



A SINGLE INTEGRATED COURSE ACROSS MULTIPLE LESSONS AND SUBJECTS ENABLES CRITICAL THINKING, STEWARDSHIP, AND STEAM LEARNING

Anita Lau teaches Grades 3 + 4 at Mitchell Elementary in Richmond, Canada.

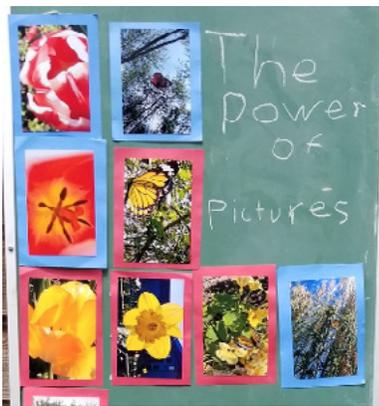


Chris Jordan's famous Albatross at Midway Island launched the topic - plastics in our oceans.

Through her school district, Ms. Lau received access to the Digital Media Academy for Schools. Ms. Lau previously avoided integrating technology into her classroom for fear of technology replacing learning.

Ms. Lau was inspired by the easy framework provided to integrate technology into her teaching of core subjects. Recognizing digital technology and images provide rich opportunities to encourage curiosity and engage young learners, Ms. Lau integrated Digital Media Academy for Schools' The Power of Pictures course into biology, art, and stewardship course.

The Power of Pictures course provided her with the learning and guidance she needed to apply her creativity and infuse her courses with technology education.



Ms. Lau's students' photographs

Guided by the core concepts of The Power of Pictures course, students learned to read pictures, discussed how creators use different elements to tell stories, and understood how images connect with an audience. To reinforce this concept, the class continued its research and investigation of the human impact on the environment using photos, peer feedback, and reflection activities providing students with the language and perspective to see the world in new ways.

From birds to oceans to plants and flowers Ms. Lau was able to deliver technology infused lessons without relying on technology itself. As a final project students took the perspective of ocean creatures using technology, did research, sculpted with plasticine and finally put the creatures in the plastic bottles with a letter that students wrote from the animal's perspective to humans. The students' letters were impactful and powerful as they had built up their understanding of our environmental impact throughout the lessons. Students even stayed quiet for one hour as they "Imagined a World without Birds".

Through the entire learning journey, visual literacy has empowered the students' thinking. The class tapped into the power of pictures to help them express their feelings and to tell their story. The Power of Pictures from Digital Media Academy guided the students to think creatively and critically about their learning topics through pictures. The lessons taught them how to use different photography techniques intentionally to communicate their story.

Students engaged in abstract thinking and practiced making conscious choices to communicate their ideas. Integrating technology and photography into teaching and learning provided students with new perspectives. Through the exercise of taking pictures of the same object from different angles or a close-up of only part of the object led to new understanding. Ms. Lau and her students both learned new things.



“ In my plan I was going to integrate The Power of Pictures into a single lesson. I was inspired as I taught future lessons that The Power of Pictures course continued to offer opportunities to integrate higher level learning. The critical thinking questions from the Digital Media Academy for Schools course were a huge hit and drove students learning deeper. I used them all!” - Anita Lau, Educator, Mitchell Elementary, Richmond, Canada.