

Research Article

Online Bargue Drawing Course Feasibility: Insights from Indonesian Art and Design Students

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Abstract.

This paper presents findings and insights from a pilot study on online drawing instruction focusing on the Bargue drawing method conducted with a sample of students from the Art and Design Department at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), Indonesia. The study aimed to explore the feasibility of an online course consisting of 16 hours of instruction delivered in two-hour sessions held every Tuesday and Thursday. The pilot study involved a total of 20 students. The research methodology employed in this study involved observation of the student's behavior during the course and analysis of their drawing results. These methodologies facilitated a thorough evaluation of the student's progress and performance. The participants faced various challenges throughout the online course, including internet connectivity issues, communication effectiveness, and fluctuating student motivation. Eventually, only eight students completed the course successfully. However, these students demonstrated significant progress and achieved impressive results in their drawings. This paper discusses the limitations and challenges encountered during the pilot study, emphasizing the need for an offline workshop model due to the constraints of online learning. The insight gained from this study contributes to understanding the necessary changes and considerations that should be addressed if one intends to pursue online pedagogy for art and design education.

Keywords: art and design education, online learning, drawing instruction, student motivation, Bargue drawing method.

1. Introduction

The global pandemic has reshaped the landscape of education, forcing a temporary shift to distance learning. This transition has highlighted both the benefits and challenges of online methods, which can potentially address limitations posed by pandemic conditions [1, 2]. However, this emergency shift to online instruction was often staggering, especially in specific disciplines, such as art and design, as was observed from teachers' and

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students' perspectives [3-5]. Mainly, it happens in practical skills courses like drawing, which traditionally rely on hands-on instructions and immediate feedback.

This paper presents the findings from a pilot study conducted at the Art and Design Department at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), Indonesia. The study explored the feasibility of online drawing instructions using the Bargue drawing method, a classical approach that emphasizes accurate observation and meticulous reproduction of models [6]. The Bargue method, traditionally taught in a physical studio setting, was, in this case, adapted for online teaching.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the understanding of online pedagogy for art and design education. This field has traditionally relied on face-to-face instructions. The insights gained from this study could inform the ongoing discourse on online learning in art and design education, providing valuable perspectives on its potential benefits, limitations, and areas of improvement. Furthermore, the study also sheds light on the challenges and opportunities of teaching the Bargue drawing course online.

2. Method

The study was structured as a month-long online course with more than 16 hours of instruction. The course was delivered in approximately two-hour sessions every Tuesday and Thursday from 6 to 29 September 2022. The study was structured around the Bargue drawing method, which involves the step-by-step reproduction of Bargue's lithographs. The online course was led by Nelson Ferreira, an artist and art instructor based in London, known for his expertise in the Bargue method. Ferreira's unique teaching style, combined with his extensive online instruction experience, brings a fresh perspective to this drawing technique, especially in Indonesia, where it is seldom taught.

The study participants were self-selected students from the Department of Art and Design at UM. A total of 20 students volunteered to participate in the course. Each student was provided with tools and materials such as: Canson Mi-Teintes paper size 55 x 75 cm, a printed Bargue plate, Lyra Canson willow thin charcoal 3-4 mm, and a kneaded eraser. Due to insufficient space and inadequate internet connection at home, the students agreed to carry out the study together in one of the hallways within the university building.

The instructions were delivered through a video conferencing platform, which allowed for real-time interaction between Ferreira and the students. Each session began with

Ferreira's verbal introduction or drawing demonstration, followed by individual work time during which students worked on their drawings while Ferreira provided individual feedback. The sessions concluded with a summary, where Ferreira recapped the lesson's key points and provided guidance for the next session. In addition to the live sessions, students were supplemented with a pre-recorded video of Ferreira demonstrating the Bague drawing process. These videos were subtitled in Indonesian to ensure the students fully understood the drawing process.

The research methods employed in this study were threefold. First, the researchers observed the students' behavior during the course. This observational method allowed the researchers to gather data on the students' engagement, motivation, and challenges encountered during the online course. Second, the researchers analyzed the students' drawing results. This provided a tangible measure of the student's progress and the effectiveness of the instruction. Third, at the end of each session, a short survey was conducted to gather quantitative and qualitative data from the students. The quantitative data provided measurable feedback on their experience in each session. The qualitative data, collected through open-ended questions, provided insights into the students' understanding, challenges, and suggestions for improvement.

The combination of these methods allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the student's progress and performance, as well as the challenges and limitations of online drawing instruction. The data gathered from these methods were then analyzed to determine the feasibility of online drawing instruction using the Bague Drawing method.

3. Result

The online workshop was conducted over eight sessions, each with a specific focus and objective. The first session introduced the students to the 19th century academic drawing technique and the masters of this period. Ferreira also explained the technical procedure for conducting the online course. One of the most critical aspects concerned one-on-one critiques, which involved the students showing the correct view of their drawings, either during the online meeting or by sending photographs of their work afterward and receiving feedback from him.

The drawing practice began in the second session. In this session, the students taped the Bague plate and their drawing sheet to the wall to draw while standing, as in a classic art studio setting. Subsequently, they were instructed to draw initial helper lines, a horizontal and a vertical line, which considered intersections with many details in the Bague plate. From these lines, students could create four extreme points in

their drawing. These points served as reference points for creating the overall shape or “envelope” of the object in the Bargue plate. This process was continued in the third and fourth sessions until the angles of these lines were deemed correct, along with achieving the correct proportion for the shape. Students were required to create and refine these lines by eyeballing them without any measurement tool. During these sessions, Ferreira provided individual assistance to the students, helping them to correct the angles in their drawings. Figure 1 shows an example of the feedback image shared via a messaging app.

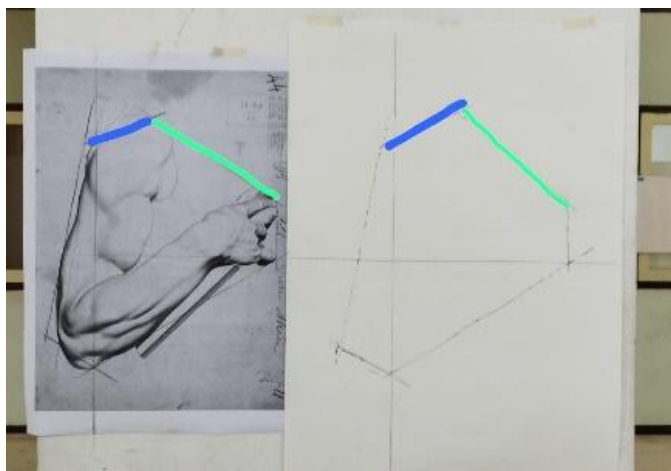


Figure 1: Feedback lines were drawn to rectify angle errors in the drawing.

The fifth session involved refining the envelope shape and introducing the concept of “terminators”, the borders between light and dark areas. At this stage of their drawing, the students were encouraged to use a handheld mirror to check the proportions of their envelope shape to further add details to their drawings. The sixth session continued with the refinement of the drawings and introducing group critiques, where the students were encouraged to critique each other’s drawings. The students continued to refine their drawing, especially concerning details such as the object’s outline sculpting the large envelope into a smaller one. In the seventh session, the students began shading their drawings with pure black tones. In the final session, the students were introduced to using medium and hard brushes to create different shades in their drawings. At the end of the session, Ferreira stressed that the Bargue drawing method was just the first step in learning how to draw, and it was traditionally taught to children as young as 14 in the 19th century.

The number of participants varied from session to session, with a total of 20 students. The maximum number of students in a session was 19, while the minimum was four. Out of the 20 participants, only eight students completed the course. These eight students showed significant progress in their drawings, evidenced by their accurate reproduction

of the Bague plates, as shown in Figure 2. During online instruction, it became evident that these students grasped the principle of the Bague method, and their ability to observe and apply these principles improved noticeably as they dedicated more effort to completing their drawings. They also frequently assisted their peers, showcasing their enhanced observational skills.



Figure 2: Student progress in accurate drawing reproduction.

Due to the fluctuating number of participants, comparing the students' satisfaction levels was impossible. However, the qualitative data collected from the survey indicated that the students who completed the course had positive sentiments about the online Bague drawing instruction. For example, one participant referred to as Participant M, who attended all of the sessions, commented: "Overall, is it fantastic, memorable, it gives much insight, and impress on the process" and "I think so far is good, and I think that every meeting there's always a new science that opens up insight even if it's a simple thought, and also an example of simplicity and humility of the great people or figure or maybe artist of art world from Nelson. for today's example is Maria Callas".

4. Discussions

The result of this pilot study provides valuable insights into the challenges and potential of online drawing instruction using the Bague drawing method. The fluctuating number of participants across the sessions, with only eight completing the course, points to several challenges that should be addressed.

Firstly, the unstable internet connection was a significant issue that likely contributed to the fluctuating participation. The quality of online instruction heavily depends on the reliability of the internet connection, as it affects the communication between the instructor and the students, the delivery of the course content, and the overall learning experience. In this study, the unstable internet connection likely hindered the students' ability to fully engage with the course, leading to frustration and dropout.

Secondly, language barriers may have also affected the students' participation and engagement. While the students could understand English, they were too shy to communicate in English, which may have limited their ability to ask questions, participate in discussions, and fully express their thoughts and ideas. This highlights the importance of considering language and cultural factors in online instruction, particularly involving students from different linguistic backgrounds.

Finally, the nature of the Bague method itself presented a challenge. The Bague method is a meticulous process that requires patience and a step-by-step approach. However, some students appeared impatient to see their drawings' results, which may have led to frustration and disengagement. This suggests that the expectations and requirements of the drawing method need to be clearly communicated to the students at the outset and that ongoing support and encouragement may be necessary to help the students navigate the challenges of the method. In addressing these challenges, we can also consider the principles of the peak-end rule [7], which suggests that our overall perception of an experience is heavily influenced by how it ends. For instance, we could boost students' motivation by incorporating shorter, diverse exercises with an experimental and interactive nature into the curriculum. These exercises can provide immediate fulfillment at the end of each session, creating a positive impression and sustaining their interest and curiosity in the subject matter.

5. Conclusion

The pilot study conducted at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), Indonesia, aimed to explore the feasibility of online drawing instruction using the Bague method. Despite

the challenges encountered, including unstable internet connection, language barriers, the wavering students' motivation, and the meticulous nature of the Bague method, the study revealed the potential of online drawing instruction. The eight students who completed the course demonstrated significant progress in their drawings and expressed positive sentiments toward online instruction.

These findings underscore the need for reliable technology, consideration of language and cultural factors, clear communication of expectations, and careful scheduling in online art and design education. They suggest that online drawing instruction can be a rewarding and practical learning experience with the proper support and conditions. These insights align with previous research [8, 9], which underlines the significance of structured curricula, clear guidelines, and adaptability to diverse student cohorts in pursuing successful online drawing instruction. With careful planning, consideration of students' needs and contexts, and ongoing support, online drawing instruction can be an effective and rewarding learning experience. This study provides a valuable starting point for this ongoing exploration, suggesting a comparative study providing in-person instruction of the same method with an equivalent population sample to ascertain the challenges specific to the online model.

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