

Class lesson: Woodlands Photography Blog: <http://woodlandsphoto.blogspot.ca/>

**Summarize Original Activity:** Students in my photography class participate in a class blog. The blog has assignments, tutorials, critiques of photographs, opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of work and ideas. Guest speakers are highlighted and fieldtrips are announced. Websites and resources are also posted to the blog. Students are encouraged to share great shots, interesting thoughts and any resources they find valuable.

**Instructions:** On Mondays, students log on to the blog to check weekly happenings. Learning concepts and activities are posted. Assignments for the week are also posted. Any videos posted should be viewed. Students are to post their best shots taken and comment on one other post. After nonparticipation from students, two postings were assigned for the month of May.

**The Critique:** In essence, the Woodlands Photography Blog was really Ms. Kloppenburg's Photography Blog. I was very proud of my accomplishment of creating a blog for my class. On the first post, I highlighted a very special guest to our class. The blog was meant to be a showcase for student work, a platform for student critiques, a resource for class-generated content and a weekly event calendar. My mistake was thinking the students would be intrinsically motivated to participate in the blog. I did not prepare them with any examples or lessons on how to properly critique a photograph. The students did not have any background knowledge of participating in a blog. I just assumed that they would not only know how to do it, but would welcome the opportunity to share their work and ideas. As for generating content as a class, I did not supply the class with any criteria or rubrics that would outline what their contributions to the class blog would look like. After reviewing the big ideas of Understanding by Design, my plan to create my first photography blog provided a learning curve only for myself. My students were not informed of the learning outcomes and were not provided with criterion-based scoring tools that would evaluate their performance. My students were not successful in participating in the class blog because they had no idea where they were going, why they were going there and what was required of them along the way.

Summary of Instructional Re-design:

The class is introduced to the exercise of critiquing photographs. Writing critiques are beneficial not only for the photographer, but also for the writer of the critique. By analyzing all the different aspects of what makes a "good" or "poor" photograph, students are adding to their knowledge base before they click on the shutter. Technical, compositional and emotional aspects of critiquing will be explored. Class will do a series of critiques together before posting on the blog.

A class blog is created using Blogger. Students will be instructed with a tutorial on blog usage and proper online etiquette. Basic workings of the blog, such as how to post and upload files will be explained. Examples of what makes a good blog post will be demonstrated. Students will view photography blogs online. As a class, we will generate criteria for the blog posts and comments. These criteria will be made in to a rubric for students to refer to use as a tool for assessing their performance. Once the blog is up and running, the class will decide which high school blogs they would like to join. Once signed up, students will participate with critiques to blogs other than their own. A once-a-month blog post to a contributing high school blog will eventually be assigned.

The class is assigned one photo upload and one blog post critiquing a peer’s photograph per week. Feedback on blog posts will be given at weekly information circles. Students will have opportunities to rethink, revise, and refine their work based on the feedback provided.

By redoing the classroom blog lesson using the Understanding by Design model, clear focuses of the “big ideas” are in the forefront before any activities are planned. The tools to assess the desired results and the opportunities for improving photography skills are built into the lesson design. Students are given a clear understanding of where they are going, why they are going there and what is required of them along the way. The UBD Model ensures the instructor imbeds learning activities after the main goals and assessment pieces are established. The planning works because the instructor never loses sight of the end result while constructing the unit. My original lesson was centered on the “cool factor” of providing the class with their own blog and assuming they would instantly be motivated to participate. If I had looked at the reasons why I wanted to use the blog in the first place (instead of being concerned about how it looked) and had taken the steps to ensure the evidence and learning activities were designed to fit my overreaching goal, the end result would have been much different. I now have in place a re-designed lesson that begins with my desired goal in mind and the subsequent planning never loses sight of that goal.

UbD Template 2.0

<b>Stage 1 Desired Results</b>			
<p><b>ESTABLISHED GOALS</b></p> <p>Students will be able to critique photographs using technical, compositional and emotional aspects</p> <p>Students will be able to sustain an online dialogue with their peers on the subject of photography</p>	<b>Transfer</b>		
	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to participate in constructive critiques of professional and amateur photography in a classroom blog. The art of critiquing photographs will build on the students’ knowledge base enabling them to make better photographic choices before they press the shutter.</i></p>		
	<b>Meaning</b>		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>UNDERSTANDINGS</b></p> <p><i>Students will understand ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The necessary vocabulary to comment on both the technical aspects and the emotional impact of a photograph.</i></li> <li>• <i>What the technical, compositional and emotional aspects of critiquing a photograph are.</i></li> <li>• <i>How to upload photographs and post</i></li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How will my students learn to post an effective critique of a photograph?</p> <p>How will students know what a well thought-out blog post entails?</p> <p>How will students be able to create an online dialogue about photography?</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>UNDERSTANDINGS</b></p> <p><i>Students will understand ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The necessary vocabulary to comment on both the technical aspects and the emotional impact of a photograph.</i></li> <li>• <i>What the technical, compositional and emotional aspects of critiquing a photograph are.</i></li> <li>• <i>How to upload photographs and post</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How will my students learn to post an effective critique of a photograph?</p> <p>How will students know what a well thought-out blog post entails?</p> <p>How will students be able to create an online dialogue about photography?</p>
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	<i>comments on a blog</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Proper online blog etiquette</i></li> </ul>	How will students learn to demonstrate what was learned through the exercise of critiquing photographs?
<b>Acquisition</b>		
	<i>Students will know...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to submit photographs to a blog</li> <li>• How to post comments to a blog</li> <li>• How to critique a photograph using technical, compositional and emotional aspects</li> <li>• Photo editing methods</li> </ul>	<i>Students will be skilled at</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downloading photo files and editing them in photo editing program</li> <li>• The art of critiquing a photograph using technical, compositional and emotional aspects</li> <li>• Navigating the blog</li> </ul>

**Stage 2 - Evidence**

<b>Evaluative Criteria</b>	<b>Assessment Evidence</b>
A blog post rubric for critiquing photographs  Weekly group meetings for verbal feedback	<b>PERFORMANCE TASK(S):</b> Posting once a week to a classroom blog Commenting on one photograph per week using critiquing knowledge Downloading photo files and editing in a photo-editing program Visiting other high school blogs and participating in the blog posts once a month Participating in a weekly information circle by contributing a question or key learning for the week
Rubric for e-portfolio submissions	<b>OTHER EVIDENCE:</b> Posting on their personal websites(e-portfolios), comments and photo files depicting their own personal learning journey in photography

**Stage 3 – Learning Plan**

*Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction*

Students will be able to navigate a classroom blog by posting comments and uploading photo files. Proper online etiquette will be discussed.

Students will receive instruction on how to critique a photograph using technical, compositional and emotional aspects.

Students will practice critiquing photographs with the entire class and the instructor before posting to the blog.