

Autophotography

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Students often believe that teachers "just don't understand."
List the differences between your life and the life of one or two of the students in your classes. Do you understand their world? The following activity is one way that teachers can understand each student's life more fully.

First

- Students write 20 words in 12 minutes, which answer the question:

Who am I? *Notice:* on this activity, we learn about the student, but we learn very little about the context or her perspective of her world.

Second

- Students take pictures of their world; of their perspective.
Notice: on this activity we learn about the student's environment and how the student sees the world. Allow time: 2 or 3 weeks. A colleague from Modesto CA, Dr. Sharon Whitehead Van Loben Sels hands out disposable cameras to the students. Consistently, all cameras are returned. I think of this as a classic example of *Faith in the Student*, which is often mentioned by David and Bonnie Freeman.

Third

- Students categorize photos according to any cultural perspective; for example: family; work; play; etc.

Fourth

- Students select pictures, generate an outline for narration -- for example, each photo can represent a chapter, a paragraph, a sentence. This part of the assignment requires that you write a plan for your portfolio.

Fifth

- Each student finishes this comprehensive portfolio, which includes written and artistic representations of his life and his world view.

Sixth

- Students bind two copies of each portfolio; one for the student and one for the classroom.