The Same Old Shoe CONTOUR DRAWING

By Len Mathes

After giving the oh-so-familiar, contour-drawing-of-a-shoe lesson to my eighth graders for the umpteenth year, I decided it was time to liven things up. The results were exciting for both me and my students.

I introduced blind contour drawing by having my students follow along with me as I drew a variety of shapes on the chalkboard. The "rules" were:

- Do not lift the pencil off the paper.
- Draw in one continuous line, "like one piece of spaghetti."
- Do not look at the contour drawings!

To help students refrain from looking at their drawings, I first had them take a piece of 8½" x 11" newsprint and pierce their pencils through the middle and hold onto their pencil from underneath the newsprint. This prevented them from peeking at what they were drawing.

Contour drawing is a basic way to train the eye and hand to work as a team, and it helps to teach students to observe all those beautiful details. But make sure they slow down to let their eyes catch up with their hands.

After drawing shapes from the board and experiencing various contortions of their hands, students then moved on to drawing their shoes from a side view. The only change in the final drawing was that they could now look at their drawings. But there was still no lifting of the pencil!

As always, the shoe drawings looked great and the students got a kick out of the "blind" drawing technique. I then had them trace this drawing with tracing paper.

Next, I gave them a square piece of white drawing paper, which was the same size as the contour shoe drawing. On this paper, students lightly traced the shoe four times, with the shoes overlapping each other, in a square configuration. For tracing, we used a light table, but a window would have worked just as well.

In the final step, the students decorated the new overlapping shapes with a variety of designs, using thin colored markers. At this point, my only
...NOT!

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