Using Photoshop to Accelerate Traditional Drawing and Painting Skills

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Part of becoming an artist is **training your brain to be more sensitive to visual information.**

How do we as teachers get our students to be visually sensitive?

Technology bridges the perception gap between teacher and pupil.
Concretizing Ideas in Art

- How do we get students to perceive things the way that we as teachers do?
- Turning abstract ideas into concrete ideas – all students see the exact same thing – “The ah-ha moment”
- Chunking information that can build off prior knowledge
- Photoshop allows students to investigate an image with more precision
Student Growth

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8
Sequencing your lessons for optimum learning

- **Starting with what you want your students to learn** rather than the artistic product.
- Create lessons that build on each other – scaffolding.
- **Make it current / relevant** to the student whenever possible.
- **Provide your students with a well rounded art education.** Teach both technique and concept – but only one at a time. Don’t overstuff your artworks.
Photoshop is the Swiss army knife of artistic guides

What are some of the basic artistic abilities we as teachers want students to be able to do/understand?

- **Color**
  - Local Color vs Optical Color
  - Color Mixing

- **Proportion**
  - Spatial Relationships
  - Finding angles

- **Composition**

- **Value**
  - Contrast
  - Value Mapping
Proportion & Spatial Relationships
Using Guide Lines

- The size of the digital image should match the size of the paper
- Use the crop tool to change the size and create composition
- Use the lines to show spatial relationships
- If you do not have Photoshop simply use any paint program to draw lines on an image.
How to use Guiding Lines

- Make sure the rulers are showing
- Click and hold with the mouse starting at the ruler and drag a new line onto the canvas
Identifying how to break down complex objects

- Using Photoshop you can have students trace over shapes in an image, then reveal only the shapes they have traced
Using Shape
Releasing the training wheels

- The use of these tools are not a replacement for other fundamental art skills
- They’re a system put into place to accelerate learning
- You can customize the level of assistance the technology will give your students
Sequencing your lessons
Natural Transition to observational drawing

Large amount of artistic assistance

some artistic assistance

small amount of artistic assistance
Creating Products the student is proud of

- **We as Art Educators have to make sure our students are not afraid** of trying – eliminate the “I can’t”
- Creating lessons where **all students are successful** will build their confidence
- **Concretizing ideas** help students understand content
- **Releasing the stigma** that using any aid is somehow diminishing the value of the artwork – this philosophy and how it devalues the average student
- The other end of the spectrum – students focus completely on concept and have **no traditional foundation to communicate their ideas**
What route would the majority of your students want to take?
Comparing teaching
Analyzing master work

- Symmetry
- Rule of Thirds
- Composition
- Spatial Relationships

You can also use a paint brush on a layer above the image to further analyze the image
SLO’s— This is the same student

**Pre-Assessment**
- With no guidance the students were asked to draw a still life

**After instruction**
- After learning about guiding lines
Students will find their own Solution

- When given this tool students will invent their own way of using the guides. This promotes 21st century learning.
- The student on the right found it helpful to look at the composition in boxes.
The Crop Tool (C)

- Click on the crop tool icon or press the letter C on the keyboard
- Change the width, height and resolution to match the size of your paper
Value
Value Mapping

- Using the cut out filter in Photoshop it is easy to turn any image into a value map (remember it should be black and white to start with)
- The number of levels indicates the steps in the value scale
- The higher the levels the more steps the scale will have
### Differentiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 levels</th>
<th>8 levels</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A struggling student will benefit from a less complex value map</td>
<td>- A more advanced student will be pushed further</td>
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How to use the cut-out filter

- Click on Filter -> Artistic -> Cutout...
- Adjust the settings to the desired outcome
Creating Actions

- Actions can be used to automate multiple files with the same editing.
- Go to Window > Actions to bring up the actions window.
Actions Window

Record

Stop

Create a New set

Start a new recording of actions
Automating

- File > Automate > Batch...
- Choose your set and action
Contrast

- **Levels (Control + L)**
- **Brightness / Contrast**

- **Provide instant feedback on how contrast can improve artwork**
Examples
Implementation

- **Quick Practice** – Students use prepared images to practice value mapping
- Students use **value mapped self portraits** to create an artwork – Teacher provides photo shopped images
- Students use cameras to take their own imagery and upload it to Photoshop. The students apply the setting themselves and create an artwork based off of the image
Student Growth

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8
Student Growth

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8
Color

GRADE 6
Local Color vs. Optical Color

Local Color

Optical Color
Finding Optical Color

- Using the color selector you can easily assess the optical color.
Finding Optical Color

- Using the color selector you can easily assess the optical color

The lightness and darkness of the color - can be used to find tint / shade

Family of Color - tells the student the main local color
Implementation

- Demonstration by teacher followed with class discussion
- Create a game where students are asked to find the optical color in specific areas of an image
- Students work side by side with a computer and use the color picker to help them find and mix color
Chuck Close Style Pixilation
Chuck Close Style Pixilation

- Click on Filter -> Pixelate -> Mosaic...

- The size you should choose will depend on the size of your image

**EXAMPLE**: if your image is 10 inches long and 3000 pixels (300dpi) you will choose 75 pixels for ¼ inch squares or 150 pixels for 1/2 inch squares
Students can use the color picker to investigate the color in each square and use this to help them mix color.
Fauvist inspired artwork

Students use the cut out filter to help them value map the portrait. After value mapping they apply warm and cool colors to the value map according to the lightness or darkness of shapes.
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Scholastic Winners 2014-2015
This is not the end

- The ultimate goal is for the students to be able to utilize these artistic skill sets intuitively
- Students will use these techniques to force them to complete specific tasks
- Clear visual example of what we struggle to get students to see for themselves
The only thing separating these two artworks is 3 years of education.

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