

Demonstration of Responsibility #3: Uses a variety of media to deliver instruction to students and to engage students in learning (e.g., samples of tools and technologies designed to meet specific needs and objectives.)

Artifact 3: Multimedia Photoshop Assignments

THE PROBLEM

Educators often struggle with accommodating the learning style needs and preferences of their students to maximize learning. Students learn most effectively through exposure to a variety of learning materials and formats. While many teachers are accomplished in the traditional Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic lessons design, they are stumped when faced with teaching more complex content or when they encounter students who are challenging to teach. The more “tools” teachers have in their toolbox, the more successful their teaching.

BACKGROUND

During the introduction of Adobe Photoshop, I usually lecture for one day and then have the students complete a series of tutorials. During the initial lecture I draw a simple picture on transparencies, comparing each transparency to a Photoshop Layer. I draw a sun on one, grass on another, and finally a stick figure of Mr. Griffin waving to his class. I then have a student make changes to the picture, adding clouds to the picture of the sun transparency. This visual aid helps students quickly understand this complex concept.

The second day I distribute a series of basic Photoshop Tutorials. Students have the choice of completing them from the paper booklet, reading from the Acrobat file on the screen (Figure 1), or watching a video demonstration of the assignment (Figure 2).

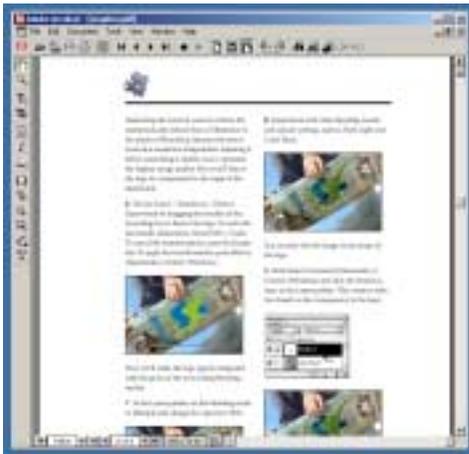


Figure 1. Adobe Acrobat Photoshop Assignment



Figure 2. QuickTime Movie of Photoshop Assignment

Students are encouraged to help each other. The primary rule regarding this is that the assisting student cannot touch the mouse or keyboard of the student they are helping. They have to explain the process to the student, which develops their oral communication skills as well as facilitating cooperative learning. After several tutorials are completed I usually take a day to demonstrate how the tutorial skills can be used in real life, (e.g. merging two photographs together seamlessly).

My final observation of the student skills serves as very simple test. Students need to demonstrate the acquired skill for the instructor. Test are distributed to students several days in advance, so students have plenty of time to ask questions and practice needed skills.

RATIONALE

Students and adults learn in different ways. Whenever possible, teachers need accommodate for different needs. It is not always possible to acquire or create video files explaining work, but teachers can combine analogies, short lectures, time on task, and short quizzes. Active experimental learning is invaluable when learning new skills.

RESULTS

I have had the opportunity to observe several professional and graduate seminars in Adobe Photoshop. Students and adults get distracted very quickly if they are not allowed to get hands on practice very quickly. Teachers need to balance a wide range of student skill and experience. They need to give students enough information to put the assignment in context and then let them work at their own pace. If too little information is given initially, each student will need individual attention. If too much is given, students are quickly distracted and then become distractions to the class.

This process of a short introductory lecture and then individual tutorials works well for a wide range of skill level. Real life demonstrations give students a context for their learning. The simple quiz closes the unit, verifying the skills gained.

REFLECTIONS

Teachers deal with limited resources; primarily time, money, and experience. Teachers cannot create an individualized lesson for each student. What teachers **can** do is to allow some flexibility in content presentation (lecture, self paced tutorials, one on one help, group projects), encourage student ownership of assignment (student chosen topics and checklists), and just take an interest in student work. As I gain additional experience I am able to hone my presentation skills, student assignments, and assessments to better reflect actual student needs.