



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Education

Master of  
Educational  
Technology  
Program



# Visible Mending Challenge

Sustainable Actions in the Face of Fast Fashion

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## Overview of the Challenge

Our modern relationship with fashion and clothing has changed in the past few decades due to the availability of cheap synthetic materials, manufacturing overseas, and the rise of the fast fashion industry. This has had a negative impact on the environment due to pollution associated with the acquisition of raw materials, processing of materials, transportation of products, and textile waste that is often unable to be recycled. The impact on people living in developing countries, where garments are frequently manufactured and later disposed of, is greater than in developed countries who are the greatest consumers of fast fashion. One way that we can improve the sustainable nature of our clothing choices is by keeping the clothing we have longer and learning ways to repair clothing so that it has a longer lifespan. Visible mending is a simple type of mending that requires few skills but can be very effective for repairing and beautifying clothing items in a unique and personalized way. Cultures around the world have traditional types of clothing repair that are used in visible mending. Examining your own actions as they relate to sustainable fashion, learn about and apply visible mending techniques to extend the life of a garment.

## Materials and Resources Required

- A worn item of clothing or an accessory made of a non-flexible woven fabric. These could have patches where the fabric is thin, torn, or discoloured, but they should be clean. Jeans, backpacks, flannel or button-down shirts, and cargo pants are good for this. Avoid bringing t-shirts, hoodies, or sweatpants unless you intend to provide Stick N Stitch Stabilizer (or similar) as the material is too stretchy on its own for many of the creative mending techniques.
- Mobile devices to access online materials
- Coloured pencils
- Darning and embroidery needles
- Embroidery Floss (various colours and white)
- Thread
- Scissors
- Needle Threaders
- Fabric Glue or hot glue gun
- Felt
- Fabric Scraps
- Buttons
- 3-inch or 4-inch embroidery hoops
- micro:bit kits
- Optional: Shashiko Needles, Stitch stabilizer (if students will be embroidering on t-shirts), Fabric Paint, Paint Brushes, Stitch-on sequins, hot glue guns, sewing machine, tennis balls (for darning), repurposed fur, fabric scraps in durable natural fibers.

Introductory [Article](#) on Visible Mending:

## Mending: An Ancient Craft for Modern Times

May 1, 2020  
By RUTH TERRY



## Visible Mending Choice Board:

**Visible Mending Challenge Choice Board** [The Quilted Embroidery Artist](#)

Choose one or two types of mending from the choice board to explore and use them as inspiration for mending a worn item of your own clothing in a way that will increase its lifespan and encourage you to wear it more.

<p><b>Sashiko:</b></p> <p>Explore the Japanese mending art of sashiko and its cultural relevance through this <a href="#">video</a>.</p> <p>Visit this <a href="#">video</a> to get ideas for how you can use more scraps of machine-made stitching and incorporate them into mending your item.</p>	<p><b>Darning:</b></p> <p>The earliest example of darning dates back to Ancient Egypt. Discover the darning technique in this <a href="#">video</a> (starts at 2:54) and on woven cotton in this <a href="#">video</a>. Try the same or different fabric? Would you use the same or different fabric? Would you use the same or why not?</p>	<p><b>Kantha and Embroidery:</b></p> <p>Kantha is a traditional Indian embroidery method of mending and beautifying holes. Read this <a href="#">video</a> about the history of this art form. Learn how to do this way! <a href="#">video</a></p> <p>Watch these <a href="#">shorts</a> on Kantha used in visible mending outside of the Kantha tradition to cover holes in clothing.</p>
<p><b>Sewing on a Patch:</b></p> <p>Patching clothing means to add a piece of fabric on top of or behind a hole to repair it. Watch this <a href="#">video</a> on patching jeans and use a new or creative method of attaching a patch more decoratively with a <a href="#">video</a>.</p>	<p><b>Sewing on a Button:</b></p> <p>Losing buttons like buttons is a common reason why garments get thrown away. Learn how to <a href="#">sew a button</a> and use the technique to fix a missing button on your garment or use buttons to embellish your visible mending in a creative way.</p>	<p><b>Lighting up your Mending:</b></p> <p>How could you incorporate technology into your mending and how could this benefit your visible mending? Try out some of these <a href="#">ideas</a> on your mended and find a creative way to incorporate the fun factor into your visible mending project. Remember to make the mending easily removable for washing!</p>



## Inclusive Maker Challenge Instructions

1. Have students work collaboratively (groups of 3 max) to learn about different kinds of visible mending and apply these techniques to mending their own clothing items. Students should also share any mending techniques that they know from home with their group and incorporate these into their design.
2. In groups they read this [article](#) on visible mending and the history of that practice.



3. Have students explore a [visible mending choice board](#) to learn about different mending techniques and traditions. They should use at least one of the techniques mentioned to incorporate into mending their own clothing item.



## Challenge Objectives

- Implement the design process of understanding context, defining, ideating, prototyping, testing, making, and sharing using visible mending techniques as a way to create a more sustainable relationship with fashion.
- Learn about and practice skills for different mending practices, some associated with cultural traditions, basic techniques, and expanding into the realm of e-textiles.
- Engage in the design process to produce a creative visible mending solution for an item of clothing that includes exploration of new techniques building on current textile skills.
- Investigate aspects of culture and family traditions that impact the way in which people interact with clothing and identify cultural practices that can create a more sustainable relationship with clothing.

## Critical Questions for Consideration

- What mending techniques are practical and useful in repairing the types of clothes that you and your family wear?
- What traditional mending techniques exist around the world and how did these techniques come to be in their cultural and historical context?
- What mending techniques are used within your family and culture?
- What are my current skills with hand sewing? What skills can I learn to be able to accomplish this challenge in a way that builds on my existing skills?
- Who is responsible for caring for (washing, folding, storing) and mending clothes in my family? How could sharing the responsibility for the care of fabric items make fashion choices more sustainable?
- How is mended clothing perceived by your peer group? How does this impact your views on mending and how do these views affect how sustainable your fashion choices are?

## Background/ Additional Information

Although a variety of resources are included in the visible mending choice board the following resources can provide added context for the rising popularity of visible mending and practical things to consider when undertaking this challenge.

[New York Times Article on Visible Mending.](#)



[Visible Mending: 10 Basic Principles to Get You Started Mending your Clothes](#)



[Repair What you Wear Website](#)



## Inclusivity Focus

Students may find this task challenging and the teacher will need to circulate to help guide students towards an enriching but achievable choice board option if they are feeling overwhelmed. Highlighting that there are many different options for various skill levels included in the choice board before they start exploring it can be helpful.

You may be able to identify some students who would appreciate using different materials that minimize the need for sewing due to fine motor challenges. Having fabric glue and fabric paint on hand makes this activity much easier to access for any students who need accommodations. It allows for creative expression and the use of mending practices without the need for sewing. Students may know another sewing technique from home or from their own culture. Encourage students to use these if they feel that it would work well for the purposes of mending. You may want to ask students beforehand if there are any materials they might want for a sewing activity so that you can acquire these, taking into account mending techniques from a variety of cultures that may require specialized materials.

It is important for students to thoroughly explore resources in order to empathize before defining the problem that they are looking to address through their maker challenge as is demonstrated in the Diagram of the [design thinking process based on IDEO model by Ali Boese](#). This will also help them build appreciation and understanding of the meaning of different mending techniques within their cultural context and why the use of these techniques must be approached with respect.



# No-Tech, Low-Tech, High-Tech Options

For this challenge, students have the option of using very low-tech mending with glue, felt, and buttons or expanding their skills into more challenging sewing techniques. They also can choose to bring in more high-tech solutions through using micro:bits. No-tech, Low-tech, and high-tech options for this challenge are integrated into the choice board for this activity.

## Extensions

- A very motivated class or group of students may choose to start their own school-based version of a repair café for clothing items or toys.
- They can also delve deeper into programming micro:bits and find ways to include electronics in visible mending.
- Students could showcase their work in a visible mending fashion show or display to help encourage enthusiasm for the idea of mending clothing within their peer group or school community.
- Students could work with younger buddy classes to help them use mending techniques that are appropriate for their skill level using fabric glue and felt.