

Picturing the lives of young people: The challenges and opportunities of Photovoice

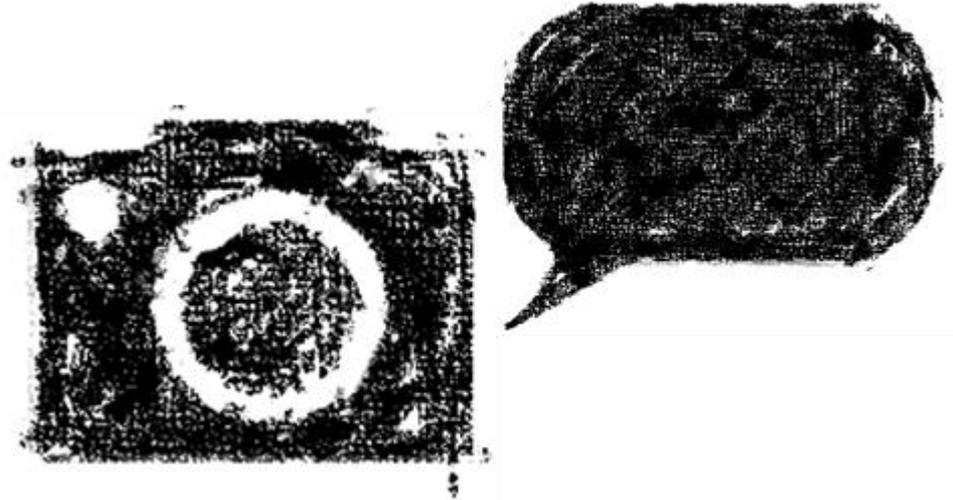


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The challenges and opportunities of Photovoice (PV)

1. What is PV?
2. History and theory of PV.
3. What's involved in PV?
4. Action?
5. PV with young people.
6. Challenges of PV.
7. A case for PV.



What is Photovoice?

Photovoice “entrusts cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders”.

Wang & Burris (1997: 369).

“Photovoice, at its most basic level, is the use of photographic equipment, usually digital, to capture a visual image, and then to transform this image into a vehicle for generating information and discussion.”

Delgado (2015: 7).

How is PV described?

**“Arts-based
qualitative research
method”**

Delgado (2015: 7)

**“Grass roots
community
assessment tool”**

Krieg & Roberts
(2007)

**Community based
participatory research
(CBPR) method**

Catalani & Minkler (2010)

**Participatory Action
Research**

Wang (2006)

History & Theory

- Inspired by [Paulo Freire's](#) use of participatory photography in education research in Peru (Burke, 2008).



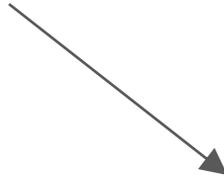
Critical consciousness

- Developed into a methodology by [C.C. Wang](#) and colleagues in their work with women in China in the 1990's.



Feminist / democratic approach

- Influenced by community photography (e.g. [Jo Spence](#), [Wendy Ewald](#), [Jim Hubbard](#)).



AIMS

- 1) To enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns
- 2) To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs
- 3) To reach policymakers

What's involved in PV?



SHOWeD technique

- 1) What do you **See** here?
- 2) What's really **H**appening here?
- 3) How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
- 4) Why does this problem, concern or strength **E**xist?
- 5) What can **W**e do about it?

(Shafer, 1983)

Wang & Burris (1997)

Action

Wang and colleagues' PV model encourages a public exhibition where photographs and narratives are shared with community leaders / policy makers.

Participants can also become involved in advocacy projects based on the needs identified during PV (Mamary, 2007; Lopez, 2005).



PV with young people

Wilson et al. (2007)

Aim: Engage marginalised young adolescents in an empowerment and civic engagement project focused on health promotion.

Participants: 10-12 yrs, many who spoke English as a second language.

Strengths: Resulted in participant led social action activities based on concerns and strengths identified during the PV project, such as self-esteem, bullying and peer pressure to use drugs.

Challenges:

- Engaging young people in critical thinking
- Achieving democratic research
- Group dynamics
- Time

PV with young people

Streng et al. (2009)

Aim: Explore the experiences of newly arrived Latino adolescents in North Carolina.

Participants: Born in Latin American countries, average age: 17.5 years.

Strengths: Participant's led the project and several themes emerged that were not initially part of the researcher's agenda. The barriers to social inclusion faced by participants were presented to other students, school leaders and health / education partners during a public exhibition.

Challenges: The exhibition elicited defensive responses from school leaders and health / education partners. Streng et al. argue that conflict is a necessary part of change.

Challenges of PV

Analytical

1. To train or not to train?
1. Managing photographs in analysis.
1. Group / participatory analysis vs researcher analysis.

Ethical

1. Recruitment.
1. Consent is complex.
1. Ownership.

Major strengths: A case for Photovoice

- 1) Taking photographs brings an immediate reward.
- 2) Can be fun and creative.
- 3) Photographs of familiar scenes and people can change perceptions.
- 4) Photography is easy to learn and can be used by a wide range of people.
- 5) Images are powerful.
- 6) Images can be understood regardless of language, culture, literacy levels, etc.
- 7) Images can send a powerful message to policymakers.

Rabinowitz & Holt (2013)

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