



Written Report or Visual Artwork: Application to a Soil Science Field Course

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Experiential learning is a key component of the student experience in our soil science program at the University of Saskatchewan. During a one week long field course students learn to classify forest soils, quantify vegetation communities and interpret the landscape using visual art. The focus of the course is about relationships –the relationship between soils and the vegetation, the student’s relationship with the landscape and the relationships students develop with their classmates. Traditionally the requirement of this course was a written report describing the relationships they observed between the soils and vegetation across several different landscapes. But are there other ways of capturing the experience of the week besides the writing of a traditional report? While on sabbatical at the Technical University of Berlin I was challenged by what I observed in the department – the hanging of visual art works completed by students. Was it possible to include this aspect into my field course where science students would create an art work rather than writing a report? This presentation discusses the process in moving beyond traditional approaches in synthesizing science activities and how the art component for the project was developed and executed in the field course.