

SESSION #9

IPAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ELA
CLASSROOM



TRANSCRIPT

PRESENTER:
MICHELLE BROWN

Hi, I'm Michelle Brown and I was for the past five years a language arts teacher at an arts magnet elementary school in an urban district in Connecticut. I wanted to share with you today one of the STEAM and Art integration projects that we worked on this year. In my school, we collaborate with our arts teacher during the year and we come up with a number of projects that we co-teach and this was one that I thought was especially fun and fit into the theme of STEAM for today. Thought you might enjoy it and that it might inspire you to either use our project or come up with one that works for your classroom.

What we did is called iPad photography in the ELA classroom and I wanted to share with you how it went.

Moving myself up here. There we go. I found that iPad photography and ELA turned out to be a perfect match. We, these days everyone thinks they're a photographer and the iPhone or iPad is usually the camera of choice. Everyone carries their phone with them. Everyone's taking pictures all the time, editing them, using apps. It's something that most people are into. Students and adults love taking pictures with Apple Technology. So many students are fascinated by images that they can create and edit on their iPhones. Using iPhones was definitely not an option in my school, but I did get the idea about this because the Visual Arts teachers had a PD with a professional photographer where he came in and talked to them about using iPhone photography. I knew I couldn't use phones in my classroom. Elementary schools typically don't allow phones and mine certainly doesn't, but we did have access to 10 iPads, so I collaborated with that photographer that day. I got some ideas about what to do and we came up with this project.

We had the 10 iPads. We paired that with found poetry that I was going to do in my classroom anyway and it turned out to be a marriage made in heaven. So I'll go over a little bit of found poetry with you. Found poetry is basically taking the things that you see and observe around you and coming back and making a poem out of it. The first thing I would say is to use an area where the children can sit awhile and really reflect on what they're experiencing. If you can get outdoors, it's definitely the best thing to do. I would have loved to take them on a real true nature walk. The lesson plan that I first found out about encouraged people to go out with a lunch and have the students really sit and take some good time to get this done. That was not an option in my school, but we did have a courtyard, so again, as teachers, we always have to be



flexible. I did want to get them outside. I did want them to observe nature. This was the best it was going to be.

It turned out to be great because it was a enclosed area. I could keep an eye on everybody. It actually turned out to be a much safer option and a more contained option, so a nature walk or courtyard is a great idea. Clipboards and paper work really well for this project. Again, the students find a sit spot that looks inviting to them. They are sitting in silence for a bit and observing what's around them. It really is sort of an exercise in mindfulness and writing, mindful writing. It's something that students don't often get a chance to do and I'll tell you that my students really enjoyed it.

Then they're going to draw, sketch or write the phrases, words, things that come to mind that describe what they see, hear, smell and feel. So again, incorporating those sensory things, sensory words that always enhance writing in any genre and things that we As Language Arts teachers encourage them to do but these are sort of in a more palpable way because they're really observing and their senses are coming alive. They're noticing things that they don't typically notice.

These are some examples of some of my students and they are in these pictures outside observing nature, finding their sit spot or a stand spot, if that worked better for them and really engaged, taking it all in. You can see, if you take a look at them, how into it they were and how peaceful they seemed. They took some good time to jot some things down. They did some drawings. They definitely found some phrases and words and when you'll see in a little bit how we took those and collaborated with them.

These are some girls who are finding some great spots on a rock to really enjoy observing things around them. Another group of students you can see sort of, you can kind of feel the breeze in the picture there. There was definitely a breeze and they were enjoying that. This student was one who really was not exposed to nature, she lives in an urban environment. It's just not something that was really part of her world. And after she completed this project, she came to me and she said, "I never knew I love nature." And she was like glowing. She just was so excited that she got to sit out there and observe it and you can really see how peaceful she was. So I think it was a a great benefit to her.



TRANSCRIPT

Okay. Voila, after you come back into the classroom with these clipboards and all these phrases and drawings, the students can collect their words and phrases and that's the time to really encourage them to add some figurative language, some similes, some metaphors, onomatopoeia, whatever they want to add and some sensory words to paint a beautiful picture with their poetry and to remember to always add a title.

A tip I wanted to give you is that students can share the words and phrases with a buddy before their writing process begins. The class can then create a found poem together as a model and this can be displayed during the writing process and that's exactly what we did. I'm going to share with you and I'm going to move myself down there. I'm going to share with you our model poem that we came up with together and I just basically used popsicle sticks to pick on who ever to give an example of a phrase that they liked, that they wrote down and we've put them together almost like a little bit like that refrigerator poetry with the magnets. These came together sort of like that and we very quickly created class poem. And it really gave them the inspiration and the confidence that they could do this themselves.

So we came up with the model poem Courtyard in Spring.

I feel safe, calm and relaxed. I feel the breeze and the sun on my knees. The trees are green, the grass is greener. I see birds flying all around. Pretty trees, small bushes, flowers that are blooming, butterflies are flying around the flowers. I see rocks in a garden ready to grow. A bird flies from the sky laying down in the nice summer shade, I feel peace.

So again, this was a beautiful picture of what had happened that day. And that picture on the top right is one of the potted plants that was outside and they really liked that. We had just gone through a project that our school of planting a garden outside and sort of refreshing that whole courtyard so it was nice for the students to take some time. I do feel that it hit on some social emotional learning as well. It really helped us as a community building activity to go out and appreciate the garden that the students had helped build and teachers have put together.

So at this point, you just have to add photos and this is where the co-taught lesson comes into place with our fabulous art teacher. You can see her there. We had then gone into a session where my students went into the art room a different day and she

SESSION #9

IPAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ELA
CLASSROOM



TRANSCRIPT

PRESENTER:
MICHELLE BROWN

went through with them how to use photography, using an iPad and she gave them roles. We figured out how many iPods we had and how many students and we realized the groups had to be three people.

So she came up with three roles that would work well. You could add onto this if you had more students that needed to be together, you could create other roles, timekeeper or things like that. But the basic ones that we went through, I'll go over with you. And she also gave them some artistic goals to set.

These are my students in the art classroom, learning about iPad photography. This is what the art teacher had taught them about the roles in a photo shoot. The first one was the art director, the person who really kind of comes up with the vision for the image. The photographer, the one who actually is holding the iPad and creates the image. The lighting person, and she taught them how to use small whiteboards to bounce the light and to help to fill the light in. She talked about center of interest being the part of a design that you see first and how they want it to focus that, the center of interest being the thing that came out of the poem and reflected something that had come from their poem.

So we went back outside and the students found imagery that represented an aspect of their poem. Each student worked in a group, they worked in the group of three and they were responsible for fulfilling each one of the roles. And that's actually on the rubric that I will share with you so that each role was taken care of and that they captured their images as a team. And you can see the teacher demonstrating, that is the small whiteboard that I was telling you about that they were using to reflect the light.

These are some pictures of students doing their version of reflecting light and fulfilling the roles and creating their images that went along with their poems. Each student was able to find something that really enhanced the poem that they wrote.

So teamwork, I'm going to move myself again. With a bit of a negotiation, it did take a little bit of work, but each group was able to carry out their roles and really enjoyed matching an image to a feeling and that is how it all came together. This is the teamwork for my co-teacher and I, the lovely Stephanie, our art teacher. So there is some other students, some photo teams and got to go back to that one, photo teams.

SESSION #9

IPAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ELA
CLASSROOM



PRESENTER:
MICHELLE BROWN

TRANSCRIPT

These are some tips that I wanted to share that come from the professional photographer who had come in and done the photo iPhone photo PD with the Visual Arts teachers. He talked about experimenting, searching for vibrant colors, fun patterns and interesting textures, playing with different viewpoints and you can see the student on the top right how she's all the way down on the grass. She's definitely playing with viewpoint there. She went for it with that one and then stratos, reflections and silhouettes and some of the students definitely incorporated that into their work.

Some of the other things I learned from the professional photographer were the apps for editing and one of the ones that became the most important to me was Phonto because we use that in our project. Phonto creates a poster like image that combines text with imagery. It's a free app. This is what my class used. It was very user friendly. It turned out to be the perfect one for us. He also shared several other apps, VSCO, which is great for editing images and advanced camera controls. Some of the other ones he recommended playing around with and I've done a little bit of playing around with them, but I found Phonto to be the best for my elementary school students, but SKRWT, Instagram that everyone's familiar with. Snapseed is another great one that's pretty simple to use. Camera Plus, Light Room and Enlight. There are others as well, but these are the ones that he uses as a photographer and he really recommended using those.

When we went back to the room, the students created their Phonto creations. They chose their favorite image and typed the poem into the picture and you'll see how those came together and you can see how they've worked as a team. Again, we didn't have enough iPads for everyone in the class. We don't have one on one technology in my school, so we did have to be a little bit flexible on that. And the students were able to work in groups, kind of helped each other. We had some students who became sort of the [inaudible] gurus, they really understood Phonto well and they could help the others to really get up to speed. And in that way, it was a differentiated project. We had some peer tutoring that was going on and and some of the students' poems were longer or shorter than others. It all worked out just the way that it needed to. So Phonto, again, is a free app that allows you to use lots of fun effects to personalize your text and photo combinations.

SESSION #9

IPAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ELA
CLASSROOM



PRESENTER:
MICHELLE BROWN

TRANSCRIPT

Here's some of my students working on their Phonto, typing in, changing their fonts, creating different color backgrounds, different color texts. That's something that we probably would advance on if we did it again. Some of the students use colors for their fonts that didn't show up quite as well as they could have. That's something that I would definitely encourage you to talk to your students about, picking a color that really shows up in front of the photo that they're using.

So here are some of the final products. As you can see, some of the poems are much shorter than others. You can see their images of a pinwheel, the trees, the sky, students really observed many different things. You know, everyone had their own interpretation of what was out there and they came up with some beautiful poetry.

Images were displayed in our school, sort of in a publishing fashion. They were displayed in a gallery in the foyer of our school for the fifth grade graduation. So you can see some of the poems here, and the way that they turned out was beautiful. They did want to bring them home, of course, and perhaps even frame them and put them in their room. This was the display at the fifth grade graduation, our found poetry in iPad photography project, and the parents certainly loved seeing that.

Here's one final poem that I wanted to share with you, Atrium in the Spring.

Come sit under the trees with the butterflies and bees. Come sit on the rock next to the big garden block. Watch the trees, make their nests with their big feathery vests. See the drain that catches the rain. See the pots full of huge, big dirt clots. Hear the wind flow through the grass. I have found a quiet place at last.

I'm hoping that by looking at our project together today, our Phonto iPad photography, that it's given you some ideas for using iPads or even iPhones if you're allowed to, in your classroom in ELA. I certainly think it could work well in social studies, you could certainly take it on a historical field trip. I can just, I'm starting to think of so many ways that we can incorporate iPads and their wonderful technology into our classroom to sort of enhance our students' understanding and give them an opportunity to express himself in a way that they're dying to express themselves all the time. They love photography.

SESSION #9IPAD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ELA
CLASSROOM**TRANSCRIPT**

PRESENTER:

MICHELLE BROWN

So I'm going to share with you in my handouts, the rubrics that we used, the essential question that we used, but of course these things are adaptable to whatever it is that you're studying in ELA. So I hope this has helped you and thank you for joining me today.