Photography Workshop

Lesson plans

This is designed to explain the power-point presentations and to give guidelines as to how to structure the lessons.

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Photography Workshop

Teaching Schedule:

Day 1
- How a camera works
- Composition

Day 2
- Lighting

Day 3
- Focus
- Landscape photography

Day 4
- Photoshop ‘trick’ photography

Day 5
- Light graffiti

Materials:
If at Sibford, a projector can be made available to you. You can use this to present the power-point presentations. The computer room at Sibford has Adobe Photoshop Elements for day 4 (although not all the computers have it installed). One camera is available from ECS for students to use. For day 5 you are going to need a digital SLR of some kind, that has a ‘Tv’ or ‘S’ setting (see footnote p.3). Perhaps a student or teacher will be able to lend you one.

Aims:
These classes attempt to give students a new lexical set surrounding photography thus expanding their English and building an awareness of some of the many issues pertaining to photography. The method I have chosen to do this is totally flexible but goes something like this:
Teach → Analyse → Practise → Presentation and feedback

Possible lexis: Basic: Camera, lens, flash, fill-flash, photograph, focus, tripod, foreground, background, subject, texture, lighting
More advanced: Monochrome, bokeh, aperture, blur, macro, portrait, landscape, composition, shutter
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**Useful websites:**

I have tried to distill as much of the information from these websites and my own experience into the power-point presentations as I can but you may feel I have missed something 😊

- [http://www.fotofinish.com/resources/centers/photo/takingpictures.htm](http://www.fotofinish.com/resources/centers/photo/takingpictures.htm)

Also, you may want to look at some stock photography and photography competition sites e.g.

- [www.dpchallenge.com](http://www.dpchallenge.com)
- [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)
- [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

Countryfile on the BBC also, I believe, runs a photography competition around summertime which might be good for the students to enter. Any other competitions may provide an interesting focus to the lessons. Look at the free entry challenges on DP challenge (link above).
Lesson Plans:

Day 1

Photo scavenger hunt:

Students must go out and take photos of these 10 things as a warmer (see accompanying worksheet)

1. A plant/bush
2. Wood and brick
3. Bins
4. Vehicle
5. Tree
6. Path
7. Pool table
8. Ladder
9. Water
10. Glass

The slide show: ‘How a Camera Works’

1. A camera is basically a machine for focusing light onto a receptive surface (film or a digital sensor). This slide shows how light is at first reflected by the mirror (in most digital SLRs) and then, as the mirror flips up, light is allowed to hit the sensor
2. An image of the digital sensor itself
3. The aperture controls the amount of light that comes into the camera and effects how much of the foreground and background is in focus

The slide show: ‘Composition’

This slideshow is fairly self explanatory – the main message is simplicity and focusing on the subject of the picture. The student should always ask themselves ‘what should the person looking at this photo be drawn to?’ i.e. what is the focus of the picture?

Analysis

Take a few examples of the photos taken at the start of the lesson and look at the good/bad points with respect to composition. The aim here is to get a before the slideshow and after the slideshow comparison with the photos the students are about to take next.

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1 Digital SLRs are the type of camera with removable lenses and use mirrors and pentaprisms to direct light into a viewfinder allowing you to see the shot you are going to take – this is considered more accurate than cameras with a viewscreen on the back.
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**Student practice**

Send the students out in groups of two for 15 mins to take photos in and around the school concentrating only the rules of composition studied.

**Presentation**

Students choose 2/3 of their best photos and give reasons as to why the photos are effective in terms of the rules of composition. Give them time to write a short description of each picture. Feedback is given by other students and possibilities for improvement.

*Examples from Sibford 2008*

Note: People should always be looking into space; the space shouldn’t be behind their head. If the head is even slightly turned this rule should be applied...but rules are made for breaking, of course.
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Day 2

The slide show: ‘Lighting’

1. This presentation starts with a review of day 1. Elicit the rules and tips that were learnt the day before.
2. The first slide introduces the concept of lighting in photography. After going through the slide, eliciting the word ‘mood’ from students, get them to describe the mood of the picture at the top of the page i.e. atmospheric, warm, calm etc.
3. The rest of this presentation is self-explanatory except for slide 12 – exposure is the amount of light that is permitted to hit the sensor. The easiest way to change this is to adjust the time aperture is open using the ‘Tv’ or ‘S’ setting on some cameras.
4. The final slide is designed for students to comment on. How does light affect these pictures? Picture number three highlights the importance of blue skies with a light scattering of clouds for shots of water (look at the river). A different effect is created in the last picture as it is taken later in the day.

Analysis

Split the class into groups and give each group one of the example picture sheets (numbers 1-8). Students must comment on the lighting and composition, writing a short description of each picture. The group then presents their analysis to the class. More pictures may be necessary but can easily be found on google images.

Student practice

Send the students out for 20 mins to take photos that look specifically at lighting, while not forgetting the rules of composition previously learnt. Get them to focus on texture – flaking paint, old wood, weathered stone etc. Also remind them that black and white (monochrome) photography can be highly effective at highlighting mood and texture with respect to lighting.

Feedback

Students choose their best three photos and present them to the class with a description of what makes them effective. The class then gives feedback on how the images could be improved.

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2 $Tv = 'Time\ value' \ / \ Av = 'Aperture\ value'
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Examples from Sibford 2008
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Day 3

Today is the out-of-doors lesson and so includes an element on landscape photography. The presentation also looks a little at the very complex area of focusing, although for the needs of most students what we study here will be sufficient.

**Slideshow: Focus and landscape photography**

1. The first two slides review the first two days, once again elicit the rules and tips that have been studied
2. Then there are some example photos on slide 3:

   ![Light in front of subject](image1)
   ![Light above subject](image2)
   ![Light from side of subject](image3)
   ![Light behind subject](image4)

   - Elicit where the light is coming from
   - Which lighting angle is the best? (side or behind with fill-flash)

3. Focus locking is an important tool, allowing you to focus on the subject and then move the camera in order to compose the shot correctly – the slide shows how to do this
4. Slide 7 shows how putting the Tv/S setting for a greater length of time can create a blurry image providing a sense of motion – not all shots have to be in focus!
5. Macro photography is photography of small things which fill the frame. There are specific lenses for this job but most cameras have a macro setting. The symbol for this setting is on the slide.
6. The portrait setting blurs the background creating what is known as ‘Bokeh’ – this is a Japanese word which describes the pleasant technique of blurring the background behind a subject in order that it doesn’t interfere with the main focus of the picture.
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7. The slides on landscape photography are self-explanatory, although you may wish to pre-teach tripod and check understanding of foreground and background. Remember to link what has been learnt about lighting and composition when looking at the photos in this area. Focus, lighting and composition (specifically landscape photography) should now be used to describe the pictures.

**Student practice:**

Take the students for a country walk (a map is provided here with some routes marked out). They seem to really enjoy this so you can take your time. This is a good opportunity to get some group shots of the students for next year's brochure.

**Presentation and feedback**

I would keep this one short as they are tired after walking. Perhaps pick a few photos at random and analyse them with the class.
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Day 4

This is a fun day for the students as they often love the idea of photoshop. It has become a part of western culture and a new term, 'photoshopped', has emerged to describe blatant manipulation of an image (examples could easily be found from magazines to show students)

Slideshow: Day 4 Review

This can be done quickly at the beginning of class to remind students of the areas covered so far.

Photoshop

Here are the steps for creating the image shown here:
1. Get students to take 3 photos with themselves in various positions in the frame. This could be done as a group with multiple people in multiple positions. The most important thing to remember is to **keep the camera in the same position for all three shots**. Even the slightest movement can cause problems so get them to put the camera on a self-timer.

2. Once you have the shots upload them onto the computer and open them using Adobe Photoshop:

   Insert the card reader (Jessops) and select ‘open file to view contents’ in the pop-up or go to My Computer to bring up the different drives.
Select the files needed. To select multiple files with different clicks press the Ctrl button while clicking.

Copy files by selecting all required and right clicking.
Paste files onto the desktop

Right click and select open with -> Adobe Photoshop
3. Now all three pictures should be open in Photoshop. Select one picture to be the ‘base’ on which the others are added – often this should be the thing furthest into the background as the other elements overlay it.

4. Next you need to open one of the other pictures. Use the selection tool to select the element you want to put into the base picture e.g. a person. You don’t need to be too careful about how you select but be careful to include shadows otherwise the photo will seem strange.
Use the selection brush for accuracy or the selection wand to select everything of the same general colour. The wand can sometimes be used first and then the selection brush can fill in any missing parts. Adjust the size and shape of the brush in the toolbar above.
5. **Select the move tool**

Now you want to drag what you've selected into the base picture.
6. Now you need to move this new layer you have just added into a position in the base photo as close to where it was before as possible.

To move the layer more accurately, use the arrow keys.
7. Inevitably when shooting outdoors the light levels will vary from shot to shot as can be seen above. This takes some sensitive adjustments but is an easy fix.

Go to Enhance and Adjust Brightness/Contrast.

Adjust the brightness levels to make it lighter or darker and then the contrast to bring it more in line with the base picture. It won’t be perfect yet but get it as best you can.
Now you can use the *clone tool* to perfect any problem areas. It takes a sample of somewhere (press and hold Alt to sample an area) and then replicates that wherever you click the mouse. Select use all layers. Any harsh lines of contrast can be softened with the clone tool, although you may need to lower the opacity to create a softer transition between layers.

The burn and dodge tools are also useful. The former darkens the area you click on and the latter lightens. Adjust the strength to about 10% and click until the light level is the same.
8. Now do the same for the remaining photo

Note the reflection and the slight shadow on the floor.
Now we have the problem that, even after brightness adjustment, the picture is too light. This is where the burn tool comes in.
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With that comes the finished product which the students can print out and keep 😊
Day 5

This is another fun day for the students and produces some great results. You will need a camera with an adjustable ‘Tv’ or ‘S’ setting so that you can lengthen the exposure.\(^3\) The final result will look something like this (but without anything in the background). You could think about the second picture here and place some props in the room to create some interest e.g. drawing angel wings on a person. Anything you put in that room, however, has to be dimly lit if you want to see it in the end result:

\(^3\) If this is not possible then you can extend the Photoshop day to last over two days by getting them to make a second, more adventurous picture.
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The first part of this lesson will be taken up with finishing off the pictures from the previous day. Get them to use the clone tool to get rid of imperfections in the face or picture should they finish early.

**Lighting effects**

1. First get your digital SLR and turn the dial to ‘Tv’ or ‘S’ (time/shutter priority)
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2. Next, go into a dark room (the squash courts work really well for this as they are completely dark when the lights are off). Get the students to each bring a source of light e.g. a mobile phone or torch

3. You will need to put the camera on something stable because it can’t move (a tripod is, of course, best but failing that a tall stool or chair will do fine)

4. Get the students to stand in groups in front of the camera

5. Now – set the exposure to 8-12 seconds, depending on how much the students want to write. This is often done by moving another dial like this:

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6. You can now get the students to move their light source to write or draw something.  
7. You may then upload the photos and present them to the class.

Finally, students may take some time to save any of their photos onto disk or e-mail them to themselves. After which the workshop summary can be given to them.