

Photography for teaching place based learning

Introduction:

1. **Regionalism (AKA place-based teaching)-(The main theme of Project Learning Tree):** Early 1900's regionalism quote from Florida environmentalist, Marjory Stoneman Douglas -

"It concerns itself with making people of a locality more conscious of the unique possibilities of that locality...It is developing local poets, and painters and writers. It is teaching people, all over again, to enjoy the richness of their own boundaries...beginning with their own roots and their own soil."

2. Digital photography storytelling – promotes regionalism –
 - a. slows kids down.
 - b. allows you to be specific as to what you want them to observe (details, details, details...)
 - c. encourages kids to find all kinds of subjects to photograph in nature and builds enthusiasm
 - d. allows kids to focus intently on one thing at a time (what they see in the view finder.)
 - e. encourages kids to write qualitative observations about things they might never have imagined
 - f. allows kids to have pride in their connection to nature
 - g. gives you an opportunity to create an open-ended photo scavenger hunt for specific things that you are studying without disturbing nature..."leave only footprints"
 - h. gets kids interested in photographing patterns in nature / repetition / geometry?
 - i. motivates kids to photograph a series of things that tell one story (history)
 - j. encourages kids to keep a digital nature notebook (Google Docs, for example) and insert photos throughout the seasons (phenology). Include observations / poetry (haikus)
 - k. allows kids to be creative by taking extreme photos (photos from different angles/points of view)
 - l. gives kids who are not comfortable with their drawing talent an opportunity to create art.

Applying Photography uses in the classroom:

1. Field Trip Reports: (Photographs embedded into reports)
2. Lab Reports: Photographing (still and video) nature labs to incorporate into lab reports. Can photograph procedure, equipment, students performing tasks.
3. Photographically explore local environmental issues, exotics, invasives, from the forest floor to the tree tops, etc.
4. Google Docs for education.
5. Look at your photos and see what you captured that surprises you, because that is also what science is all about. Finding all the details, and having time to analyze.
6. What barriers do you foresee in bringing photography into your classroom? What other ideas do you have that we can add to our list of activities? Have you done something similar? How did it work out?
7. How can photography fit into your classroom? How can you adapt what you've learned today into your lessons?

Resources:

Get out Minnesota – [Xtreme Pix](#)

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/parks_trails/kids/site/index.html

(camera talk, picture time, composition 101, seeing as a photographer, gallery)

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/activities/moreactivities/photography101/>

WONDERS OF NATURE: FIVE TIPS FOR SCENIC SHOTS

by Annie Griffiths Belt

1. **USE NATURAL LIGHT.** Photographers are always out taking pictures before the sun comes up, and long after it goes down to get the perfect light for their pictures.
2. **NEW HORIZON.** Try framing the horizon so it's not in the middle of the picture.
3. **FULL FRAME.** Arrange your picture by thinking about the objects that surround the subject of your photograph. The best pictures have interesting elements that fill the whole photograph.
4. **TRY SOMETHING NEW.** Shoot creatively and try to get something really special. Get down on your stomach or carefully climb a tree to get a new angle.
5. **KEEP SHOOTING.** Don't spend too much time looking at the pictures on your digital camera, it uses up the batteries quickly!