



Enhancing technical workshop handouts

Jade Gellard, Specialist technician, BA Fashion Contour

Positionality

- White British Neurodivergent Female.
- Deep rooted belief in 'Universal design for learning'.
- Graduate of BA Fashion Contour 2016.
- Specialist Technician on the same course 2021 onwards.



Fig. 1 Jade Gellard with a mannequin (Author / date unknown)



Fig.2 O'Driscoll, G (2025) Jade Gellard in workshop delivery.



Rationale

- Students rely on technical handouts. Current materials lack clarity and scaffolding.
- Inaccessible handouts increases reliance on 1:1 support. There is visible anxiety and disengagement.
- 30% of students have declared disabilities and many more face hidden or language-related barriers.
- Inconsistent resources undermine equity independence.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) promotes anticipating difference, not reacting to it.
- Redesigning handouts embeds inclusive practice into everyday teaching.



‘when students should request this kind of support, some of them do not use it because they do not want to reveal their disability.’

(Gerrard and Shurville 2007; McAndrew, Farrow, and Cooper 2012)

Original handout

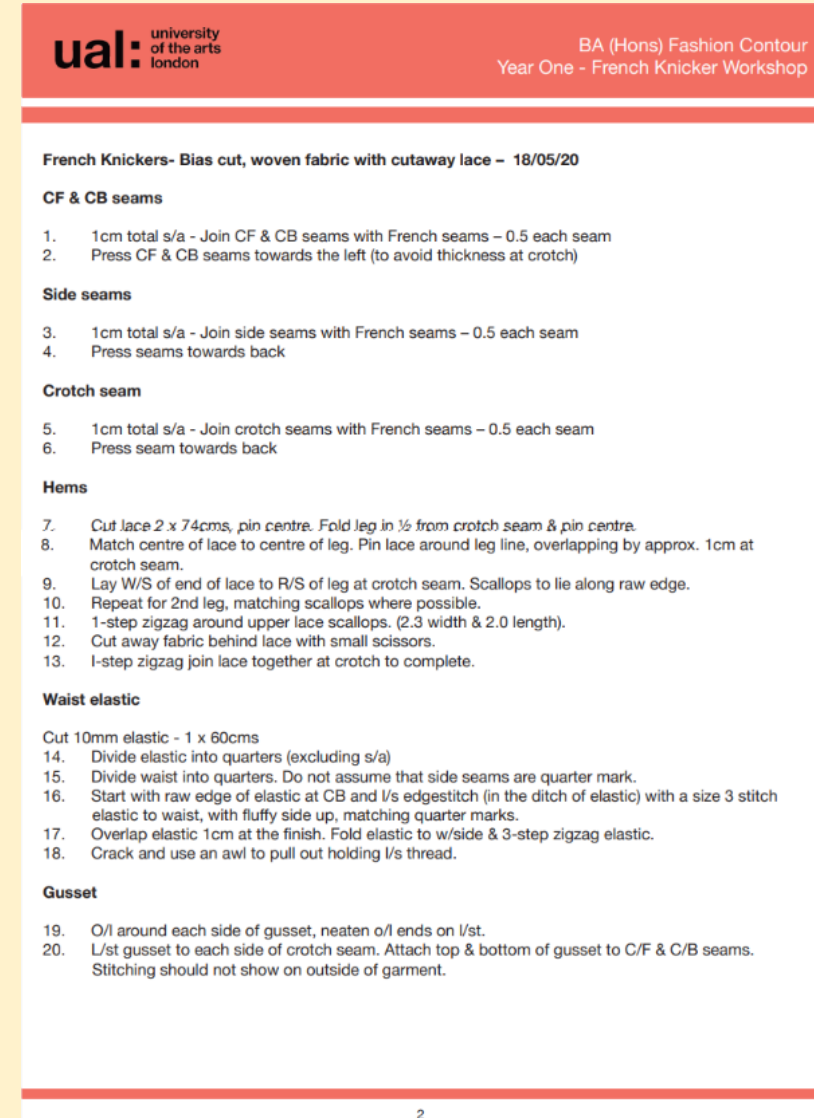
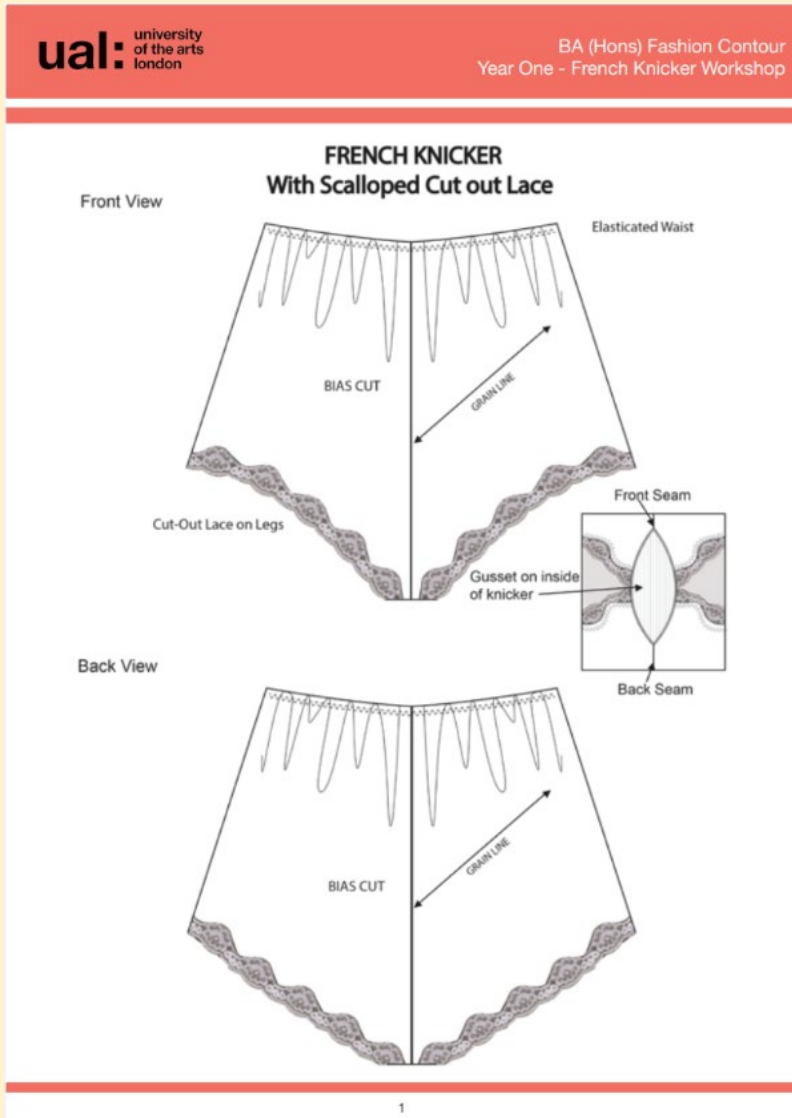


Fig. 3/4 BA Fashion Contour Handout. London College of Fashion



- Abbreviations with no glossary.
- No visual guides.
- White paper (option for yellow).
- Complex methods with little explanation.
- Delivery in workshop does not always align with handout.
- Not in line with dyslexia guidelines.



Vysotsky's zone of proximal development

- ZPD bridges what students can do alone / with support.
- Clear handouts act as scaffolding.
- Reduces over-reliance on 1:1 support in busy times.
- Supports confidence and independence.
- Enables students to move toward autonomous technical practice.



Choosing a focus group

- Generates qualitative feedback.
- Encourages shared discussion and reflection.
- Allows participants to build on ideas.
- Supports inclusive participation.
- Suitable for neurodiverse students.
- Directly informs improvements to practice.

Focus group

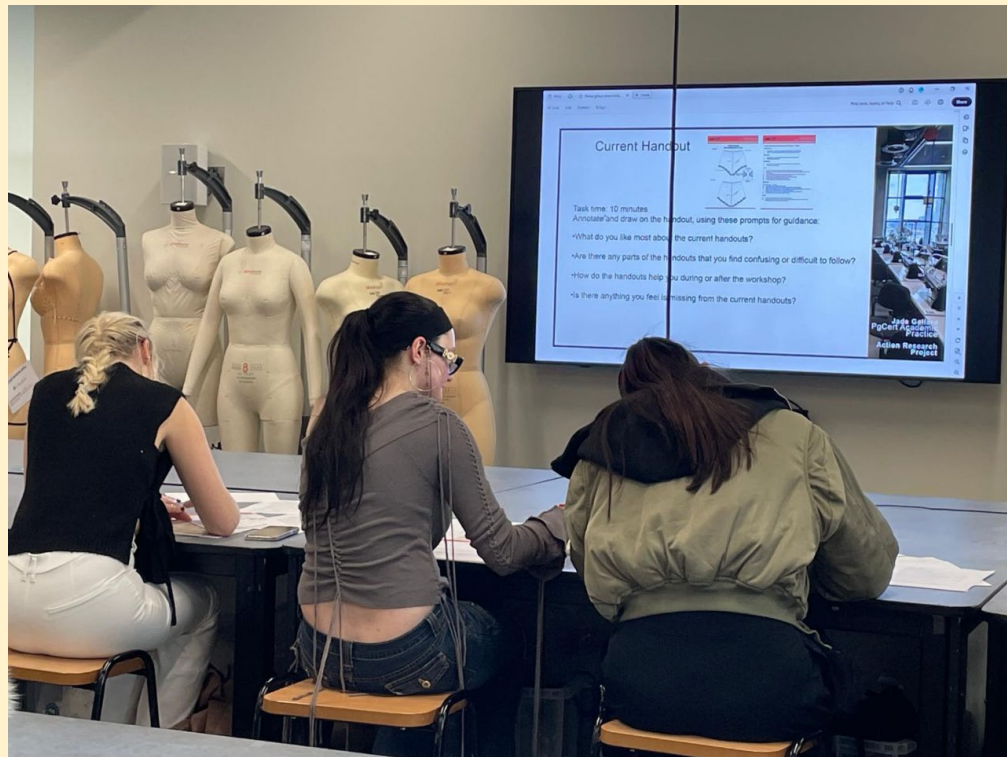


Fig.5/6 Raskino, S.(2025) Jade Gellard delivering focus group to participants.



Original handout:

- 62.5% liked visuals, 75% noted clarity issues.
- 50% confused by technical terminology.
- Handout favoured prior knowledge.
- Narrow design may marginalise diverse learners (UDL principle)

Hems

7. Cut lace 2 x 74cms, pin centre. Fold leg in 1/2 from crotch seam & pin centre. → ?

CF & CB seams

1. 1cm total s/a - Join CF & CB seams with French seams – 0.5 each seam
2. Press CF & CB seams towards the left (to avoid thickness at crotch)

↳ left side worn?

Side seams

3. 1cm total s/a - Join side seams with French seams – 0.5 each seam
4. Press seams towards back

Crotch seam

• could be more visual
• image of a French seam – as some may not remember how to sew one?

Gusset

19. O/I around each side of gusset, neaten o/l ends on l/st.
20. L/st gusset to each side of crotch seam. Attach top & bottom of gusset to C/F & C/B seams.
Stitching should not show on outside of garment.

needs more explanation
or maybe another handout given for the whole year with the meanings of acronyms

French Knickers- Bias cut, woven fabric with cutaway lace – 18/05/20

CF & CB seams

1. 1cm total s/a - Join CF & CB seams with French seams – 0.5 each seam
2. Press CF & CB seams towards the left (to avoid thickness at crotch)

maybe explain French seam more

Not visually engaging

Participant 2

Participant 5

Participant 6

Participant 7

Updated handout

Glossary

SS - Side seam
CF - Centre front
CB - Centre back
WB- Waist Band
SA - Seam Allowance
ZZ- Zig Zag
LS- Lock stitch
OL - Overlock



In this workshop, we'll work together to create a French Knicker. You will learn key techniques, including:

- French seams
- Lace appliqué
- Elastication

Important Note:

For the purpose of submitting your work, please follow the construction method shown by your technical staff. This helps make sure everyone is working to the same standard for assessment.

There is often more than one correct way to construct a sample to an industry standard. As creative practitioners, we all have different ways of working, and that's a strength. The method shown in this session is just one approach. If you're interested in learning other techniques, or if you have a preferred method that supports your learning or creative process, feel free to speak with a technician or tutor. We're here to support different learning styles and ways of making.

Cutting Instructions.

Items Required:

- Pins
- Unpicker
- Air dissolvable marker
- Sharp scissors
- Rotary cutter
- Cutting mat
- Bobbin and case
- White Thread

Optional items:

- Pattern weights
- Pattern master

Machinery requirements:

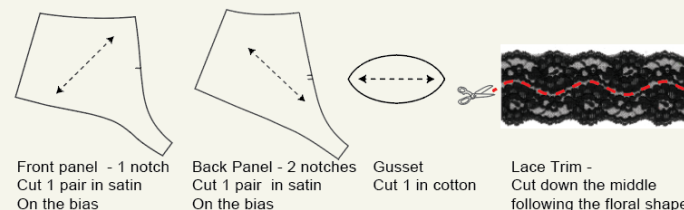
- Lockstitch
- 3 Thread Overlocker
- Zig Zag
- Iron

Cutting instructions:

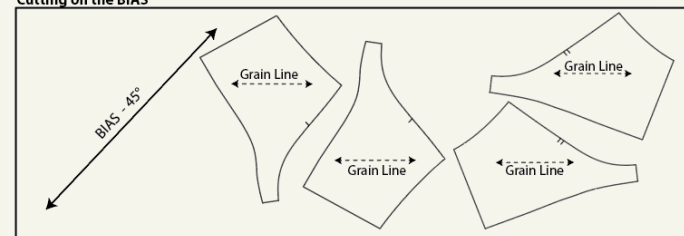
- Use sharp scissors / rotary blade with a cutting mat underneath.
- Mark all notches with invisible marker. Do not cut notches.

Cut piece requirements:

Cut 1 x 10mm width elastic, 60cm long.



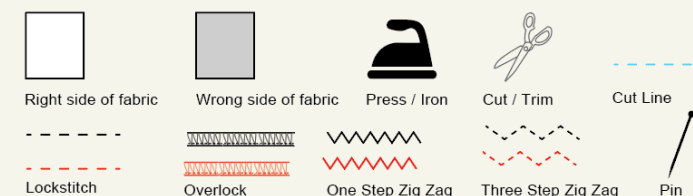
Cutting on the BIAS



SELVAGE - "self-finished" edge of a piece of fabric - the grain line follows this.

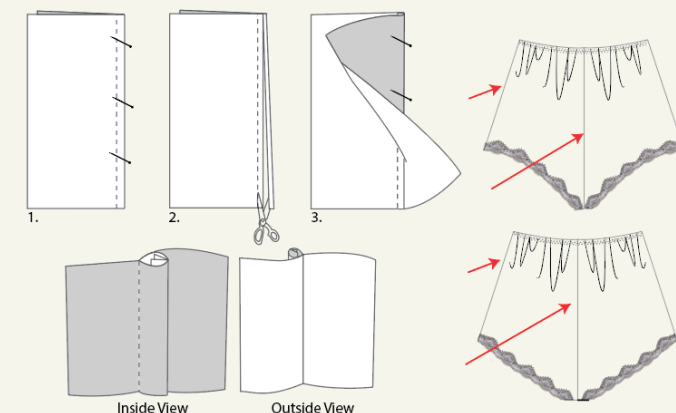
Order of Assembly

Symbol key:



Front rise / back rise/ side seams - french seam

1. Pin wrong sides of front rise together. Lock stitch with 5mm Seam Allowance.
2. Trim 2-3mm seam allowance with small sharp scissors.
3. Pin right sides together. Lock stitch with 5mm seam allowance.
4. Repeat for back rise and side seams.
5. Press (Iron) front and back rise seams towards the left to avoid thickness at crotch.





Updated Handout

- 100% found it clearer.
- 87.5% were positive about overview & headings.
- 75% praised mixed media (photos + diagrams) for easier visualisation
- 87.5% positive about glossary & symbol key

Redesigned handout reduces barriers, supports learner variability, and improves equity.

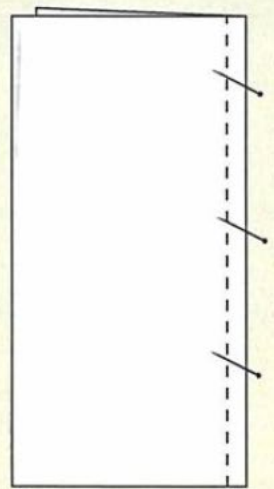


Glossary

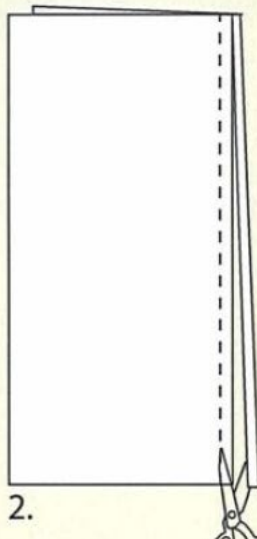
SS - Side seam
CF - Centre front
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*So helpful!!
Love the Glossary*

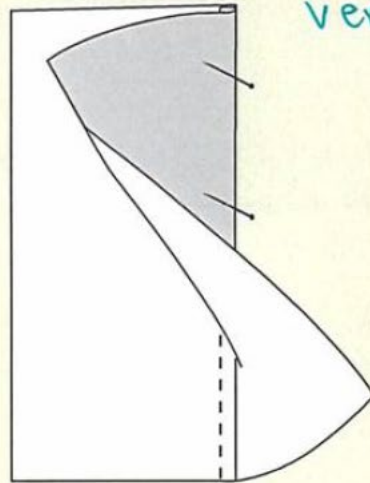
Participant 1



1.

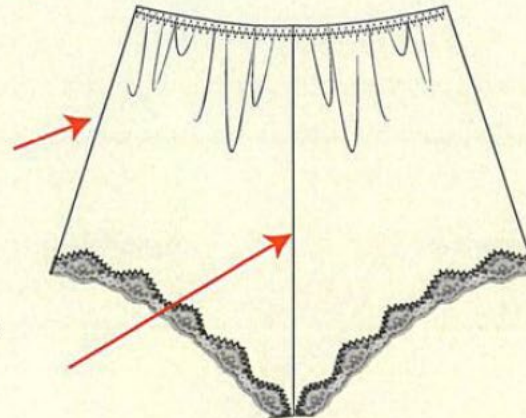


2.

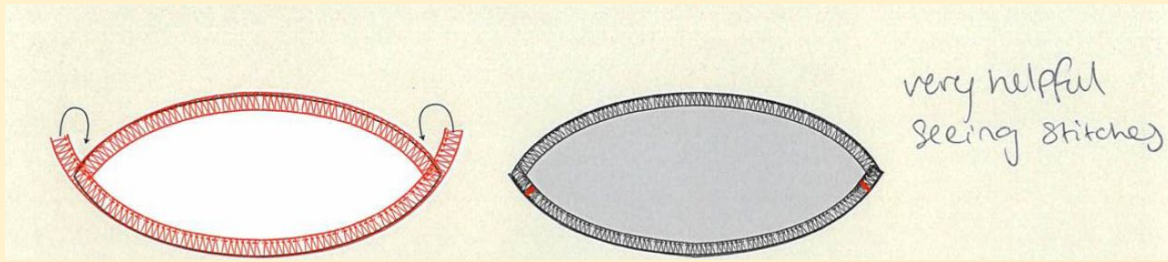


3.

very clear Imagery



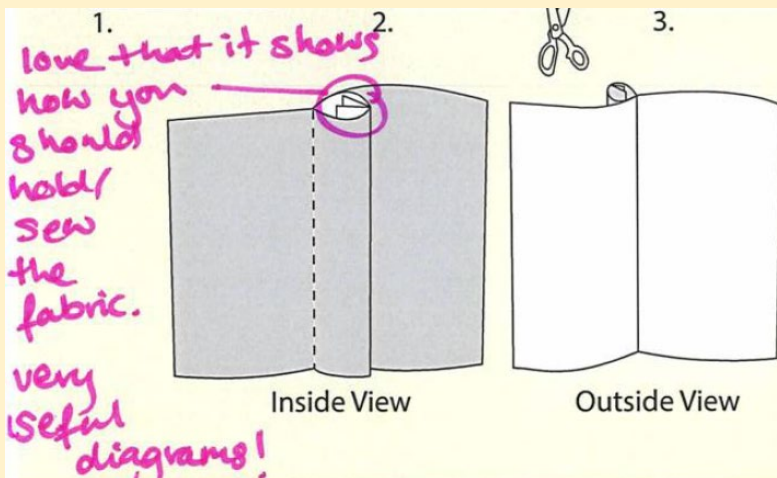
Participant 2



Participant 5



Participant 7



Participant 8



Suggested further improvements

- More detail in places.
- Better section placement.
- Improved photos – better stitch and trim visibility.



↑ maybe specify which
side of the fabric you
are sewing on

Participant 4

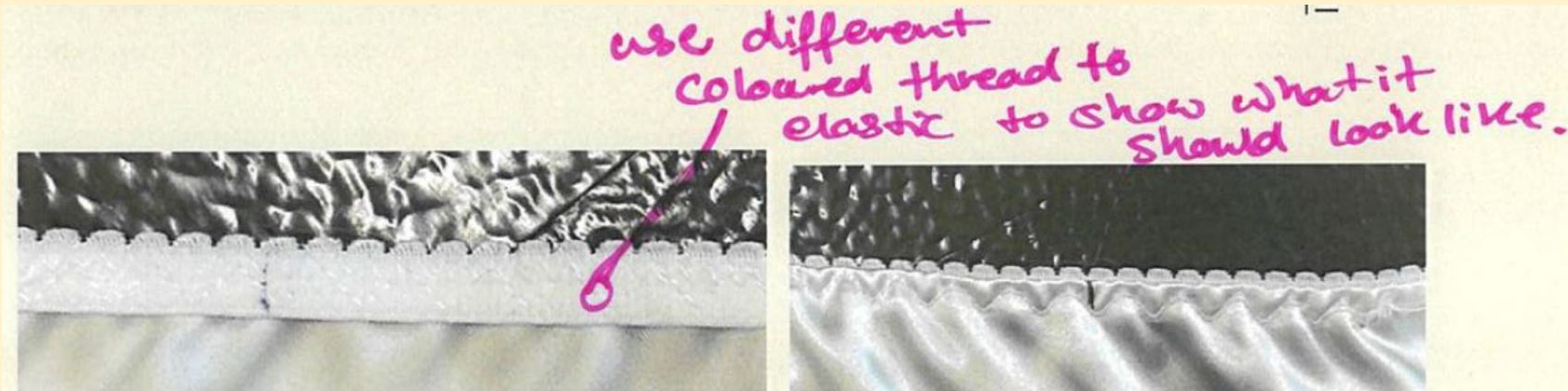
- maybe fabric
swatches

Participant 5

- French seams
- Lace appliqué
- Elastication

— Maybe say where on the garment
these are to go on the photo

Participant 7



Participant 8



Limitations with research

- Small sample size (8 students from a cohort of 146).
- Participants self selected.
- Year two students – increased technical confidence.
- Unavoidable power dynamics.

Findings should be understood as indicative rather than generalisable.



Scaffolding

- Provides temporary support for complex technical learning.
- Bridges dependence to independence (ZPD).
- Reduces cognitive load through clear, structured steps.
- Supports confidence in busy workshop environments.
- Risk of over-scaffolding.
- May limit autonomy or creative risk-taking if not withdrawn.



Action research cycle – what's next?

- Ask students for continued feedback – questionnaire.
- Work co-collaboratively with students.
- Create a template for the technical team.
- Update all handouts to same standard.
- Continued informal feedback.



‘To be effective in a more inclusive, more demanding teaching environment, arts educators will have to be more responsive to individual differences by recognizing the variation in difficulties that their students will have and addressing them in productive ways’

Glass, Mayer, Rose (2012, p.104)



In conclusion

Applying UDL principles to teaching resources can:

- Reduce barriers to learning.
- Promote equity.

There is further improvements and further research to undertake.

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Image bibliography

Fig.1 Jade Gellard with mannequin. Author / date unknown.

Fig.2 O'Driscoll, G. (2025) Jade Gellard, far left, delivering workshop to year 1 BA Fashion Contour students.

Fig.3 London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London) (Date unknown) *Sewing techniques handout: French Knicker*. Unpublished teaching material, BA Fashion Contour, London College of Fashion.

Fig.4 London College of Fashion (Date unknown) *Sewing techniques handout: French Knicker*. Unpublished teaching material, BA Fashion Contour, London College of Fashion.

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Image bibliography

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Fig 22. London College of Fashion (2025) *Annotated handout: research findings from BA Fashion Contour students*. Unpublished teaching and research material, London College of Fashion.