The Pictures Tell A Thousand Words

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INTRODUCTION

When I was first inadvertently thrust into teaching Yearbook only two months into my teaching career, I had no vested interest in photography. This was based on my great lack of experience sans the occasional disposable camera. As part of the agreement with the school to take over the Yearbook program, I was allotted money to purchase a camera to be used for all major school events. They also allowed me some time to take pictures on my own to get used to the camera, therefore, increasing my ability to effectively teach the workings of the camera to my future photographers. After taking a few photos around the school and anything I found fascinating, I was absolutely hooked and knew that I had found a passion which I would be able to effectively facilitate my students feeling the same passion I had found.

Our Yearbook Staff began with one Fuji S7000 digital camera and a collection of "throw away" disposable cameras from Walgreens as the entirety of my Yearbook supplies. The students I was teaching (this is at a school I was at previous to my current school) were extremely low income and had rarely, if ever, held a camera. They dove right into the photography, as I did, and soon enough there was not a single event of which I did not want to keep a photographic record.

The power of pictures tells an effective story which is so attractive to me. My background is in story-telling of a more traditional style as my college degree is in Creative Writing with a specialty in fiction story writing and my passion in non-fiction essay writing. The ability to tell an effective story and to put an image in the mind of the reader is the goal of any effective writer; this ability, of course, easily correlated itself into my photography practice and teaching.

My original, personal interest in photography was based on one of my great passions: sports. The first time that I partook in photography outside the traditional "school photos" of kids in the cafeteria, classroom, or hallways occurred when I took students to a Houston Astros game. This game had a two-fold meaning to me. First of all, it was the first game that a majority of the students had ever attended. The pictures of their faces capture all that is great about baseball and the togetherness and unadulterated enjoyment that the game intends. Secondly, it was the day that Roger Clemens, arguably the greatest living pitcher, advanced into second place on the all time strikeout record. I was good or lucky enough to capture the record-tying and record-breaking pictures from our upper deck seats due to a wonderful zoom lens on the Fuji camera. That picture still holds a very special place in my house as the first great picture I've ever taken.

After photographing random sporting events, from professional to high school athletics, I found my interest shifting into another genre of photography. While there are many satisfactions to capturing an image in a sporting event which "wows" people, I felt as if the story was not being truly told, and the emotions were not utilized. This is when my interest shifted from photographing sporting events to focusing on the portrait which holds the majority of emotion within an event.

When I came to Challenge Early College High School, my only demand was that I would be able to continue my duties as a Yearbook teacher. Overjoyed as they were at my willingness and eagerness to take over the class, it was also an incredible experience considering that the school was still in the growing stages, and I was able to chronicle our transition.

Teenagers wear their emotions on their sleeves and their faces, and the camera loves to capture every emotion of their quasi-adult faces. The entire point of a yearbook, which I have now been putting together for four years, is to collect photos and organize them in some way to allow students and faculty alike to remember the stories of the events that occurred through the course of the year. While there is a great deal of copy which goes into a yearbook, the copy does not last in the same way the images do. It is the faces and body language of the students which tell the real story behind the story. Going along the cliché, "a picture is worth a thousand words," it is the picture of the emotions of the subject which leads the viewer to understand not only what the event is but also what the event meant to the person in the photo.

ACADEMIC SETTING

My classroom itself epitomizes the belief that a picture can tell the story of an event. The spirit of the students at my school resonates throughout the room whether they are in the room or not through "the wall." "The wall" is a stretch of my walls starting in the northwest corner and stretching along the two subsequent walls which are completely blanketed by photographs. This is not a hyperbole; literally there is not one inch of wall which can be seen between the pictures that are divided between vertical and horizontal pictures. At current count, there are over 4,000 pictures on my wall, and it grows exponentially each week. Roughly about ninety percent of the pictures were taken by my Yearbook students, with the other ten percent being taken by me; each picture tells a story of my school (Challenge Early College High School) from its second year of existence through as recent as the day before. The best part of this wall is that each picture tells a separate story for the person who is looking at the picture at the time. "The wall" is also the beginning point of any tour which goes through Challenge Early College High School as we attempt to allow our guests to truly understand the spirit which resonates through our school. Whether it is incoming/potential students, parents of current students, district administrators, current students or former students, they all can enjoy the pictures on different levels which is the definition of what photography is supposed to be. The epitomizing of stories within the high school careers of hundreds, and someday thousands of students, surrounding my students and I at all times is a fascinating experience. To be able to watch the lives of my students' progress as they grow and their ability to reflect on where they've been before is the first stepping stone to help them on their journey of where they are going.

There seems to be this affectionate feeling of high school students for the previous year or two in the school combined with a drastic disdain of the current year. As a teacher, it is very difficult to appease those feelings within a student, so I feel that teaching photography allows me a small gateway into their feelings and allows me a small understanding of how their minds work. When adults photograph students, there's often professionalism and perfection which limit the spirit of the photograph. Don't get me wrong, the picture may be wonderful and follow every rule and guideline of photography, but there's a raw spirit which is missing. That is why I love to put teenagers behind the camera to photograph "their own kind." No adult can truly understand the mentality of a teenager as another teenager does, and the feelings they share are modeled beautifully in the photographs they take because they are on the same level.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

One of the goals I set for my students is to go beyond the verbal-visual connections and interpret their photographs, as well as others, on how the camera captures the spirit of the subject and its surroundings. When a student or teacher is photographed at Challenge, it not only tells the

story of that person, or group of persons involved, but the story of Challenge. The difficulty is getting the students to the point of understanding that, "as photographers and writers, we are observers of the world, real and imaginary" (Ewald 29). The spirit of the school resonates in each photograph to the point that we can identify pictures taken by Challenge students of Challenge students and faculty by the small nuances in the photographs.

The goal of the lessons is for my students to appreciate the storytelling power of pictures and images, as well as the aesthetic value of a well-taken photograph. The primary objective is for students to map out a storyboard of photographs for whatever event they are assigned in order to grasp the meaning of the event within their personal artistic integrity. Ansel Adams once stated, "There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs" (Quotegarden.com). This rule of thumb is my teaching style of photography.

The students live in images; their entire culture is based on seeing then interpreting the significance of the action. There is a drastic distinction between the major events which define a generation for the current student: World War II's memories are a collection of quotes and sound bytes. While there are a multitude of images from *Life* magazine or newsreel footage, it is the words which compose what the students are primarily taught. Neil Armstrong's setting foot on the moon is another model of the quote being more memorable than the image; but the Twin Towers collapsing on September 11, 2001 is an image. There were stories, quotes, and sound byte,s but it was the image of watching them fall which defined the current generation that we teach. Most importantly, the story and the history is re-lived throughout this generation and will be passed onto others by the images of the towers, the looks on the faces of the victims, and the dusty, dismal aftermath.

Regarding this in a slightly lesser severity, the students must find the looks on the faces, the body language and the images in their photography which will tell the school's story, year after year. Yearbook is the chronicle of the school's history and the foreshadowing into the school's future. Seeing where our school has come from allows us to make predictions of where our school is headed in the future. It is the active history, especially in a school like where we are the record keepers and the storytellers for the future students of Challenge who didn't get to experience our humble beginnings. Photographers are the new minstrels.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Objectives and Advanced Placement

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS are the statewide guidelines in Texas for student success on our standardized (TAKS) test (Texas Education Agency). While photography does not play a major role in the TAKS test, the standard is set for students to be able to analyze and mark appropriate works for revision and publication. The standards are up to the teacher to set for publication so it is an appropriate incorporation into your classroom.

While the use of images is not highly utilized in TAKS testing, the Advanced Placement national test which by the year 2007 will incorporate an image analysis driven writing prompt as one of its essays in the AP Language Test. The ability to analyze images, find a meaning and express the meaning of the picture in the eyes of the viewer in words will become of major importance within the next few years in many of the core curriculum classes, not just the fine arts.

Time Frame

This "unit" is more than that; it is my teaching philosophy for a section of my Yearbook Staff for an entire year. The photography goals are set at our first Yearbook meeting (which is two weeks before school actually starts) with developing assignments with my Photography Editor for the photographers to do within the first few days of school. The practice begins on the first day of school where students take assigned photos, printing them (as it is completely digital) and analyzing the effectiveness of the photograph with myself and my editing team. This is the

beginning of transitioning the photographer into having a "photographic eye" to view events, not as a whole, but as a collection of images which is waiting to be captured by them.

Gauging Prior Knowledge

We begin with a familiarization process of learning how to use the Fuji S7000 digital camera. I give them the basic information on working the camera (e.g. zoom in/out, multiple flashes, framing tools and the, as they refer to it, button to snap the picture). I spend a bit of time on camera angles such as "bird's view and worm's view" as does my photo editor who focuses on the basics laid out by Herb Germar, "[I] make evaluation in terms of reader attention, content, eye appeal or impact, timeliness, and the ability to communicate" (Germar 51). Working through the perspectives of visual angles, the two are interrelated through all aspects of photography. I oftentimes, due to the glory of digital photography, allow my students to "learn by feel" and just get themselves acclimated and comfortable using the camera. Much like when I assign written pieces in my English class, I realize that if a student is comfortable and having fun with the tools available, then the product is already improved. The wonderful part of digital photography in high school journalism is the fact that the students can go out and take hundreds of photos just to get a feel for the camera in their hands and learn about distances, angles and lighting.

Photographic Analysis

The students, once completing their first series of roughly one hundred pictures take a look at these "perfect photos" they believe they have taken and then disseminate the positives and negatives of the photographs (traditionally the negative being a finger in front of the lens of blurry photos due their hands shaking). Once they feel a bit more comfortable with their cameras, we begin discussions on what it takes, not to take a good photo, but how to bring meaning and depth to the photography. Think about the school photographer who comes in to take headshots; there is no risk involved in that photography. The subject is seated in a sedentary manner, with a normally forced smile at the prodding of the photographer, with perfect lighting which they personally set up with their handpicked background. Any student could step behind that camera, press a button and take a photograph which the subject can be satisfied with because there are no outside factors inhibiting its success. That is not what Yearbook photography is about; it is finding the perfect moment with imperfect subjects and the photographer ties the subject in with the moment to capture a picture which chronicles the event. As Wendy Ewald stated, "An object of desire is transformed by the photographer's eye and sensibility in making the photograph" (Ewald 17). The photographer must have an intended purpose which is defined in his or her photography, or the picture is merely an accident which is unacceptable.

Our goal in the assignment is to view multiple genres of photography beginning with taking group interaction shots. The reasoning is that oftentimes, teenagers are not comfortable with their looks alone so the idea of a group shot usually makes them a more willing participant. Brian Horton points out that "[A] picture that puts the subject in a setting that provides a quick identification of that person" (Horton 99). Considering that students often travel in packs or cliques as they may be referred to in sociological or education study books, they can be identified by the company they keep. This also allows for a great deal of comfort in the subject(s), therefore, allowing the photographer to capture the image they desire.

The photo opportunity is two-fold for teaching photography within a Yearbook class. First and foremost there is a generally accepted rule: there should be more than one person in a picture if that picture is to tell a story. If there is a picture of one student standing against a wall then the story is: "Here is a student, he/she is standing next to a wall," which is of course, mundane and absolutely pointless. If you add a second and/or third student to the picture, and they are all standing against the wall, then there is a possibility that with the correct caption or story attached to it, then the picture may be interesting, such as: "The three boys couldn't hold back their joy as

they stood outside the exam room once the finals were complete." Finally, if you add a teacher to the mix, then the interaction is very interesting, and even with the omission of a caption the story could hold true for its viewer. Chances are, there are many students who have had a discussion in the hallway with that teacher (at Challenge this is a constant activity where students and teachers interact in the hallway); therefore, the viewer of the picture could make the story personalized. Whether they know the students, know the teacher, or know both, it will affect their interpretation and the way in which they will enjoy the photograph. The overall intention of this first factor is to judge the merits of the photograph based upon its capturing the emotion of the moment or event occurring in the picture.

The second part of this two-fold plan is taking the emotion of single group photography where the emotion is based on the subjects to capturing the emotion of a moment or event where the actual event is the emotional factor, not the subjects. To clarify, if two people are talking and both are laughing, it is one of the subjects (persons) who have made the environment enjoyable, therefore, causing the reaction. If these same two people are on a roller coaster and a photograph is taken and they are smiling, then it is because of the event (the roller coaster ride) that they feel joy, not the interaction between them. This second part focuses on capturing the emotions of their subjects through the precise moment that the photographer decides to snap the picture.

Think of a student at a jazz concert; the styles vary so greatly in jazz that the students are engulfed in multiple emotions in the short period that the musicians are performing. When the band starts to play Dixieland music, a very upbeat and positive genre of jazz, the students oftentimes smile due to the faster tempo of the music. . When the band moves into Blues, a more somber genre, students often get very relaxed or even saddened as the looks on their faces portray. A photographer (with the plan in hand that sets goals for the photos they want to take) can choose a group or an individual (or both) as their subject(s) and capture the spirit of the concert without ever photographing the musicians. It is not the musicians the students will remember when reflecting on the event, rather the emotions they felt because of the musicians. If the photos are properly done, and the photographer really felt the emotions they were aiming for in their pictures, few words will be necessary to do justice to the emotional roller coaster that the subject is being put through. This allows the photo to become far more relevant to more viewers, not just the subject themselves or their friends and family.

In a culture so immersed in images, it is interesting to me how few students have actual experience with forming images. Due to the influence of television and film mediums, students often take what they are told or what they read and turn it into images to store in their memories. My desire is for the students to not only passively engage in the documentation of their world through images, but take an active role in chronicling the events, people, and feelings that make up their world. As a writer by trade, it amazes me how a proper image can deem words unnecessary to understand the power of the captured event.

Photographic Samples

The students will keep three continuously growing photography folders on their required flash drive for the class. The first folder will contain professional and previously published yearbook photos (from our school as well as others in HISD) as models for their photography. I have found that when working with high school students, when you give them the opportunity to start off as a "copycat" of another style they soon modify that style into one of their own. If a student can analyze and discover nuances in others photography to impersonate the work in an attempt to improve their photography than the teacher should be supportive.

The second folder contains photographs which the photographers feel could or should be utilized for publication in our yearbook. These photos need to be divided up either by event or by emotion as to allow easy access. This is of course the folder that is shown off as part of their portfolio presentation to define their work throughout the year.

The final folder is their rejects photo folder which, consists of the photographs which have errors, flaws or are ineffective in some manner which make them no good for publication. One reason I have the students keep these pictures is to motivate them to improve their craft. Secondly, the students will be able to see a natural progression of their talents as a photographer showing growth which is the primary purpose of the education a student receives as a member of the Yearbook Staff. Finally the photographs can be altered through usage of Adobe Photoshop. While it may not alter the pictures well enough for the publications, the students can learn about improvement of the photos. While there are ethical questions regarding the alteration of photos for publication, as a training basis there are multiple learning opportunities in regard to framing and lighting which comes from working with cropping and light alteration tools on Photoshop.

Overview of Photographers Who Have Utilized Emotion in Photography

Nadar (Gaspard-Felix Tournachon) 1820 - 1910

The Nineteenth Century photographer worked in professions ranging from theatrical performer through caricaturist, he moved into photography at the will of a friend. (Department of Photography). After Nadar first persuaded his younger brother, Adrien Tournachon into the seemingly lucrative photography business, Adrien abandoned his brother which led Nadar into his own interest in photography. Photography in the early-nineteenth century was attempting to replace daguerreotypes with collodion-on-glass negatives which could produce multiple copies (Department of Photography). This could be seen as a time where photography began to be an acceptable medium for artists to produce. Nadar's original artistic plan was to produce caricatures of the one-thousand most influential people in the world (Masters of Photography, "Nadar"). The everlasting images which were required for the caricature work were produced through photography. It was Nadar's reliance on photography which led to his work with images.

Once working with photography he quickly surpassed his brother in success and was deemed one of the premier photographers throughout Europe. His basis for success in his art was the "intuitive facts" which he spoke on:

> What can [not] be learned ... is the moral intelligence of your subject; it's the swift tact that puts you in communion with the model, makes you size him up, grasp his habits and ideas in accordance with his character, and allows you to render, not an indifferent plastic reproduction that could be made by the lowliest laboratory worker, commonplace and accidental, but the resemblance that is most familiar and most favorable, the intimate resemblance. It's the psychological side of photography—the word doesn't seem overly ambitious to me. (Department of Photography)

With his interests ranging widely enough to be considered a "Renaissance Man," his photography covered his other interests until his death in 1910.

Nadar combined his passion for hot air ballooning with his photographic ability to take the earliest aerial photography. One of his earliest documented photographs came as a self-portrait in the basket of a hot air balloon. The look on the man's face has an oddly indifferent feel to it of course implying the fact that this was not his first time flying. This goes back to the original idea of the facial expressions telling the story of the event. While in the Nineteenth Century, one may assume that anyone would be excited to be in flight of any regard, yet this expression clearly defines that assumption to be unfounded as a truth. The significance of his incorporation of

science into the art of photography made it a far more practical art form and its utilization would then be able to spread into other forms of society.

There is one other advancement in photography with which Nadar was originally credited, which is something we as photographers use to this day: electric lights in his studio. One of the most important lessons my students learn is use of proper lighting: "Nadar's subjects were posed in relaxed positions with Rembrandt-style lighting, a lighting style still popular today. He was the first to implement electric lighting in his studio" (Whitmire). Now, anyone who has photographed within a school knows that fluorescent lighting is poor for photography and we are used to the lighting.

Arnold Newman

Arnold Newman, a well recognized freelance photographer from New York City. Once stated, "Photography, as we all know, is not real at all. It is an illusion of reality with which we create our own private world" ("Arnold Newman Quotes"). It is this mentality which I have envisioned for my photographers because the reality is the total of events which happens around them. It is not about the reality of the photograph but about the reality which is created for the viewer by the photographer. Arnold Newman's goal of modeling the spirit of the subject in his photography was utilized in both his personal and commissioned photos where he photographed everyone from famous artists to actors to world leaders.

These photographs are examples that I love to show students because they can recognize most of the subjects and even know a little bit of history surrounding them. Of course, it is always wonderful when a teacher can tie in their lessons to another class and when I can get yearbook students discussing world leaders; I know that the history department appreciates the incorporation of their subject. As an English teacher though, I have a predilection to his photographs of writers.

The ideal portrait for me is of playwright and political satirist, Arthur Miller taken in New York City in 1947 ("Legends Online"). Arthur Miller is posed in front of what looks to be one of his plays being performed behind the curtain. The author posing in front of his play is a perfect representation of himself as a writer. The second picture which epitomizes my English preferences is one taken of Truman Capote in New York City in 1977. This would be a wonderful opportunity to incorporate the recently released movie "Capote" whether or not the teacher wants to show the entire film (due to questionable material) or just scenes. Adding to that some writing from Capote, the picture which has Truman Capote asleep and stretched across an old fashioned couch could easily be understood as representing the image which was considered an accurate depiction of Capote.

The spirit of photography is based on the spirit of the subject, Newman particularly understood that idea. No matter whom he was photographing, Newman "carried his camera and lighting equipment to his subjects, capturing them in their surroundings and finding in those settings visual elements to evoke their professions and personalities" (Grundberg). The fulfillment of personality traits within the professionalism allows Newman to capture the spirit of his subjects, yet another reason that he is an effective source for my students to utilize in regard to taking ideal portraits.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The unit itself is meant to be used in my Yearbook class with the lessons focusing solely on the aesthetic values required in TEKS, Advance Placement Strategies as well as Habits of Hearts and Mind (which is a philosophy that is a cornerstone of Challenge Early College's Advisory program). The ability to appreciate and understand the aesthetic value of art is underutilized in school and is necessary for a student to be well versed or a "global learner"; which is why my

school and I have taken such an interest in the student's learning how to appreciate photography. The idea of a "global learner" is a person who is well versed in multiple forms of the arts as well as the academic aspect schools traditionally offer. We are primarily attempting to answer the question: "What makes a good picture?" The reason this question is so perilous to the students and instructors is the fact that there is no concrete answer I can give to my students. A good picture contains photographic rules, such as the Rule of Thirds: the photograph should be able to be divided into thirds, and the subject should be focused in one of the sections, in addition to the intention of the photographer and the event which is being portrayed. Mixing rules along with artistic vision is attainable only through practice and is never fully reached but continuously driven for.

We will examine hundreds of photographs (amateur and professional) through the course of the year in order to assess the composition as well as questioning the intention of the photographer and the subject. It's all about the motive in the photographs, and once the students can begin to understand the deeper influences of other's pictures and their process, then they will become better photographers and improve their process.

We will also look into the planning behind photography to avoid "accidental photography." High school students are not known for being the most forward thinkers in regard to planning, so it is very important to promote the importance of planning the pictures out. In looking at the picture, we work backwards to the planning period for both effective photos, where we as a group can disseminate what they did in order to take an effective photo in contrast to poor photos where we can discover what they did not do and how greatly it affects their ability to take the picture they desire. This is running alongside the concept of the "intentional fallacy" which is a literary term defined by saying the author's intention (or for our purposes, the photographer's) is not of primary importance. It is true that the photographer's intention is lost if others who view the image do not interpret it the same way, however the student's mind is far more intuitive to what their peers think than anyone else in the school.

The enthusiasm is born from the desire not only to have their photographs in the yearbook, but on "the wall" as well. It is considered an honor at my school to have a picture that you have taken or that you are the subject of placed upon the wall. The wall tells the story of the school year and as my normal desire in photography is to capture the essence of the school and photography on "the wall." In the end, the yearbook and "the wall" will accomplish the transition of the student's transition into accomplished photographers.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One: The Nickel Rule

After watching a few days of students taking pictures and viewing their "final products," I have come to one conclusion: photographers who have had little training behind a camera have no idea what they are doing! While that may seem glaringly obvious, think of how many people buy disposable cameras in a day to capture those "major life events" that they need to remember. It is getting past this idea and leading the students to a point where they understand their lack of knowledge; that is where the real teaching and learning can begin.

The largest issue facing the students is the fact that they take pictures of large groups of students or teachers with absolutely no regard for the composition of the photograph and the story which is being told in the image. The later lesson plans focus on the facial expressions of the photo's subject to tell the story and capture the emotion of an event. The problem that I have encountered with most of my photographers is their feel for necessary space between them and the subject, combined with a love affair with the zoom lens. I know this may sound like a drastic transition from my original topic, but I promise it is relevant to what I've discussed previously.

There is a basic rule of Yearbook which states that there should be very few or no pictures which only hold one person if the intention is to tell a story. When there is only a solitary figure available, the story seems a bit mundane. This is where the Nickel Rule comes into play, identifying the subject as if it is merely a single person, only instead of surrounded by space, he or she is surrounded by others, and the photographer manages to make them the center of attention. The way in which this is done is that the subject's head must be larger than the size of a nickel. If you place a nickel on the photograph and you cannot see the subject's face then they are not emphasized enough in the photograph.

Materials

Obviously the materials needed for this project are the basics: camera (Fuji S7000), XD memory card to transfer the photo onto the computer, a photo quality printer, and a nickel.

Objective

The student will be able to affectively identify the subject in a photograph and present the subject in such a manner to allow any viewer of the picture to identify them with ease. They will do this by making sure that the intended target's head (or other part of the body which is specified as the intended target) is larger than the size of a nickel to allow every person who sees it to be clear on the intention. The students will spend one week on this project, but the practice of it resonates throughout the entire school year.

Prior Knowledge

The students have had a few weeks to get a feel for the cameras and all have the ability to use the computer and print their own photographs. We have as a class gone through multiple examples of multi-genre photography, and the students have collected what they consider to be effective photography examples.

Lesson

The students will take a collection of their ten best group or couple pictures, print them, and place them on a poster board spread. They will present their photos to the class and each student will mark down the person they believe to be the subject of the picture and why they believe that. Once that is done, the student who is presenting will identify who is the actual subject and what is the logic behind making them the subject. In addition, they will discuss what their intentions were with the angle and lighting of their choice.

The spread is then placed on our center table where the student who is presenting takes a nickel and puts it over the face of the subject. If the subject's head is completely covered by the nickel, then the picture is no good for publication.

Obviously, in the photograph to the left, the subject is the student on the right and the photograph is zoomed in enough to know that her face would cover the nickel rule. If the viewer cannot see the face of the subject, then they will lose interest in trying to find out who it is, which is bad for publications.

There is no particular focus on one person in the above right picture, and no person has the focus enough in the picture to have their head larger than a nickel. The face must be larger than the nickel for it to be an appropriate picture for publication. Once again, you must specify to your students that it can be a good picture if it doesn't follow the nickel rule; it just isn't good for publishing purposes.

Lesson Two: The Puppy Story

It is amazing to me how little students understand the importance of facial expressions in photography. The students' limited scope of understanding how yearbook photos don't tell the complete story when everyone is posed with a "Cheese" kind of smile on their face, the image must set up the mood of the page. I was searching for a way for our photographers to elicit emotional outbursts from subjects without delving into the clichéd "Model Photographer" who says things like: "OK, now show me happy!" So the Puppy Story assignment was born; while this lesson may seem a bit extreme at times, there is sound reasoning behind it. A majority of the high school students whom I have come across in my time as a teacher feel little to no empathy for people or most animate creatures. This lack of empathy can impact a yearbook photographer's ability to gather an effective emotional picture. The only reaction I was able to attain from a majority of subjects was when I used a puppy as the protagonist of the story. This assignment is set for two 90-minute class periods. The first day is to take the photos and the second day is to crop, print, and present the photos.

Materials

Each photographer will use a Fuji S7000 Digital Camera (although for your assignment any camera will do). The reason I am using this particular camera is to make sure that each student begins the project on an even playing field for photo quality. Other materials are: a designated writer/speaker to tell the story, a notebook, writing utensil, and, of course, a subject who will react to the story. The second day of the assignment requires: the camera, an XD Memory Card Reader, and a computer with Adobe Photoshop (or any photo editing program you have for your use).

Objectives

The student will learn how to distinguish the facial expressions of a target and focus on the importance of emotion in telling an effective story.

Prior Knowledge

While this project is usually done in the second week of school, the teacher will spend the first week introducing the students to the camera and how it works. In addition, the students will have learned and modeled a mastery of the "Nickel Rule" which was discussed in Lesson Plan #1.

Lesson

The point of the project is to have another Yearbook Staff member tell the "Puppy Story" to a student who's not a member of the Yearbook Staff and send them on a journey through five

emotions: happiness, anger, fear, sadness and relief while the photographer documents their interpretation of each emotion.

The photographer sets up no more than five to seven feet away from the subject in proper lighting. The preferred background is a plain, solid color which contrasts the subject's facial features. The writer should be standing about one to two feet behind the photographer in order to stay out of the frame of the camera, while still attracting the subjects' eyes towards the camera. The photographer is to zoom the camera in where the face of the subject covers 75 to 80 percent of the frame. This setup allows the photographer some room to crop and edit the photos later.

The writer, who has the emotions listed in front of them, begins to tell the story while the photographer tries to capture the facial expressions to match the intended emotion. The speaker first asks the subject to picture the cutest puppy that they can imagine; then picture that puppy running across a frozen lake and barking at the snowflakes which are covering its face. Normally, being that it is a cute image, a smile comes across the face of the subject and the photographer can capture the first emotion: happiness.

The speaker then asks the subject what their prized possession is. After they specify the object, the speaker moves on with the story: "Now picture that puppy on the frozen lake with your (insert possession here) and it is tearing it to shreds. This action would of course cause a negative reaction, allowing the photographer to capture anger.

Now, the story takes a slightly darker turn for attracting the expressions of fear and sadness. The speaker brings the subject back to the puppy on the frozen lake, but now it has walked over thin ice, and the thin ice begins to crack. This allows the photographer to capture fear as the speaker is usually concerned at this point.

The speaker then describes the ice giving way and the puppy's back paws falling into the water. This for most people causes sadness at the thought of an animal in trouble, and the photographer captures the third emotion.

Now in an attempt to be empathetic ourselves, we try not to leave the subject in a state of peril, and the speaker begins the final portion of the story. The puppy has pulled himself out of the water, runs home, and falls asleep in front of the fireplace. This story causes a sigh of relief on the subject's face, allowing the photographer to capture their final picture.
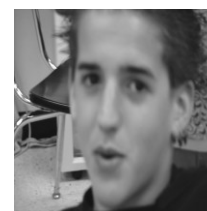
The reason for asking more than one student is that not every student will wear the necessary expressions on their faces. To avoid this, the teacher has two different choices: one is to have the students interview multiple subjects and take one emotion from the subject they feel epitomizes it the best; or have the students find that one ideal subject who will live through all five emotions for the camera.

The second day of this lesson involves taking the digital photos which were collected in the previous class period and properly cropping them to emphasize the emotions of the facial expressions of the subject. The students then print and present the photographs to the Yearbook Staff. We have a total of fourteen students in this class, not including the photographer and the writer who already know the answer, if over half of the class can identify the emotion in the picture than the students get credit for it. If not, the student receives half credit with the possibility of improving the photograph after a critique by the other staff members and me as the Advisor.

Lesson Three: ID Picture

Do not let the name of this lesson fool you; I would never plan something as mundane for my photographers as to take identification pictures of everyone in the school. No, this lesson is based upon originality of what you would call voice in writing, so I guess we can call it sight for photography.

The basic idea is for students to put together a photographic portfolio to tell the story of their progression as photographers throughout the course of the year. This is a very useful activity because it is a ready-made portfolio for the students to either enter in High School Journalistic Association photography competitions.

Materials

Students will need a professional-caliber portfolio to hold the work in, a camera (Fuji S7000), XD memory card, computer, photo printer, and a word processing program to type up their essay.

Objectives

The student will take the time to assess their work over the course of the year in their development as photographers. They will reflect on, and model, their proudest pieces and give the reasons for their choosing of these particular examples.

Prior Knowledge

Students at this point have had most of the year to work on their photographic craft. They have had an immense amount of experience with the cameras, computers, photo programs and photo printers. This is all about reflection so their prior knowledge is the subject. Any higher level thinker must focus on reflection, without reflection there is no basis for improvement. As one of the teachers who will assess their work, I can see where their prior knowledge and reflection came into play during their presentations by gauging their improvements throughout their process.

Lesson

This is the Semester Exam for the photographers in the spring: to put together a portfolio of 10 pictures they have taken. They do not put their name however, instead they write a 2-3 page description of their photographic style.

This description covers: philosophy, lighting preferences, mechanics, angles, speeds, etc. The reason for this is I have a panel of teachers (one a newspaper teacher, one photojournalism teacher, and one other teacher who is not in an English-related field) to look through the photographs and read the photographic mantras of the students. If the teacher can read the mantra and look at the pictures and make the connection between the photographer and the writing, then the student receives full credit for this section of their final.

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    <http://www.quotegarden.com/photography.html>.
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Ewald, Wendy. *I Wanna Take Me a Picture – Teaching Photography and Writing to Children*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

This is a great collection of philosophies and practices to use with your students in the classroom. It is nice to see from another teacher's perspective how photography can be successfully utilized in the classroom.

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   Obviously, working with the Associated Press as a news publication is beneficial. This is a great collection of "advice from the experts" which the students can look over and take to heart in developing their own photographic style.

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Department of Photographs. "Nadar (1820–1910)". 2006. In *Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 14 June 2006. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nadr/hd_nadr.htm>. (October 2004)
   This website, which is based upon a collection of photographs which was presented at the Museum of Modern Art. This is a broad overview of Nadar, but it gives the necessary background information and basics to present to students.

Whitmire, Vi. *Nadar – Photography's Innovator*. 2004. International Photographers Hall of Fame.
   <http://www.iphf.org/inductees/gnadar.html>.
   This site is dedicated to Nadar's 1979 induction into the Photographer's Hall of Fame. It focuses on some more minute details of Nadar's life and career.

Supplemental Resources

Crampton, Nancy. *Writers.* New York: The Quentuck Lane Press, 2005.
   This book is very helpful for cross-curricular activities with English classes as the students can find a photograph of a writer they recognize (e.g. Toni Morrison) and relate the image of the author to their style of writing.

Gucci, P.C. *Photojournalism – Making a Publication*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1978.
   While a bit outdated in practice, the focus on the intangibles of photography is very useful for new photographers.

Hicks, Wilson. *Words and Pictures*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1952.
   Excellent overview of combining photography and writing. Gained particular interest in the section regarding the idea behind the story.

Michel, Ulli. *The Art of Seeing*. London: Pearson Education London, 2000.
   This collection of Reuter's photography is an outstanding resource to enable students to see relevant samples of photography in a context they recognize as examples.

National Portrait Gallery. *Nadar (Gaspard Felix Tournachon) 1820-1910*. June 15, 2006. <http://www.npg.org.uk>.
   This is a great collection of multiple artists' photographs (21 in particular by Nadar). This is a great resource for students to see examples of proper portrait photography.

Spencer, Otha C. *The Art of Techniques of Journalistic Photography*. Texas: Harrington Publishing Company, 1966.
   Not relevant to digital photography in practice yet has a great focus on the crafting of a photograph.