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Fibonacci Folding Book Project

How to Select Photos

Photo selection works best with small groups of students (no more than 5 or 6 at a time). Allow approximately 30 minutes for each group.

Supplies

index cards
pencils
computers (1 for each student)
jump drives holding student images (1 for each computer)

Preparation

Save student images on a jump drive in a file structure that works like this:
teacher name
 group number
 student name

Procedure

Students will work in windows explorer. They will need to know computer basics, such as using a mouse to select (both one-click and double-click), and navigating file structures to find and open files. Before the students sit down, you should select the drive that corresponds to the relevant jump drive. Instruct the students to double-click on the file with their teacher's name. Then, to double-click on the file with their group number. Then, to double-click on the file with their name. At that point, they should see a list of the file names for the photographs they took. You can instruct them how to display the files as thumbnails.

Ask the students to open the first image. This is typically an image of the student. (When I take students out in the field to take photographs, I take a photograph of the student right before I hand the student a camera. This makes it easier to identify the photographer of the images.)

Say: "Is it a picture of you?" Yes. "That's how we know we have the right images."

Ask the students to look in the upper left hand corner of the screen to find the file name of the image. Ask each one to read it aloud, and check over his/her shoulder. Tell them that this file name (or, more precisely, the last four digits of the file name) is the label to use to refer to any image they select.

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At that point, ask the students to look through all the images, one by one, and then select the three images they think best fit the assignment. Solicit from them characteristics of good images from two points of view: scientific and artistic. Some answers are: clear, shows several parts of plant or animal for identification purposes, interesting shapes, lines or colors.

Each student writes the three file names on an index card. Then, ask them to underline the file name of the image they think is best.

At that point, ask them to face away from the computers with their index cards in hand. Tell them that you will act as Art Director. Begin the “creative meeting” to choose the images that will go in the field guide (or other book). Ask each one to describe his/her image. If two students present photographs of the same plant or animal, ask both students to bring their images to the screen and ask all the students to take a look and express preferences, with reasons. Take a vote. (I feel comfortable expressing my preferences and giving my reasons because it models for the students how a photographer makes judgments about which images he/she will use. I ask that they articulate a reason, too, when they express a preference.)

Questions to Ask in Selecting Photographs

What story do we want to tell?

Does this photograph help us tell the story?

Is this photograph interesting?

Does it include shapes?

Lines?

Colors?

Designs?

Emotions?

Is this photograph in focus?

Is this photograph too light?

Is this photograph too dark?