

Lesson Name:

Shape Your Life

Student Objectives:

- Explain how your perspective of yourself shapes your happiness.
- Create a self-portrait of yourself that demonstrates a positive perspective of yourself.

Educator Preparation:

- Familiarize yourself with the lesson outline and the poem.
- If presenting this lesson yourself and time allows, students would probably greatly appreciate you sharing your own self-portrait.

Introduction:

Hello! Today I am sharing with you a lesson about having a positive perspective of yourself. I will be teaching this lesson through a photography experiment called “Decoy.”

Instruction:

Several years ago the camera brand Canon decided to do a photography experiment. They gathered different photographers together and asked each one to create a portrait of a man. However, the group heading up the experiment told each photographer a unique story about the man. One was told he was a fisherman, one was told he was a millionaire, one was told he was a former convict, one was told he was a psychic, and one was told that he had saved a life. Each photographer made a huge effort to capture the man’s true personality. What they weren’t told, is that they didn’t know the man’s true personality at all.

At the end of the project, they each put their portrait on display in a gallery of sorts and were invited to join the other photographers to view the portraits. The photographers were stunned at the work and some of them were uncertain the photographs were even of the same man. Each photographer had created extremely different portraits in an effort to use their art to capture the man’s story.

In the end, it was revealed to each of them that they had each been told a different story

about the man and their unique photographs began to make more sense.

Interaction:

Show [slideshow](#) of photographs and comment on what sticks out in the photograph.

When I view the photographs, I notice certain differences between them. In the fisherman photograph, he looks friendly and approachable. In the millionaire picture he looks serious and reflective. In the convict photograph he looks questioning and hardened. In the lifesaver portrait, he looks very friendly and welcoming. In the psychic picture he looks knowledgeable.

Closure:

Canon used this experiment to create this slogan for their brand: “A photograph is shaped more by the person behind the camera than by what’s in front of it.”

Now, the point of this lesson is not to create an advertisement for a particular camera brand! But, the whole experiment did make me wonder about how much our perspective of something shapes how we understand it. If a photograph is shaped more by the person behind the camera than what’s in front of it, couldn’t we say the same thing about ourselves and our lives? At least in some aspects, our perspective about who we are and who we can be can shape us in powerful ways. Just like the photographers who looked for ways to focus on certain aspects of what they believed to be the man’s story in their work, we choose every day what we are going to focus on about ourselves. Will we focus on the negatives? Or will we use our positive perspective ourselves to enable our lives to become beautiful portraits of who we are?

Activity:

Today we are going to do an [activity](#) that is somewhat similar to the photography project we looked at today. You are going to choose one word to focus on to describe your positive perspective of yourself. Then, you are either going to draw a portrait of yourself or you are going to take a selfie. Your picture should try to illustrate the positive perspective of yourself. Think about the objects you have in the background, the colors you are wearing, your facial

expression, the lighting, and your body language. Then, write a brief paragraph explaining your thought-process in creating the photograph. How did you show a positive perspective of yourself through the portrait?

Additional Resources:

- [Canon Video about Decoy Project](#)
- [Slideshow of photographs](#)
- [Graphic organizer worksheet](#)