

## Best Practices for the PhotoEssay

For Rules and Rubrics: go to <http://uwtrio.org> and select TRIO Quest

### Planning

The following questions are designed to help you plan a PhotoEssay curriculum that fits your time frame and needs.

- 1) Where does this activity best fit into your program curriculum/activities?
  - a) Into an existing communications skills class or workshop (writing/composition)
  - b) A lesson in an existing class or workshop such as math, science, social studies, or counseling
  - c) A project-based learning activity that crosses multiple classes or curriculum requirements
- 2) How much time will students devote to this activity (See suggestions below)?
- 3) Will students begin the activity with a preexisting piece of writing or images?
- 4) What is the students' experience with writing and/or digital images? For example,
  - a) Is the student still learning the art/ genre of writing?
  - b) Does the student know the fundamentals of taking a digital image or creating one?
  - c) Does the student know the fundamentals of moving an image to the computer and of photo manipulation?
- 5) Does your program or the student have access to:
  - a) A digital camera and Photo manipulation software OR
  - b) Preexisting images that you have permission to use
  - c) A computer with word processing software

### Beginning

Programs who have submitted PhotoEssays recommend the following steps at the beginning of the PhotoEssay activity:

- 1) Review the Rubrics and Rules with students
- 2) Review Intellectual Honesty and Citation

### Conclusion

Programs recommend the following steps at the end of the PhotoEssay activity:

- 1) Collect the PhotoEssays, review and comment, return for students to edit, and collect for judging.
- 2) Select the judging process and review Rubrics with judges. Programs have had success with both peer judging and/or staff judging.
- 3) Submit entries to TRIO Quest for national judging. See instructions at <http://uwtrio.org>
- 4) Recognize and celebrate the best work within your program.

## Suggested Activities Based on Time Allotted

### 2-4 Hours for Activity

**Focus on writing: (especially if the students do not already have an essay, poem, fiction, or research abstract):**

- 1) Create a folder of images for the students to choose from.
- 2) Give the students a theme for writing, possibly structured around the images in your folder.
- 3) Create a structured writing assignment with steps for the student to follow, including the citation of sources and images.

OR

**Focus on images (especially for students with existing essay, poem, fiction, or research abstract to adapt to the PE):**

- 1) Have the student list the content, style, and source of three images that best support the writing.
- 2) Introduce the basics of photography composition.
- 3) Give a tutorial on the basics of using a camera and have students take images for the writing.
- 4) Provide a tutorial on the basics of image manipulation and have students manipulate the best 3 images for the writing.
- 5) Have student place the images within the text.

### 5-8 Hours for Activity

**Example of a 5-8 hour curriculum activity with a writing focus:**

- 1) Instructor structures how students choose a topic
- 2) Students storyboard ideas to organize writing
- 3) Students write first draft based on storyboard
- 4) Instructor reviews and gives feedback
- 5) Instructor gives a tutorial on good image composition and on basic use of a camera
- 6) Instructor distributes cameras to students and students take images related to chosen topic
- 7) Students transfer images to computers
- 8) Students choose images that best represent their topics and use basic editing techniques to improve image quality
- 9) Students rewrite essay based on instructor comments and place images within text for best effect
- 10) Instructor follows steps at the top for "Conclusion"

**Note that the Curriculum above could be used for college students who haven't yet begun a research project. The focus could be their presentation in the PhotoEssay of an introduction to the type of research they want to do and why.**

**A 5-8 hour workshop or class focused on creating images could use elements above but with a shift in focus, such as:**

- 1) Students begin by selecting the content for the images they will create, or reviewing their images to select three that would support the content. They then create the images if needed, transfer these to the computer, and manipulate the images.
- 2) Students write a poem, narrative, essay, or other writing that enhances the communication inherent in the images. They submit the completed assignment for the instructor to review and provide comments for revision.

### 10 + Hours for Activity

**Consider:**

- 1) A science and writing class collaborate to report results in a PhotoEssay
- 2) A writing and tech class collaborate to produce a PE based on a writing assignment
- 3) College students design a project (possibly for General Studies credit) with a program of interest and report the project and its results in a PhotoEssay.