

Sensing Form: Using Feel to Manipulate Clay with Linda Green

By [Linda Green](#)

This resource is based on a CPD (Continual Professional Development) session led by [Linda Green](#) as part of the Somerset Primary Art Conference organised by [SPAEDA](#) at [Hestercombe](#). Primary school teachers were taken on a sensory journey exploring sight, feel and memory.

Linda Green is a retired Art teacher of thirty years and it is with great pleasure that AccessArt is able to share this very special workshop session with its readers.

Tuning in to the Senses

Drawing with Feel

To start, objects were hidden in plastic bags which participants were asked to draw using their sense of touch.





Drawing with Sight

Teachers were then asked to take their object out of its bag and explore drawing it by sight, or 'looking.'







Comparing drawings: those drawn with feel and those with sight

On completion of two drawings, one through touch only, and the second, more conventionally through close looking, participants were asked to reflect on the tasks and their sensory awareness, both visual and tactile.

A print out of [Merit Oppenheim's 'Fur Teacup'](#) was shown to teachers, challenging expectations of an object's function. Imagine drinking hot tea through fur!

Making Sculpture Blind

Teachers were then blindfolded and given a lump of clay which they manipulated from the memory of the object that they'd just drawn.



After drawing a rabbit through sight and touch a teacher goes on to create it through memory, using only touch



Making a clay star fish in the blind

Whilst working teachers were asked to consider how these activities could applied back in their classrooms?

Or how the choice of objects, e.g. shells, bones and natural forms, vintage toys, kitchenalia or unusual objects, could be a starting point leading to subsequent projects, themed areas of learning or discussion?



The tea strainer challenges the individual when considering convex and concave structures



From blind drawing to making in the blind - A 1940's potato slicer triggered a discussion about homes and living in that decade



Teachers are asked to reflect on how they are working: tactile, through touch, intuitively from memory and familiarity, and to reflect on how they may be able to apply this task back in their own classroom settings

Most remarkable about this challenge, was that once the blindfold was removed, the memory made clay models revealed, resembled greatly the actual objects they were meant to represent.



Finished star fish made in clay blind-folded



Revealed! A 1940's potato slicer - An interesting and unusual shape, unfamiliar and with a specific function and purpose.



An air freshener! The electrical plug in air freshener posed difficulties, but could be used as a starting point for design problem solving when tasked with designing something for a non sighted person.



The pulley and chain, a fascinating object



A collapsible toy: challenging and difficult, yet very familiar



A vintage toy car with it's aerodynamic shape...

Thanks

Many thanks to [Linda Green](#) for sharing her ideas and teaching with AccessArt.

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