

## Environment & Art

Sarah Moore  
Bronx Guild High School

### Environment & Art: Exploring the natural world through photography

**Overview:** As I teach in the heart of the Bronx, many of my students have little or no contact with nature. This lesson is designed to introduce my students to the study of their environment. Through art, students explore the flora and fauna that surrounds them as well as investigate the interdependent relationships that exist within our own concrete community.

**Grade Level:** 9th-12th

#### Learning Standards:

- \*NYS Living Environment Standard 6: Interdependence of living things
- \*Common Core Science: RST.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific text
- \*Common Core Science: RST.11-12.10. Read and comprehend science/technical texts



"Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the twenty-first century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media) are integrated throughout the standards."

-Common Core Standards Initiative

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- understand the various types of relationships within an ecosystem
- demonstrate comprehension through the creation of a photoessay
- demonstrate mastery of the elements of photography
- read and understand a scientific text
- work in small collaborative groups
- engage in peer review and art criticism discussions

#### Materials Needed:

- \* Digital cameras - 1 per group (group size may vary)
- \*Computers (to download photos onto)
- \*Powerpoint (for the final presentation)
- \*Time allotted for students to explore and photograph
- \*Handouts - Reading Selection, Assignment, Critical Response
- \*Sample photoessays

## **Lesson Outline:**

I. Class Brainstorm: As a class, students brainstorm about the ways in which they (and all people) interact with their environment.

II. PowerPoint: Review key vocabulary terms and concepts. *See E&A Powerpoint attachment*

III. Article Review: Read the article and discuss *See E&A Reading Selection attachment*

## **Activity: Photo-Essay**

Students are broken up into small groups of 2 to 3. Each group has one digital camera. Each group creates a photo-essay in which they explore the different interdependent relationships in their environment, the Bronx. See E&A Assignment PDF attachment

1. Introduce the concept of a photoessay. Show sample work.

2. Give the groups time to brainstorm and plan a shot list.

3. Using class time, students go out into the world and take some photographs.

4. Partners regroup and review the photos they have taken so far. Two groups can work together to peer review each others photographs.

5. Allow time for another photo session.

6. If necessary and/or possible allow students to take cameras home over the weekend. 7. Students must then begin to make selections for their final product. Remind them that their photo essays should contain varied shots, angles and subject matter.

## **Assessment:**

Students will present their work to the class. After each presentation, engage the class in a critical response to work presented. Ask the students to decide if they did a good job meeting the requirements of the task. Solicit student feedback and suggestions. See AYV Critical Response Worksheet attachment

## **Extensions:**

I often extend my photography projects into drawing, painting and diagraming. Students first photograph their favorite plant, ecosystem or even a material cycle. The photo is then printed on transparency paper. The photo can then be projected onto a piece of paper or canvas and traced and painted. Lastly, the student can diagram the picture by labeling all of the parts.

**Background Information:** The science content is pretty easy to find. I mostly chose interdependent relationships as the main topic because ecology takes up a pretty large chunk of the Living Environment Regents. What takes a little more planning is the art component. As I teach every subject, I really like to infuse art into my curriculum. There are some great photography curriculum resources available from Adobe Youth Voices. Below is their website

<http://essentials.youthvoices.adobe.com/curriculum/photography-curriculum.aspx>

Additionally, information on the basic elements of photography can be found at: <http://www.digital-photography-school.com/5-elements-of-composition-in-photography>

[http://photoinf.com/General/NAVY/Photographic\\_composition\\_Balance.htm](http://photoinf.com/General/NAVY/Photographic_composition_Balance.htm)

<http://www.photography.com/articles/taking-photos/five-elements-of-a-great-photograph/>

<http://www.digital-photography-school.com/rule-of-thirds>

Lastly, Time Magazine always has a great collection of photoessays. I like to dissect a few with my students before they begin their own. <http://www.time.com/time/photoessays>

*Vocabulary: See E&A Vocabulary attachment*