

Digital Citizenship Lesson Plan
Photoshopping Beauty

General Topic (as defined in the Digital Literacy Framework)	DF1
Digital Citizenship f) Self-Image and Identity	
Applicable Grade Range	
3-5	
Outcome(s) to be Addressed	
The student is aware that photographic images can be digitally manipulated for positive purposes or to mislead us, and can distort our perceptions of beauty and health.	
Importance / Significance of Lesson	
Media images of models and celebrities and regularly photoshopped to make them look better. Students need to realize that often images that they see in magazines or on TV have been altered to show the best possible representation of that person or object. Though this is a common practice, students need to realize that it is a false representation of how stars really look and the perfection these images portray is impossible to achieve.	
Duration	
30-45 minutes	
Overview	
Students will watch two videos and discuss the before and after images for changes. Class discussion regarding how things are altered to look better in the media will emphasize the inconsistencies between the ‘before’ and ‘after’ shots and identify how such advertisements shape what society views as being beautiful. Please note that these videos are from Youtube channels and so teachers must be cautious of advertisements on the page and the potential for inappropriate comments in the discussion on each video.	
Required Resources	
Computer hooked up to a projector Class set of laptops/access to the computer lab OR class set of iPads/iPods	

Lesson Plan and Extension Activities

Start the class by bringing up a picture of a celebrity (anyone you choose) and talking to the class about what they see and what they don't see – blemishes? Evidence of airbrushing? Lighting? Perfect hair or makeup? Ask the class if they think the celebrity could be called beautiful.

Watch the first video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U> using a computer hooked up to a projector. Discuss the changes that were seen throughout the video. Highlight the changes to the shape of the face, the length of the neck, the colour of the hair and eyes and skin, etc. Ask students why they think these changes are made and how it changes their impression of the model. Is she more beautiful? Does it look real or fake? Could they ever look like that? How does that make them feel? Note that there are certain traits that 'society' views as more beautiful or more popular, like being skinny, tall, athletic, or pretty, having blue eyes or blond hair or olive toned skin. But that doesn't mean that you aren't beautiful if you don't have all those traits. Compare a picture of two models or celebrities with different traits (one with dark hair, one with blonde hair or a plus-size model and a skinnier model) and ask the class if one is more beautiful than the other and why. Record their answers on the board.

Note that Photoshop is not only used to alter our sense of beauty in people, but also in just about anything around us. Food advertisements are meant to make consumers want to buy the food right now, that they will enjoy tasting that delicious looking meal in the picture. But typically what we buy does not look anything like the advertisement. Watch the second video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGj2eVgWI6Q>. Note that this is a very common tool used in the food industry. Explain that food in advertisements is supposed to look really good, delicious, juicy, fresh and clean. No one would want to buy a burger that looked old and stale and discoloured.

Have students find examples of pictures online that they think are photoshopped and ask why and how they have changed. These pictures could be of celebrities, travel destinations, food products or anything advertised and meant to be sold.

As an extension students can also work at making changes to a picture of their own using photo editing software.

Adaptations

Older students can do research of their own for other photoshopped materials. There are a number of videos online, even in the Dove campaign, that identify how much work goes into a model's photo shoot and how different the pictures taken are from what is actually printed in a magazine. Further, older students could experiment with their own photographs and how they could improve or alter them with Photoshop. Another video that could be used is located here <http://www.buzzfeed.com/micaela/unreal-celebrity-photoshop-transformations> however it shows models in swimsuits or in more sultry poses so shouldn't be used with younger students. Further celebrity transformations are located here: <http://imgur.com/gallery/XkoBG> Watch these videos first to ensure they are appropriate for your students.

Additional Resources

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U> – Evolution from the Dove beauty campaign

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGj2eVgWI6Q> – How McDonald's fakes their food

Cross-curricular Outcomes Also Addressed

Health and Career Planning – self-image and self-worth lessons, peer pressure

Social Studies – issues of propaganda

~developed by Kristin Sward, 2014



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