

**Toni Pitts**  
**4503 Brittany Trail Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61822**  
*tonivanessaphotography.com*

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***I hereby certify that I am authorized to approve this Report, which serves as a Request for Reimbursement, that I have reviewed the attached invoices in the amount of \$600.00; that all costs claimed have been incurred for the Project in accordance with the Agreement between Toni Pitts and the CITY OF URBANA; that all submitted invoices have been paid; and no costs included herein have been previously submitted.***

**1. GRANTEE:**

Name of Applicant or Primary Contact: Toni Pitts

Address: 4503 Brittany Trail Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61822

Project Title: Photography and Social Justice

- 2. TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS AWARDED: \$600.00**
- 3. TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED TO DATE: \$300.00**
- 4. GRANT PERIOD: April 1, 2018 through April 1, 2019.**
- 5. EXPENDITURE DEADLINE: April 1, 2019.**
- 6. DATE OF PROJECT COMPLETION: September 2, 2020.**

## **Post-Project Evaluation:**

### **1. Accomplishments and how grant funds were utilized during the grant period.**

The project accomplished creating a curriculum for learning the history of the photo essay in storytelling and documentary photography to advance civic engagement and social justice. Being in a situation and learning to choose the moments that best tell a story. I shot a couple hundred pictures of civic protest and ended up developing a photo essay example using a handful of images. I produced a lesson plan curriculum that is currently being presented to Urbana School District #116 teachers. For my own growth, this grant gave the opportunity and permission to become a photographer.

### **2. The impact that the grant funds had on your artistic or organizational development.**

Far too often, our public education system marginalizes arts education. We see arts education relegated to the “extracurricular” and arts teachers face few resources and support. Further, arts education is often divorced from civic education and social studies. This project seeks to offer educators curriculum that combines civic engagement and arts practice. By using photography, students explore the ways in which visual media can advance social change and dialogue. This lesson plan curriculum is currently being presented to educators for feedback towards eventual use in area schools. I plan to continue to build this curriculum into a broader set of lesson plans to provide continued learning in the area of photography and the arts as a method of civic studies.

### **3. The number of hours spent in completing the project: including planning, administration, promotion, production, and the final presentation.**

The majority of my time was spent administering, researching, and photographing and post-producing images for the lesson plan. I estimate spending about 1,200 hours on this project. There were many times that I completed a task only to continue and learn something new which required me to continually revise the project.

### **4. The number of participants in events or activities related to your grant project.**

This project involved hours of personal research I conducted independently and collaborative support from three educators: a retired journalism professor and high school teachers of art and English respectively.

I went to Washington DC to photograph activism and civic engagement in protest, including the Champaign Chapter of Moms Demand Action Against Gun Violence. I learned the power of photography and social media on grassroots activism. I ended up photographing a small group people representing the CU Moms Demand chapter and a protest demonstration of 150 people.

### **5. Description of experience working with collaborating partners.**

I consulted with Beverley Pitts, Retired Journalism Professor at Ball State University on organizing the information and project. Stacey Gross, Arts Teacher, and Lisa Soucek, English Teacher at Centennial High School consulted on project development, timeline, and teacher feedback. Jill Lagerstam, Art Teacher at Urbana High School USD #116 and Stacey Gross, Art Teacher at Unit 4 are currently reviewing the curriculum. Both teachers have indicated a willingness to test the curriculum in their classrooms.

## **6. Any additional comments.**

This project was more difficult than I anticipated. I wound up having personal and familial health issues that impacted my timeline. Soon after meeting with Arts & Culture Coordinator, Rachel Storm, to make a plan for completion with an approved revision, the pandemic became another hurdle to overcome. While the timeline was stretched for this project, the curriculum lesson plan was a success and I'm excited to move forward beyond this grant to continue to develop it further.

This project taught me a lot about myself; quite often it was my vision as a photographer and the way I related to my subjects. Other times it was skills, for example I took a basic writing course to improve my written communication skills.

I am grateful that committee had confidence in me and my idea and gave me a grant that had a profound impact on me as an artist. I am grateful for the opportunity, the most important thing I have learned, is to feel the fear and do it anyway. Sometimes that is easier said than done. Secondly, being curious and willing to be a lifelong learner is helpful. This opportunity has encouraged me to begin to solve problems and seek answers through art. This project taught me to look to the history of photography for guidance.

7. **Fiscal Report:** The Fiscal Report is a basic list summarizing expenses supported by grant funds. Report only those expenses supported by your Urbana Arts Grant. List the expenses supported by your Urbana Arts Grant in a **spreadsheet or list format** on letter size paper and submit it with the Final Report to the City.

SD cards (2 x128 GB)	in-kind donation
Photo paper	in-kind donation
Ink cartridges	\$219.80
Camera and equipment	in-kind donation
Travel to Springfield Illinois	in-kind donation
Travel to Washington D.C.	in-kind donation
Photography and Editing	in-kind donation
Research Honorarium	\$100.00
<u>Artist Honorarium</u>	<u>\$300.00</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$619.80</i>

**Total Amount Billed**  
**to Urbana Arts Grant:** **\$600.00**

# How Are Social Activists Made?

TEACHING CURRICULUM

PROPOSED BY

Toni Pitts



**A Special Thanks To:**

City of Urbana Arts and Culture Commission

Stacey Gross, Unit 4 Arts Teacher, Centennial High School

Lisa Riecks Soucek, Unit 4 English Teacher, Centennial High School

Beverley Pitts, Retired Journalism Professor, Ball State University

## **Teaching Unit Plan**

### **Photography and Social Justice**

#### *I. Introduction to Unit Overview and Objectives*

Photography can be used as a tool for social change. Using photography to capture a series of moments, and gestures of a subject or perhaps an event takes practice and skill. It can have positive implications on individuals and society. This lesson plan is intended to be a useful and supportive resource for teachers interested in including the study of photography and social change into their art curriculum.

In this unit, students will learn how to use a photo essay as a communication tool that can be used for social activism to inform, and document significant events for an audience. Students will learn to use photography to visually communicate an idea or a narrative. The skills developed within this lesson can help students become aware of situations around them on a daily basis and to use that awareness as a tool to promote social change and perhaps inspire action.

A teacher can be a strong advocate for social activism. This unit plan will include a discussion guide, exercises and links to resources about photographers whose work focuses on social justice issues. In turn those examples will encourage students to realize their potential for creating work to change society for the better.

#### *A. Objectives - National Visual Arts Standards*

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Enduring Understanding: Media arts ideas, works and processes are shaped by the imagination.

- Anchor Standard MA: Cr1.1.III– Conception
  - How do media artists generate ideas?
  - How can ideas for media arts productions be formed and developed to be effective and original?
    - a. Integrate aesthetic principles with a variety of generative methods to fluently form original ideas, solutions, and innovations in media arts creation processes

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Enduring Understanding: Media artists plan, organize, and develop creative ideas, plans and models into process structures that can effectively realize the artistic idea.

- Anchor Standard MA:Cr2.III – Development
  - How do media artists organize and develop ideas and models into process structures to achieve the desired product?
    - a. Integrate a complex personal aesthetic and knowledge of systems process in forming, experimenting, and proposing original artistic ideas,



prototypes, and production frameworks, considering complex constraints of goals, time and personal limitations.

Anchor Standard 3: Revise, refine and complete artistic work. Enduring Understanding: Media artists develop excellence through practice and constructive critique – reflecting on, revising and refining work over time.

- Anchor Standard MA: Cr3.1.III– Construction

What is required to produce a media artwork that conveys purpose, meaning and artistic quality?

How do media artists improve/refine their work?

- a. Analyze, refine and elaborate elements and components to express compelling purpose, story, emotion or ideas in complex media arts productions, demonstrating mastery of associated principles (for example hybridization).
- b. Analyze, refine, and elaborate elements and components to create media artworks that have an impact on specific purposes, audiences and contexts.

*B. Prerequisites*

In order to successfully complete this instructional unit a student should have access to a digital camera and have a basic understanding of exposure (aperture, shutter speed and ISO). It is necessary to shoot more photos than needed, it is important to have options.

It often takes several attempts to capture a strong image that is well composed and properly exposed. A photography student should understand the concept of “working a scene,” that is to say, taking a variety of shots in order have several images to compare and to choose the strongest image.

*C. Materials*

Digital cameras, computers, photoshop and printers

*D. Outcomes*

It would also be helpful to understand basic compositional elements related to photography: line, shape color, texture, pattern, balance, negative space, perspective/viewpoint, framing and the rule of thirds.

It would be helpful to have and understanding of the principles of design: contrast, rhythm, proportion, balance, unity, emphasis, movement, and variety. These principles have an important relevance to photography.

## II. *Lesson Plans*

Based on a 24 week semester, each lesson plan is loosely planned to cover four weeks. There are three sections beginning with Social Justice, Camera Operation, and finally the Photo Essay.

### Social issues

#### A. *Goals*

In this Unit, students will understand the history and the role of photography to inform and document significant events, research and create a photo essay. Choose an issue and tell a story in five to seven photographs. Students should begin to consider a social issue to explore further.

#### Essential Questions

- How do photographers engage with the world?
- How does photography draw viewers into an image?
- What is social activism?
- How can photography create social change?
- What are social issues?

#### B. *Discussion and Activities*

In order to begin the discussion. Ask students to bring a photo to class that they find inspirational. It could be personal, historical or a contemporary image. Give each student the chance to show and briefly discuss their image and to explain why it is significant. It would be interesting to know whether the photos classmates share invoke curiosity or emotion. This is a good topic for a circle discussion.

Define social issue issues, social justice. Justice in terms of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Present students with historic photographs of situations that illustrate a social issue or problem

#### C. *Evaluation*

#### D. *Supporting Resources*

The following links can be used to illustrate and define the term social justice. These Ted Talk links are a good resource for a class discussion and idea generators about photographers and social justice.

Jacob Riis

Journalist, Photographer and Social Reformer

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/riis-jacob/>

Dorothea Lange

Conscientious Photography Magazine

<https://cphmag.com/migrant-mother/>

James Nachtwey

My Wish: Let my photographs bear witness

[https://www.ted.com/speakers/james\\_nachtwey](https://www.ted.com/speakers/james_nachtwey)

David Griffin

How photography connects us

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-photography-connects-us-david-griffin>

Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)

Photography as witness

[https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/themes/photography/photography-as-witness/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/photography/photography-as-witness/)

### Camera operation

#### A. *Goals*

In this Unit, students will learn how to use a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera and all of the controls. Students will also learn how to use a DSLR to successfully capture an image.

Note: There are many plans to learn how to use a DSLR, if you have an established program use it.

In order to master a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) Camera you must understand:

1. Focus
2. Exposure (aperture, shutter speed ISO)
3. Master Metering (including exposure compensation)
4. Shooting modes (including priority modes and full manual)
5. Learn about White balance

6. Understand file size/types

*B. Discussion and Activities*

1. Focus and Exposure

Students should learn how to focus manually in addition to using the auto focus mode. It is important to learn how to use all of the exposure modes on a camera. Start with manual mode. Once students master manual, aperture priority and shutter priority are easier to understand and control.

2. Metering and Shooting Modes

Discourage students from becoming dependent on automatic modes although they are useful in fast action situations, control is exchanged for convenience. The added control that comes with shooting manual can create nuance in an image.

3. Composition and Lighting

I encourage my students to try and shoot with the goal of as little post-production editing as possible. Therefore, we talk a lot about using the viewfinder to compose a good image to start with. I teach them to look for distracting backgrounds or poor lighting from the get-go. Thinking in this way will save time in the long run.

4. White Balance, Editing and Downloading

5. Digital means you can take lots of photos!

I often have students go out to shoot only to return with a handful of images. They haven't grasped the idea that they can take a large number of photo and choose the best shot from the group afterward. Many of them believe one shot is all they'll need. Inevitably, students end up wishing they could have taken more images to capture a specific subject or moment.

*C. Evaluation*

*D. Supporting Resources*

Photo Essay

A. Goals

In this Unit, students will produce a photo essay made up of 5-7 images. A narrative series of photos including each of the following shots: establishing shot, wide shot, detail shot, process shot, environmental portrait, and closing shot.

Ask students to identify the Principles of composition in an image

Ask to students to identify different shots

#### Essential Questions

- What is your subject?
- What is the best point of view to capture the subject?
- Are you close enough to get the shot?
- Should you include some of the background for context?
- Have you eliminated distractions in front of and behind the subject?
- Where is the light coming from?
- Are you standing in the best place to get the shot??

#### *B. Discussion and Activities*

Present a slide show of impactful images. Ask students to comment on the images. Do the photos make the curious? Do these images inspire questions? What type of shot is it? Choose from the following: establishing shot, wide shot, detail shot, process shot, environmental portrait, and closing shot.

Give each student one comic strip from the Sunday paper. Ask them to describe each frame in terms of the following: establishing shot, wide shot, detail shot, process shot, environmental portrait, and closing shot.

Give students a magazine. Ask them to cut out pictures of the following: establishing shot, wide shot, detail shot, process shot, environmental portrait, and closing shot.

Discuss a strategies method to research by making an outline or a storyboard. Steps to follow choose a topic, list the facts needed, create a list of images needed, make a back-up plan, over shoot and edit phot selections.

If an image is well composed it will be more likely to capture the viewer's attention. Describe Principles of Design and how it makes a composition strong.

Ask students to create an outline and/or storyboard, draw several rectangles and sketch possible images that support the message to be conveyed.

establishing shot, in filmmaking and television production sets up, or establishes the context for a scene by showing the relationship between its important figures and objects

wide shot, that shows the subject within their surrounding environment

detail shot, often tell the story of the situation by focusing on a relatively small portion of it.

process shot

environmental portrait, An environmental portrait is a portrait executed in the subject's usual environment, such as in their home or workplace, and typically illuminates the subject's life and surroundings.

closing shot

If captions are used, note that captions describe something in an image that may not be readily obvious. A caption can be long or short, it should relate to the narrative and include the most relevant works in an article. A caption should be succinct, have clarity and be informative.

C. Evaluation

Create a photo essay in five to seven images. The essay must have a research topic and the following shots:

establishing shot

wide shot

detail shot

process shot

environmental portrait

closing shot

D. Supporting Resources

The following links can be used to illustrate and define the term photo essay. These links are a good resource for a project idea generators and class discussion.

The Collective Lens- How to Create a Photo Essay

<http://www.collectivelens.com/blog/creating-photo-essay/>

Creating a photo essay is a combination of art and journalism. As with a written essay, the elements of a phot essay should be structured in a way that easily conveys a story to

the viewer. The photos chosen must be compositionally strong, in addition they must also be informative and educational. Finding photos that have both qualities can be very challenging, but the result can be very powerful.

#### W. Eugene Smith's Landmark Portrait: 'Country Doctor'

In 1948 Smith spent 23 days with Dr. Ernest Ceriani and documented the challenges of being a doctor in a rural town. The photo essay was originally published in Life Magazine. The link to the article contains photos from the magazine and several unpublished images from the shoot.

<https://time.com/3456085/w-eugene-smiths-landmark-photo-essay-country-doctor/>

#### Harlem Gang Leader by Gordon Parks

Published in 1948 for Life Magazine, Gordon Parks spent four weeks with a gang leader, Red Jackson, in Harlem, New York. Parks made hundreds of photographs, 21 appeared in the article.

<https://time.com/3461593/revisiting-gordon-parks-classic-photo-essay-harlem-gang-leader/>

#### The 11 Interesting Photo Essays

This is an essential link, there are 11 excellent photo essays from across the world. All the links provide helpful examples to reinforce the power of photo essays.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/katebubacz/11-of-the-most-interesting-photo-essays>

## **SAMPLE PHOTO ESSAY**

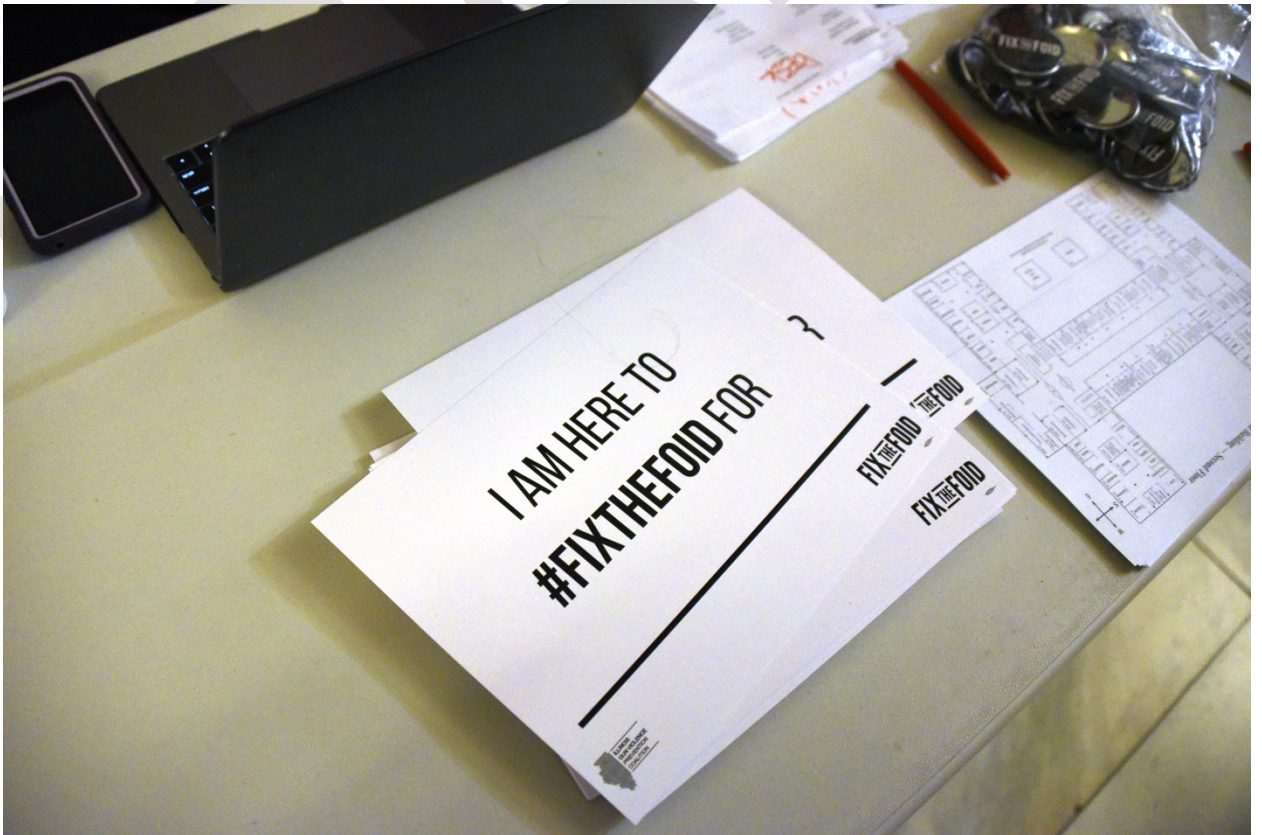
### **Mom's Demand Action Rally in Springfield Illinois**

Mom's Demand actin held a rally at the State Capital on Wednesday, May 11, 2019. They support a bill that could fix loopholes that affect gun licensing. Senate bill 1966 requires background check for all gun sales, including sales from unlicensed gun sellers. The bill would require anyone applying for a Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) card to be fingerprinted and automatic removal of guns once a FOID card is revoked.

On February 15, 2019 a tragic incidents of workplace violence occurred. There was a mass shooting at the Henry Pratt Company in Aurora, Illinois. The perpetrator and six people died, additionally six people were injured. The perpetrator was not legally allowed to possess a gun in Illinois because of a prior felony conviction in Mississippi.













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## Annotated, Supplemental Materials and Resources

### Photos and Social Issues

Reference, a picture is worth a thousand words lesson plan

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons-plans/a-picture-is-worth-1000-words/>

### Photography

Jurupa Hills High School Photography 2019-2020

<https://cauchonphotoclass.edublogs.org/photography-assignments-2-2/>

### Lesson Plans from the J. Paul Getty Museum

[https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom\\_resources/curricula/exploring\\_photographs/lesson\\_plan\\_index.html](https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/exploring_photographs/lesson_plan_index.html)

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