The ability to record, read and critically relate to images is a necessary skill in the development and construction of today’s society.
Let’s go!

The first exercise is about what it takes to get started working educationally with the camera.

- Gather a group that you want to work with.
- Find premises to be in.
- Hand over the camera.
- Make sure that everyone can take a photo.
- Make sure that everyone can see and display their photo.
- Let the participants learn from each other.

Remember!
Let the participants explore on their own. Dare to take a step back.
ADOPT THE CAMERA
If the participants borrow cameras, personalise them by putting their name or slips with numbers on them. Participants can adopt the camera as their own while you are working together. If it’s feasible, they can take the camera home between meetings.

DIFFERENT AGES CAN MEET
The exercises have been tested on people ages 0 to 100.

HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS?
3–10 people is good, depending on how experienced you are. If you are a beginner, you can try the exercises on family or friends just to see how they work.

The number of people in the group also depends on what age you are working with. The younger the participants are, the fewer there should be.

Technology
Tablets, mobile phones and digital cameras – all are equally good to use. If you don’t have access to technology but have a group that has mobile phones of their own, use these!

If you are working with children ages 0 to 6, mobile phones or small digital cameras work well. If you are working with ages 7 to 100 years, tablets or mobile phones are good.

In tablets and mobile phones, there are apps for editing still photos, and also apps for editing video, when you eventually get started with that.

It’s fun to display your photos in a large format, so it’s great to have access to a large TV screen or a projector in order to view the photos on the wall. If there’s no projector in your premises, maybe there’s one in another place that you can borrow from time to time. There are adapters that make it easy to link mobile phones with projectors.

Make sure that the tablet/mobile phone is charged and has enough storage capacity. Have an external storage memory device on hand to save the photos on.
Together you are making an agreement in the group where you decide how you are going to work with the camera in the future. The conversation is adapted according to ages and what group you are working with.

**SECOND EXERCISE**

#### The portrait – the responsibility involved in holding a camera

- **May I take a photo of you?** The participants divide themselves into groups of two. They will take photos of each other. Each person will take a photo of another person and each person will also be in a photo. The purpose of the exercise is to get a sense of the responsibilities implied in pointing a camera towards another person. What do you do if the person doesn’t want to show his or her face?

- **May I display the photo?** Now each person is to choose a photo to display to the group. But before the photo is displayed, the person who is in the photo should give permission to do so. If the person says no, the photo may not be displayed.

- **May I save the photo?** The participants now have photos of each other in their cameras. Ask them to discuss what is going to happen with the photos. Will they be deleted? May the photographer retain them? If so, may the photographer make them public?

Together you are making an agreement in the group where you decide how you are going to work with the camera in the future. The conversation is adapted according to ages and what group you are working with.
Who owns the photo?

Under copyright law, the person who takes the photo owns the photo. The photo to the right was taken by a monkey – the world’s first monkey selfie – and consequently there is no restriction on its use, according to classic laws.

If you ask a 3-year-old who owns the photo, however, the answer will be the monkey. For children, it is obvious that the person in the photo has the right to make decisions about the photo. That can be a good guideline when you work with the camera educationally.

ASK EVERY TIME THE PHOTO IS TO BE DISPLAYED

► The fact that it’s okay to take a photo, doesn’t mean it’s automatically okay to display it. Ask!

► The fact that it’s okay to display a photo, doesn’t mean it’s automatically okay to make it public. Ask!

► Each time a photo is to be displayed, permission needs to be requested again if no other agreement exists.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE LAW

Find out what applies legally concerning photos in the job in which you will be working. Also develop tools for the ethics surrounding the camera so that everyone feels comfortable with what’s happening with the photos you take.
THIRD EXERCISE

COLLECTING – the treasure hunt

- Go around the room.
- Take five photos of triangles.
- Select a photo.
- Display it for the group by making an exhibition.
- Marvel at how different the photos are, even those that have the same motif.

There are endless variations on the treasure hunt. For example, look for red things, things that start with B, various autumn leaves, things that make you happy, etc.

For teachers, the treasure hunt can become an inventory of what participants know or think about a specific subject and material to use as a basis for conversation.

Make an exhibition together.
COLLECTING
Taking photos or filming involves collecting material. Collecting is an important moment when someone photographs and films.

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EDUCATIONAL STAGES

SELECTION
Being able to select one photo out of many is an important stage.

PRESENTATION
Displaying your photo is exciting. Displaying for others is also a motivator for continuing to take photos and to film.

Three approaches:

DOKUMENTING
Here the photographer has found a triangle and documented it with the camera.

FRAMING
Here the photographer has used the camera to frame a rectangular box so that it becomes a triangle in the photo.

STAGING
Here the photographer has fabricated a triangle – in other words, has created something that did not exist and has taken a photo.
You must choose. What falls outside the edge of the photo? And what doesn’t fit?

**SELECTION – framing**

1. Make your own frame.

2. Frame a motif with your frame.

3. Take a photo that shows what is outside the frame.
PRESENTATION – in the room

THIS IS MY PHOTO! WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Make sure that each workshop includes a period when each participant gets to display a photo for the others. Preferably enlarged on the wall by a projector. Each person presents his or her photo: this is my photo! What do you see?

Someone sees a rabbit; someone a duck. We see one thing at a time, but when we look and talk about what we see, we can use each other’s eyes to catch sight of something else – we get access to more perspectives.

The presentation room is created through practice – i.e., by what we are doing. It can be any physical room, but certain rules and agreements apply. It is about taking every photo seriously, listening to each other and taking a stand.

WE SEE WITH OUR EXPERIENCE

What do you see in the adjacent photo? Sand? A foot? Or maybe a 36-hour-old track of a male lion? Everyone sees different things. And when we see the same thing, we think differently about what we see. We see with our experience.

▶ To display your photo for others is taking a position.
▶ To comment on the photo of someone else is also a taking a position.
▶ To display and talk about photos you have taken yourself is a way to catch seeing what you see yourself.
▶ To display your own photo and view other people’s photos is about exchange, dialogue and participation.

Diversity of perspectives and angles of approach is a quality. A photo does not contain one interpretation, or one answer, and as a result it can start a multifaceted conversation.
**FOURTH EXERCISE**

**Distance**

- Take three photos of a specific object. One photo very close, one a bit farther away and one a long distance from the object. Remember not to change the angle.
- Begin by displaying the photo that is closest to the object. What do we see? What can the object be?
- Then look at the photo that is a bit away from the object. What do we see now? How big is the object?
- Look at the photo that is farthest away from the object. What does the photo represent now? Is it the same as before?

**Close**

**A bit away**

**A long distance away**
PHOTOS CREATE EXPECTATIONS

In the world we live in today, we consume a lot of photos. We see photos on television and the Internet, at the cinema and on billboards around town.

Often we encounter a phenomenon in a photo before we encounter it in reality. We learn through the photos we see, and the photos create expectations that can collide with reality.

▲ A child who encounters these two animals in photos for the first time learns something through the photos. The child perhaps learns what the animals look like. If the photos are lined up as above, the child can be misled to believe that the animals also are the same size.

▲ For a person who has learned how to handle a camera and understands that distance affects how large an object appears in the photo, it’s easier to imagine that the real relationship is more like this.
FIFTH EXERCISE

We see the world differently

► Select an object, such as a chair.
► Imagine that the camera is the eyes of three different animals that are standing on the floor and looking at your object.

From the mouse’s point of view ...

From the dog’s point of view ...

From the human point of view ...

From the giraffe’s point of view ...

We see the world differently, depending on where our eyes are, but also depending on our experience and our needs.
A unique moment – ability to concentrate and train judgement

- Stage something that can happen only once.
- All choose where to stand with their cameras.
- All take their own still photo.
- Discuss the photos – the focus is on the photo and how it was taken – not on who did or did not carry out the task.
- Practise each time you meet, until everyone can do it.

Tips on things that happen once:
- a Coca Cola bomb (Diet Coke and Mentos)
- an egg that is smashed
- a tower of blocks that collapses
- a digital clock.

The purpose of the exercise is to practise:
- ability to concentrate – to read a situation,
- motor skills – to press the button at exactly the right moment,
- technique – to get the feel of the camera (all are different).
SEVENTH EXERCISE

Where does the light come from?

Why don’t we see anything in darkness? Because no light is striking what we are looking at!

- Photograph different light sources.
- Photograph shadows.
- Photograph darkness.
- How does the flash on the camera work?
- Investigate whether light has colour.
- Look at the photos you’ve taken and describe where the light is coming from.
CAMERA OBSCURA

If light passes through a small hole in a dark room, an inverse image of what exists outside the hole can appear on the opposite side of the room. The image appears “spontaneously”, without human intervention.

Now mankind has invented the camera, which allows us to save the image. How should we be using this opportunity?

A camera obscura in the form of a virtually lightproof room with a small hole in the wall. The image that is exposed on the wall opposite the hole.

Build a camera obscura

- Cover all light openings in a room so that it becomes completely dark.
- Put a piece of cardboard in place for a window.
- Make a small hole in the cardboard so that outside light comes in through the hole.
- On the wall opposite the hole, an inverse image appears.
- The smaller the hole, the sharper the image.
On the Swedish government’s website dealing with human rights, the following text appears under Right to Education: “Those who can read, write and do arithmetic are capable of grasping different types of information and forming their own opinions”. (The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26).

It’s obvious that camera and image proficiency also should be introduced in basic education. If we are serious about equality, equal opportunity and sustainable development, this is where it starts. The vision is for all citizens to be able to use the camera and to record, read and manage images in a conscious and critical way. And thereby increase their opportunities to “freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. (The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27).

ABC of the Camera consists of exercises that are part of education concerning the camera that we are now developing to achieve that knowledge.

ABC of the Camera is produced by Forum för visuell praktik (Forum for Visual Practices) in cooperation with Valand Academy at the University of Gothenburg.

For more information: www.visuellpraktik.se