from his home, I noticed the crocheted blanket over the back of his couch. Apparently, these throws are called “Nan Blankets”. Since the COVID-19 crisis began, it has been increasing important for people to occupy themselves at home. For me, learning how to crochet [kroh-shey] a colourful blanket seemed an extremely
meditative, productive, and even nurturing prospect. Just so you know, I didn’t know how to crochet until about a week ago.

Here’s a YouTube link to “What’re You At?” If you watch the first few seconds of this video you will see the blanket that inspired me and, I hope, will inspire you too.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bnkSYrCPK1

If Tom Power’s nan blanket doesn’t provide inspiration enough, perhaps Canadian interdisciplinary textile artist, Barb Hunt, who is based in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, can cause you to pick up a crochet hook. Hunt’s work focuses on themes such as relationships, gender, mourning, and recuperation. On her website she writes that “after the death of my father I found myself involved in highly repetitive textile work and knew it was my way of mourning. This labour-intensive work seems to be a common way of coping with grief and loss, as cloth has strong associations with protection and healing”. Over the last few weeks, during these times of isolation, I found myself on a vigorous mission: my crochet blanket. I see now that creating it is a coping skill, as a way of remaining productive. The rituals of textile art is explicitly connected to Barb Hunt’s art practice.

To read more about Barb Hunt and see her work visit: http://www.barbhunt.com/

MATERIALS:

Crochet Hook (I use 7.0mm size, it’s large)

Bodkin/Darning Needle*

Scissors

Yarn
My mom and grandma gave me bags of remnant yarn, which are scraps from their previous projects. Both my mom and grandma taught me to knit and both can crochet. The scraps are not exactly the same gauge* of yarn, but they are
DEFINITIONS:

**Bodkin/Darning Needle** - A really large sewing needle with a huge “eye” that yarn can pass through.

**Gauge** - the thickness of yarn or wool.

**Rows** – The number of crocheted outlines within one granny square. See photo:

![Image of a granny square with hands pointing to the rows]

This square has five “rows” – note the five colours used to create each row.

**MATERIALS**

- Crochet Hook size 7.0mm
- Bodkin/Darning Needle
- Scissors
- Yarn

**DEFINITIONS THAT WILL BE HELPFUL:**

Bodkin/Darning Needle - A really large sewing needle with a huge “eye” that yarn can pass through.

Gauge - the thickness of yarn or wool.
STEP ONE:

Create a slip knot by making a loop and pushing the working yarn through the hole. Attach the slip knot to your crochet needle. As long as the loop will close around your crochet needle, that’s all you need.

STEP TWO:

Make four chain stitches. Begin by wrapping your piece of yarn around the right side of your needle, as shown in first photo below.

Pull the working piece of yarn through the first loop on your needle. This technique is called a chain stitch. Do this motion of pulling the working yarn through the loop on the needle, four times. This will create four chain stitches.
STEP THREE:

These four chain stitches are what is going to make the center hole in the middle of your granny square. Once you have four chain stitches, you put your needle through the center of the first chain stitch on the end, so now you have two on the crochet hook.

Hold the work on the left of the crochet hook and use the other two fingers to grab the working yarn and pull it through the first loop on your hook and then pull it through the second loop as well.
STEP FOUR:

Now we are going to start making the four “shells” around the center hole. The square you will make by doing this will create the first “row” in the granny square. To start making your first shell, you are going to do three chain stitches (the same stitch you began with).

This is a shell.
**STEP FIVE:**

You will now do a double crochet. The only two stitches you will need to know during this process is the double crochet and the chain stitch, which you have already learned.

To complete the double crochet: begin by wrapping the working yarn around the crochet hook, just as you would to begin a chain stitch.

Next, put your crochet hook through the hole of your middle circle.

With your needle through the hole, grab the working yarn and pull it back through the hole.
Now you should have three stitches on your crochet hook.

Now you want to add a fourth stitch onto your crochet hook. To do that, simply wrap the working yarn around the right side of the crochet hook, just as you have been doing in the previous steps.

Then you will pull the fourth stitch through the third and second stitch. You will then be left with two stitches on your crochet hook, as shown below:
To complete the double crochet, you must wrap the working yarn around the crochet hook one more time, and then pull that through the second and first stitch.

![Image of double crochet process]

You will then be left with one stitch on your crochet needle. You now completed one double crochet!

To complete your first shell, you must do one more double crochet. If you need more guidance, go back to the beginning of STEP FIVE and follow through all of the same instructions until you return back to this point.
STEP SIX:

Once you have completed your third, double crochet, you will have completed your first shell! It should look like this:

Once your first shell is completed, you want to create the corner of the square. To create a corner, you do **two chain stitches**.
STEP SEVEN:

Now you are going to make your second shell by doing the exact same process of the double crochet as you learned above. You want to do three double crochets to complete one shell. Once you complete your second shell, it should look like this:

You will now make two chain stitches, just as you did last time, to create another corner.

STEP EIGHT:

Create your third shell by doing three more double crochets. Refer back to STEP FIVE if you need more guidance on how to do a double crochet. It should now look like this:

You will have three shells, with two little holes in each corner.

Once your third shell is complete, you once again make two chain stitches to turn the next corner.
STEP NINE:

Create your fourth shell by doing three more double crochets. Refer back to STEP FIVE if you need more guidance on how to do a double crochet. It should now look like this:

You have now completed your fourth shell.

STEP TEN:

To finish the first “row” of your granny square, you must do two more chain stitches to create the fourth corner. Next, we are going to attach our final corner, to our first shell. To do this, you are going to put your crochet hook in the corner of your first shell:

Then, grab the working yarn and pull it back through the same hole, you will then have two stitches on your crochet hook:
Then grab the working yarn and wrap it around your crochet hook:

You will then pull the third stitch through the second and first stitch, you will then have one stitch left on your crochet hook:

You will then wrap the working yarn around one more time and pull it through the first stitch. You will end up with a loop, which you can now take your crochet hook out of and cut the loop.

You have now completed the center of your first granny square!
To tuck away the loose end of yarn, you simply take your yarn needle/bodkin and thread the loose piece of yarn into the top of the square.

Now you have row one complete.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ON FINISHING THE GRANNY SQUARE:

To add the second row, you create another slipknot and attach it to your crochet hook. Reach through one of the corner holes on the center row you just completed with the crochet hook and pull the working yarn through the hole. Then pull the second stitch through the first stitch. You should now have your second row attached to your first row.

Now you essentially follow the same steps as you did in the beginning. You create three chain stitches, and then do two double crochets. You then do two chain stitches to turn the corner and follow that with three double crochets to create the next shell.

The most important part about adding rows is: when you do only one chain stitch, it creates a straight line instead of turning the corner. Once you create the straight away, you can continue making your next shell with three double crochets. Then turn the corner with two chain stitches and repeat the three double crochets for the next shell.
If you do two chain stitches in a row it will turn the corner on you, if you do just one, it will go straight. Note that with each row you add, you will add an extra straight away on each side. Be mindful of when you are turning a corner and when you want to go straight.

Now you can keep going. Essentially you could make an entire afghan by making the first row, the second row, the third row, and keep adding. Or you can make a bunch of different squares of the same size and sew them together using a whip stitch. Happy making!

**FURTHER NOTES ON PROCEDURE:**

During COVID-19 isolation practices, I could only get a bit of verbal advice over the phone from my grandma (she doesn't FaceTime) so I had to look elsewhere for a tutorial. Of course, there’s a plethora of YouTube tutorials on the subject and after checking out a few, I came across Jayda InStitches hour long video. This is who taught me to crochet. I watched the video in starts and stops, pausing as I went, to catch up, or rewatch her techniques. All the credit goes to Jayda’s easily understandable online tutorial.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_5nIpXgBOM
CONSOLIDATION:

At first, I used my hand and fingers to manually push the loops of yarn around over and through the hook. It was awkward. The more squares I made, the better I got at it, until I now use the crochet hook almost as smoothly as Jayda InStitches. I tell you this to encourage you to keep practicing, I know the technique will come. I’ve decided to make a 6 square by 8 square (48 granny squares in total) blanket to start. I’ve completed 12 squares so far…I encourage you to start with one.

**Ties to NLESD Curriculum Guide**

(There are likely more ties to the curriculum guide for this activity, but here are a few for Grades 4 and up). Smaller children are also able to learn how to crochet, however, learning from a video may be more difficult for some).

**Visual Art 1202, Art & Design 2200, 3200**

GSO 3. Students will be expected to demonstrate critical awareness of and the value for the role of the arts in creating and reflecting culture.

3.401 analyze and make informed judgments about the role that visual creations have in our everyday modes of expression.
3.402 demonstrate an understanding of the complexities of art works.
3.403 understand the influence of the visual arts, their impact on daily life, and their power to create, alter, and reflect culture.
3.404 understand how ideas, perceptions, and feelings are embodied in art works of a culture.
3.405 explore how the visual arts of their own culture are used as a vehicle of cultural production and transmission.

**Grades 7, 8, 9**

GCO 1. Students will be expected to explore, challenge, develop, and express ideas, using the skills, language, techniques, and processes of the arts.

1.3.2 Assess and utilize the properties of various art media and their ability to convey messages and meaning.

**Elementary Art - Grades 4, 5, 6**

GCO 1. Students will be expected to explore, challenge, develop, and express ideas, using the skills, language, techniques, processes, and language.

1.2.2 Demonstrate and apply knowledge of basic art skills, techniques, processes, and language.