

Using Technology in the Elementary Classroom

By Marilyn Western

Put a Little Art in Your Class

Do you have artists in your classroom that you'd like to give more direction to? Here are some ways you can use MS Paint or Kid Pix.

To learn about the shape tools, try drawing a picture using only straight lines or circles. Harder than you'd think! To extend this, draw a large rectangle. Draw another rectangle within the first – making it a little smaller. Draw another smaller rectangle within this one. Continue until you have a series of 8 'boxes within boxes'. Use the fill tool to make each box a different color. You've got a cool frame! Try using the pencil tool to write your name in the center box. Now you've got a name frame.

One of my favorite activities is to create intricate patterns. Draw out a rectangle. Divide it into 5 columns and 4 rows (doesn't have to be perfect!). Fill the rectangles with 2-3 colors to make an ab, or abc, or abbc, or aabbcc, etc. pattern. If you make the background behind the rectangle black, it becomes VERY striking. To add a little more challenge, draw a closed shape in the 1st rectangle, then copy it and paste it in each remaining rectangle. Now fill each shape with a different color in a different pattern. Can students figure out the patterns? Could they continue the pattern? Nothing like a little art to add pizzazz to math!

A neat way to look at symmetry is to make quilt squares. Start by drawing a square (hold the shift key down as you draw out a rectangle – it will be a perfect square). Draw diagonal lines to locate the center. Draw lines from the center to each of the four sides. Draw diagonals from the center of each side to the center of another side. Continue until you have the square completely criss-crossed. You should be able to see smaller squares and triangles in your original square. Now fill the sections with colors – you may want to limit your exuberant students to two or three colors. Keep in mind the pattern of symmetry. Have students name their quilt pattern.

Continuing on with symmetry, draw a vertical and a horizontal line across your paint canvas. Draw a closed shape in the first quarter. Select it with the rectangular tool and paste it in the next box. Click on Image to get flip/rotate options. Would you flip or rotate to make a mirror image of your original shape? Paste another original shape and move it to the box below. Would you flip or rotate to make a mirror image now? Paste one more original shape in the remaining square. What would you do now? This is a great way to learn vocabulary.

Very Cool Interactive Art sites: Link to one site at a time to use in an Art/Computer center in your classroom. Some are conducive to whole group, partner or small group exploration. Explore the sites before you send your students so you know how each operates and how you can fit it into your curriculum.

The Art Zone <http://www.nga.gov/kids/zone/zone.htm> Try **Collage Machine**, **PixelFace**, **3-D Twirler**, and more. A great place to explore different effects and get some really interesting results! Uses Shockwave.

The Art Institute of Chicago has a fun site at <http://www.artic.edu/aic/kids/index.html>.

Students can play quite a few Shockwave games that revolve around masterpieces. This site is based on the **With Open Eyes** cd. You can also explore **Art Access**, which gives background information on artists and their works that are in the permanent collection of the museum. An easy online 'field trip'.

Educational Web Adventures (Eduweb) <http://eduweb.com/portfolio/adventure.php>

Click on the By subject or By grade tab to get a listing of wonderful interactive Art adventures. You'll find art activities as well as history and science. Something for everyone! I highly recommend **The Artist's Toolkit** (watch a demonstration, find examples in works of art, create your own composition, watch artists in action, and a nice art encyclopedia) and **Kids Design Network** (integrating art and science: select a Challenge, design a gadget to meet the Challenge, build your gadget, talk about your gadget on the on-line Engineer Chat Board), **A. Pintura: Art Detective** <http://eduweb.com/pintura/a1.html> (solve the mystery of Grandpa's painting – great for whole class use), and **Inside Art** <http://www.eduweb.com/insideart/index.html> (another mystery to solve).

ArtEdventures sponsored by Sanford <http://www.sanford-artedventures.com/play/play.html>
Wonderful interactive art adventures for primary and intermediate grades. Many include Hands-on activity suggestions and teacher resources. My favorites are **The Art of Crime Detection** (create composite portraits to catch the criminal), **Go West, Young Artist** (meet 6 artists and learn about landscape composition) **Out of This World** (design objects for aliens), **Leonardo's Workshop** (an interactive mystery to solve) and **Faces of the Past** (identify people in portraits).

Color in Motion <http://www.mariaclaudiacortes.com/>
A wonderfully interactive Flash set of three 'chapters' that explore colors, words, and meanings. Choose The Stars to learn what individual colors mean, The Movies to watch color symbolism, and The Lab to play with colors. You could easily expand the ideas here to fit in with writing, reading, and storytelling. What fun!

UltraBug ClipOScope http://nfbkids.ca/showcase/index_e.html Make your own movie online with just a few clicks! Somewhat limited in its creativity, but a fun way to get kids involved in moviemaking. Make sure you have headphones for this site!

Monster Exchange <http://www.monsterexchange.org/>
Monsters are not just for October anymore! This free 'monster community' is a cool way to hook up with another class for an interesting writing/reading/drawing project. Students at one school draw monsters and write descriptions of them. The descriptions are exchanged with another class. Now comes the difficult part. Students read the descriptions and draw their interpretation of what the monster looks like. Drawings are exchanged and students see just how close they came to the original drawing.

My students also enjoy the interactive web sites that allow them to create drawings based on real artists' techniques. For example, kids can try drawing like **George Seurat** at <http://www.epcomm.com/center/point/point.htm>. This site also contains a link to painting like **Vincent Van Gogh**. Another fine site that allows students to try their hand at painting is **Mondrimat** at <http://www.stephen.com/mondrimat/> – based on the art of **Piet Mondrian**.

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