

A Lens Into Our Community

Based on the project **North Shore**, exhibited at Photoville from September 13-23, 2018 in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Students use photos to examine layers of communities and explore representations of identities. Students will be asked to create their stories about their communities with visuals.

Students will be able to:

- Develop skills in photography, interviewing, storytelling, and presentation
- Examine questions of place and belonging
- Design and create narratives regarding community through visuals and oral interviews

Session 1: Intro

1. Start with Visual Thinking Strategies discussion using one of Gareth's images from the North Shore.
 - What's going on in this picture?
 - What do you see that makes you say that?
 - What more can we find?
2. Gallery walk with Post-Its (Suggestion: Use darker/lighter post-its or contrasting colors to make it really visual)
 - Where in these pictures do you see isolation?
Interaction?
 - Mark each image with a Post-It (one color for isolation, another for interaction)
 - Debrief for <5 minutes: which did most of us identify as isolation? Which as interaction? Have one or two students volunteer to explain their decision for each.
 - Which of these photos is in a public space? In a private space?
 - Repeat the process above (with new Post-Its)
 - What things do you see in the images that feel familiar to you? Unfamiliar?
 - Repeat the process above (with new Post-Its)

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Featuring photography by Gareth Smit

Grade Level: 9th - 12th grade

Subjects: Photography, English Language Arts, History

Time Required: 10 sessions

Key Images:

- [North Shore Image Bank](#)

Materials Needed:

- Cameras/phones
- Notebooks
- Graphic organizer
- Audio recorders
- Writing materials
- Chart paper
- Post-Its (6 colors)

Additional Resources:

photoville.com/edu

Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8

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3. Turn and talk to your neighbor: What is community?
 - Share out two ideas with the group
 - Chart answers on board/poster paper
 4. As a class, discuss:
 - What is the street that ties everyone together in our community? Why?
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Session 2: Planning/Mapping Our Community

1. Prepare a large printed map or projected image of the street (Google map or other) that students selected in previous class.
 2. Each student receives 3 Post-Its and writes 3 story ideas down, either a place or an event or a person they want to explore on the neighborhood street.
 3. All students walk up to the map and place Post-Its along the street corresponding to the location of the story idea. Have all students take a moment to look at all the story ideas placed on the map.
 4. Who has a story idea that they are excited about? Share out ideas and edit down to 4-6 strong story ideas located on the community street.
 5. Split into groups based on interest/corresponding ideas.
 - Brainstorm WHO we will talk to and WHAT we want to look for in our stories.
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Session 3: Interviewing Skills

1. Students pair up with someone that they don't know well. Ask each other:
 - Who is the most interesting person in your family? Why?
 - Tell me one story about that person.
2. Students now pair up with a new partner and share:
 - The story you just heard.
 - Two follow-up questions you have after hearing this story.
3. Share out the follow up questions with the whole group.
 - As an interviewee, what things did your interview do to make you feel comfortable to share more? Discuss verbal and nonverbal signals that opened up conversation. Were there specific words that helped?
 - As the interviewer, what was difficult about the process of gathering the story and retelling it to someone else? How did you overcome those difficulties?
 - As the viewer/listener, did you feel like you got a complete story? What were you left wondering?

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4. As a full class, solicit and record on chart paper/the board 3 golden rules for interviewing (i.e. what should we do to make our interviewee comfortable and respected?)
 5. Break into small groups by story idea and brainstorm 10 questions for our interviews.
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Session 4: Visual Storytelling

1. Using one of the North Shore Image Bank photos, discuss:
 - What elements of this photograph tell you about where you are? Look closely at details and at layers.
 - As students start to name elements, introduce concepts of foreground, background, and other relevant photographic techniques.
2. Using one of North Shore Image Bank photos, discuss:
 - Describe the light in this image. Where is the light in this image coming from? Can you tell what the source is? What is in the light and what is out of it?
 - What mood is created by the light in this image?
3. Depending on the focus and resources available in your classroom, decide on the technology students will use to capture images. (Film, digital, cell phone) Review photography basics with your students, including basic camera skills and composition.
4. Refer to THE FENCE 2018 Guide for an intro to photography styles and The Photoville Passport for helpful vocabulary.

Homework

1. Send groups out to interview and photograph the places and people they have identified on the community street map. Each group should conduct at least 2 interviews and capture at least 40 pictures.
 2. Remember our themes from the first class and keep them in mind as you shoot!
 - Isolation and interaction
 - Public and private space
 - Familiar and unfamiliar
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Session 5: Editing Our Stories

1. Have each group of students pair up with another group working on a different story. Students will take turns sharing their photos with each other and giving feedback.
 - Which of these images stand out to you and why?
 - Which of these images using light in an interesting way?
 - Looking at these photos, what questions do you have about the story?

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2. Students return to their story groups and edit their 40+ images down to 10 final selects, using the feedback from their peers to inform their decisions.
 3. Story groups should also edit their interviews down to 3-5 quotes.
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Session 6: Sharing/Exhibition of Work

1. Create space for students to share their self-portrait collages through a gallery walk, or a presentation.
2. Have students pair up and share:
 - How did you use lighting and foreground/background in your images to show a sense of place and create a mood?
 - Choose one of the following themes and discuss how it's reflected in your work:
 - Isolation and interaction
 - Public and private space
 - Familiar and unfamiliar
 - What new things did you learn about these people or places in your community? Was there anything surprising?