

AAW Best Practices

Section: (new) **Teaching Woodturning**

Paper: **Starting a high school woodturning program**

Here are steps that, if followed, have a high probability of success

1. Find a school with a wood technology program (e. g., shop class)

Locate the instructor of record and introduce yourself and your idea. Discuss what the benefit is to the instructor first and how you can help him/her accomplish those goals. Be sure to assure the teacher of your depth of knowledge in the woodturning subject and the commitment to a long term relationship with enough available resources to sustain the program year after year.

Discuss:

- What you offer
 - Knowledge, skill, manpower
- What he/she gains
 - Renewed student interest
 - New woodworking skill area
 - Assistance in the class room - less student to direct, more eyes on all work processes

2. Find a volunteer crew

If the introduction goes well, you then must locate and recruit your volunteer “staff” It is my belief that “winging it” by yourself will not be effective or sustainable. While finding individuals to support your program can work, the more effective technique would be to locate the nearest AAW affiliate chapter, present your concept, discuss the value to the chapter, the turning community, and the student themselves. Organize your presentation to gain the best commitment. No AAW chapter? Locate a wood working club with wood turning members

3. Deal with the equipment requirements

Many schools will have older lathes and probably old tools: start with what they have and build a desire for newer, modern items over time. Also it may be possible to loan or donate mini lathes for the program. Be sure to establish a loan time frame – 1-2 years.

As the program catches on grant funds can be solicited from the AAW EOG grants (see guidelines for submission elsewhere posted on the AAW website) or federal Perkins grant funds available for technology purchases through the state’s administration. The school’s wood technology teacher should be knowledgeable of the local processes for submission.

4. Negotiate with the instructor for classroom roles and responsibilities

Here is a list of items that need to be clarified with the instructor and agreed to by the volunteers you recruit:

- Schedule, which classes, what hours, how many times per week

- Discuss and document the lesson plan, what will be taught, program standards for completion, etc. You need a process, a set of activities and an agreement on ONE PROCESS. (See the AAW Teaching Guide book for content ideas)
- Determine what school district requirements must be met by you and your volunteers (the coaches)
- Negotiate the in-classroom role of the coaches: what are their responsibilities inside and outside the turning program

5. Warm up your processes, practice your activities

With your coaching staff, practice all activities and lectures. Agree on only one way to perform the activities so that there is continuity between volunteers from one day to the next. Plan communications between volunteers to discuss progress and issues from one session to the next; discuss how to engage the students in corrective actions

6. Plan a kick off at the school

- Arrange a work day for the teacher and coaching staff to assure all is ready for a kick off
- Schedule an introduction demonstration to “sell” the program to potential students
- With the teacher select the appropriate student turning candidates, set a first session
 - Introduce the coaches
 - Discuss the volunteers’ classroom role and responsibilities with the selected students
 - Briefly introduce the series of activities and the program goals
 - Review safety behaviors to be used exclusively around the lathes