

# Journal of Experiential Education

## Photovoice and photodocumentary for enhancing community-partner engagement and student learning in a public health field school in Cape Town

Journal:	<i>Journal of Experiential Education</i>
Manuscript ID:	JEE-17-0016.R2
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Public health < Disciplinary frameworks, Multimodal/multimedia < Methodology, Higher Education < Study Community, Experiential Education < Topics, Photovoice
Abstract:	<p>Background: Field school research which begins by considering community-partners as pedagogues and thus exploring their perspectives on student learning, is uncommon. Photovoice is a method for self-expression of such marginalized voices. Purpose: Describe the photovoice to photodocumentary process and present results of its evaluation.</p> <p>Methodology/Approach: We employed photovoice with the local guides who accompany community health research field school students in Cape Town. Guides were prompted to take photographs of what students may not see or understand about their community. These were discussed at three workshops and developed into a photodocumentary for inclusion in the curriculum. Twenty-one students completed an open-ended questionnaire. These, and student/staff discussions, were thematically analyzed.</p> <p>Findings/Conclusions: Students reported learning about cultural practices which otherwise would not be visible to them. They felt greater connection to their guides who they saw in a new light, and became aware of how topic-specificity drew attention away from overarching characteristics of community life. Questions raised might be better explored through facilitated discussion rather than question and answer sessions alone.</p> <p>Implications: Field schools depend on academic-community partnerships. Photovoice can create space for community-partner reflection on student learning and the co-creation of effective pedagogical tools valued by students.</p>

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

**Photovoice and Photodocumentary for Enhancing Community-Partner Engagement  
and Student Learning in a Public Health Field School in Cape Town**

**Abstract**

**Background:** Field school research which begins by considering community-partners as pedagogues and thus exploring their perspectives on student learning, is uncommon. Photovoice is a method for self-expression of such marginalized voices. **Purpose:** Describe the photovoice to photodocumentary process and present results of its evaluation. **Methodology/Approach:** We employed photovoice with the local guides who accompany community health research field school students in Cape Town. Guides were prompted to take photographs of what students may not see or understand about their community. These were discussed at three workshops and developed into a photodocumentary for inclusion in the curriculum. Twenty-one students completed an open-ended questionnaire. These, and student/staff discussions, were thematically analyzed. **Findings/Conclusions:** Students reported learning about cultural practices which otherwise would not be visible to them. They felt greater connection to their guides who they saw in a new light, and became aware of how topic-specificity drew attention away from overarching characteristics of community life. Questions raised might be better explored through facilitated discussion rather than question and answer sessions alone. **Implications:** Field schools depend on academic-community partnerships. Photovoice can create space for community-partner reflection on student learning and the co-creation of effective pedagogical tools valued by students.

*Keywords:* Experiential Education, Higher Education, Multimodal/Multimedia,  
Photovoice, Public Health

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

**Introduction**

Field schools are a mode of experiential education that normally combine some formal instruction, fieldwork exercises (e.g. participant-observation), informal discussions with faculty, and independent research (Iris, 2004). Whether field schools are *abroad* or *at home* they generally involve immersion in a *new* place or space. Importantly, for field schools to run, they almost always depend on partnerships between academics and individuals or organizations in the field school location.

The field school literature contributes important insights into the underlying politics and power dynamics of field schools, including issues of authority, knowledge and voice (Castleden, Daley, Morgan, & Sylvestre, 2013; Guinness, 2012), the impact of field schools on communities (Glass, 2015), definitions of *the field* (Morrissey, Calvin, & Reilly, 2013), and expectations (Hawthorne, Atchison, & LangBruttig, 2014; Solis, Price, & de Newbill, 2015). These are all important for the field school we describe in Cape Town, where differences in race, class and gender lead to important implicit and explicit power differentials, including North-South disequilibrium (Solis et al., 2015).

In our experience as academics and researchers, field schools predicated upon community partnerships face an additional challenge however: how do we reconcile the fact that the main objective of field schools is to educate students, but to achieve this we (the academics) work with community-partners who have their own needs, desires and aspirations regarding such partnerships? Some have found a service-learning (or community geography) model conducive to rebalancing the reciprocity of the relationship (Hawthorne et al., 2014; Taylor, 2009). However, in response to critical perspectives on American students' desire to *save, give back* or *be of service* (Handler, 2013; Mathers, 2010), organizers of the field school

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

we describe have resisted a service-learning model, and have instead promoted a kind of *here to learn not to help* moto as the bedrock of the field school's pedagogy.

Alternatively, engaged scholarship is an overarching framework for engaging with non-academic constituencies for teaching, research and social responsiveness which moves beyond seeing community-partners as subjects to seeing them as participants (Sandmann, 2009). As this field school's primary aim is to teach community health research methods, the "public good" is not the tangible or intangible benefits of students' research to the host community. Rather, it is the training of potential global public health researchers and decision-makers who have a deep understanding of community health.

The public good – prospective public health researchers and decision-makers trained experientially – shifts the axis of engagement to the relationship between academic and community-partners who deliver the field school. In the words of Núñez (2014) "community settings become an extension of the classroom and community partners become co-facilitators of knowledge creation and the development of critically thinking professionals" (p. 94). Thus, we asked ourselves the question: if we [academic and community-partners] are all in the business of teaching students for the public good, what do we think students should learn? We employed photovoice to explore community-partners' perspectives on this question.

Photovoice is an approach to community-based participatory research which involves participants producing photographs to represent their perspectives and reflect on their everyday lives (Wang & Burris, 1997). Its aim is to enable the self-expression of marginalized voices in society (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). The photographs become "central artefacts for discussion in an in-depth interview and/or focus group" (Novak, 2010, p. 292). Photovoice projects typically include an output for action, such as community exhibitions (Massengale, Strack, Orsini & Herget, 2016), community or class presentations (Chio & Fandt, 2007;

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

Holtby, Klein, Cook & Travers., 2015) or documentary-style video (Allen & Hutchinson, 2009). Photovoice has been referred to as a democratic approach as it attempts to redress the power imbalance between researchers and participants by repositioning the latter as co-producers of knowledge (Novak, 2010; Povee, Bishop, & Roberts, 2014).

There is no universal format for implementing a photovoice project (Sutton-Brown, 2014) as it should be adapted to a community's research needs and goals (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). In the context of the field school, photovoice was employed as a method to help close the gap between guides (community-partners) equipped with local knowledge and sociocultural expertise, and the mentors (academic-partners) with foundations rooted in higher education. Photovoice assumes "that community members have the deepest knowledge of the strengths and concerns faced by their community, and should be centred in the production of knowledge about their community" (Holtby et al., 2015, p. 318).

The photovoice project involved three phases: (a) employing photovoice to explore community-partner perspectives on what students may not see or understand about their community, (b) co-creating a photodocumentary to be used as a guide-led pedagogical tool, and (c) evaluating the photodocumentary's effectiveness as a teaching tool from students' and staff perspectives. In the next section, we describe these phases as a guide to others interested in applying this approach, before going on to presenting and discussing our findings.

## Methodology

### Setting

The community health field school in the peri-urban, predominantly black township of Khayelitsha, runs for five weeks each year for 15-20 undergraduates from the USA. A key objective is for students to understand the importance of the social, historical, geographical and political in shaping individual and population health, and the value of community-based

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

health research for understanding this complexity. It was based on a partnership between an academic (course convener) and a community leader and pastor (local coordinator). Each managed a team. The course convener managed a team of four mentors with backgrounds in qualitative research and social science (one mentor was also the lecturer and in charge of day-to-day management of the field school). The local coordinator managed a team of three or four guides from the area who could act as gatekeepers and interpreters for the students. Each student group was accompanied at all times by a guide and a mentor while carrying-out the fieldwork for their projects. The coordinator’s church, made of scrap metal, was the field school headquarters. Field work time was complimented by language-learning, guest lectures, seminars and final student presentations in the community. The photovoice project began once the 2015 field school had finished and included all four guides and two of the four mentors (MW and NS).

**The Photovoice to Photodocumentary Project 2015**

**Participants.** MW, a white female Canadian led the photovoice project as part of her pedagogical postdoctoral research at a South African university. SB, a black female American Masters of Public Health (MPH) student and former field school student, and NS, a black female South African MPH student, were research assistants on the project. Of the four guides, three were male, all were black and isiXhosa first language speakers fluent in English, and all lived in the area and were not otherwise formally employed. Two were middle-aged, and two were in their early twenties.

**Choosing photovoice and photodocumentary.** The idea of a photovoice project emerged due to MW’s previous photovoice experience (Allen, Hutchinson & Wainwright, 2008), SB’s experience in photography, and MW’s parallel participation in an Engaged Scholarship program at the University of Cape Town. We were interested in making space for

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

greater engagement between guides and mentors on questions of field school curriculum and pedagogy. We thought a creative way of understanding what guides think students should be learning would be to approach it indirectly through the question “what may students not see or not understand about the community?”

Creating a pedagogical resource out of the photovoice process was part of the project’s conceptualization as engaged scholarship. We imagined options for a pedagogical output to include, a written photo-diary (assigned as a reading to students), an in-class activity in which guides presented photographs to students, or a photodocumentary film. A photodocumentary was chosen during the project because two of the guides showed an explicit interest in video<sup>1</sup>, and MW had relevant previous experience in photovoice to film (Allen et al., 2008) and podcast-production. MW felt that a medium which included *hearing* (as opposed to only reading) the voices of the storytellers was both powerful as a form of “voice”, and underutilized (Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg, 2016). The photodocumentary could also stand alone and be shared by guides as they saw fit, as opposed to a more once-off classroom event. We encourage readers to watch the photodocumentary as a supplement to this article - <https://vimeo.com/174489626>

**Overall format and timeline.** Four half-day photovoice workshops were held over nine days. Creating, editing, and piloting the photodocumentary occurred over May-July 2015. The photodocumentary was officially incorporated into the curriculum in June 2016 and was made available online through consensus in July 2016.

**Photovoice workshop 1: introduction, training and ethics.** Authors and guides were well acquainted and had good rapport, meaning that the environment was relaxed and convivial. First, we outlined the format: nine days of photography interspersed with three

---

<sup>1</sup> Two guides came spontaneously to workshops with video footage they had taken in addition to still photographs. In response to this interest in film-making, the following year, guides received training in digital storytelling and made their own individual three-minute films.

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

audio-recorded group discussions around guide-selected photographs. Secondly, since knowledge exchange and building capacity is valued by photovoice participants (Castleden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2008; Povee et al., 2014), and is a goal of engaged scholarship (Saal & Minson, 2016), in addition to training in how to use the digital cameras on loan, SB drew on her experience as an amateur photographer to create a very introductory overview of basic photographic concepts such as *subject*, *perspective* and *composition*. The emphasis was explicitly not on image quality however, but rather on digital storytelling through photographs, and worked to expand, rather than limit, participants’ photographic voice, creativity and ability to capture and communicate aspects of their community through images (Wang & Burris, 1997). The third aspect of workshop 1 was a thorough overview of the ethical principles and practices for photovoice (described later). The workshop ended, as did all the others, with re-iterating the prompt: “what may students not see or not understand about the community?”

**Photovoice workshops 2, 3 and 4: discussing photos and identifying themes.** In

addition to camera skills, time was made for teaching computer skills: removing and inserting memory cards, finding and creating folders, and cutting and pasting. Each guide downloaded their photos and selected five to eight to show and discuss. After having lunch together, these were projected onto a white sheet on the wall and each guide told the story of their photographs. MW and SB took turns facilitating the discussion, prompting if necessary with: “what’s the story behind this photo?”, “what made you want to take this photo?”, and “what does this photo teach students?” (an adaptation of the SHOWeD method by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001), to suit this project’s aims). Facilitated small group discussions (or focus groups) around participant-selected photographs is common practice (Allen & Hutchinson, 2009; Harley, 2012; Holtby et al., 2015), as it creates space for VOICE (“voicing



## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

our individual and collective experience”) (Wang & Burris, 1997, p.381) - a key step in reaching a collective perspective on an issue.

The identification of broad themes occurred through discussion at workshops rather than through coding of transcripts by the authors. At the final workshop, a collective decision was made that MW and SB would begin a first draft of the photodocumentary around four themes: *Access to Resources and Services, Employment/Unemployment, Violence and Customs and Traditions: New, Old, Transformed.*

**Co-creating the first draft of the photodocumentary.** In two weeks MW and SB used the free audio-editing software Audacity® to combine excerpts from workshop recordings and soundscapes from the neighborhood (e.g. sound of children playing) to create a 35-minute audio file which was then set to the corresponding photographs using Windows Movie Maker®. Together, guides watched the first draft on a laptop and were asked for feedback and to tell us about any content that made them feel uncomfortable. Some images were considered too political or distasteful to include (e.g. a site of open defecation, a site representing mob-justice), and some comments culturally-inappropriate (e.g. female guide’s comment on male initiation), so these were edited out. Guides received all their photographs on DVD, and some in print. Photographs of people that were included in the first draft of the photodocumentary were printed-out and guides were asked to find the people in the photographs, give them the photo and request signed consent to include the image in the photodocumentary and publications. If not possible, these were removed from the photodocumentary.

**Planning the photodocumentary’s inclusion in the curriculum.** We piloted the 25-minute photodocumentary (following final viewing by, and approval from, guides) to different audiences to help us refine our advice to the course convener for its inclusion in the

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

2016 curriculum. Four students from 2015 volunteered to watch the photodocumentary and participate in a focus group discussion. At guides’ request, we also screened it in Khayelitsha to 15 residents who the local coordinator invited. Finally, the 2016 guides, mentors and other program staff watched the photodocumentary at a training day at the university. Based on the accumulation of feedback, we added subtitles and recommended that the photodocumentary be shown in the second week, at the church, and that guides introduce it and facilitate a question and answer (Q&A) session.

**Ethical Considerations.** Like others we modified the ethical guidelines set by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) to meet our participants’ needs (Castleden et al. 2008; Novak, 2010). Consent and confidentiality was obtained and managed in the following ways: (a) training guides on the research objectives and ethical practice; (b) training guides on obtaining verbal consent to take the photographs; (c) obtaining written consent (form in English and isiXhosa) for images to be included in photodocumentary/publications; (d) giving photographed participants the option to blur their face and use an alternative name or pseudonym in presentations or publication (including the photodocumentary); (e) returning a copy of pictures that were taken to those that were photographed and (f) editing the photodocumentary with guides. We explicitly asked guides not to take photographs of acts of illegal behavior (to protect both subject and photographer), and explored alternative ways of capturing such topics. Ethical clearance was received from the University of Cape Town and the University of Virginia.

**Photodocumentary Evaluation – Field School 2016**

Having identified key aspects of community life that guides felt students may not see or may not understand, and having created a photodocumentary to help teach these, the next phase was implementing the photodocumentary into the 2016 field school curriculum and

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

evaluating its pedagogical value. We were predominantly interested in exploring students' perspectives on what the photodocumentary taught them and how they experienced watching it, and so developed our own questionnaire with 14 open-ended questions (Table 1). After the screening of the photodocumentary and the ensuing Q&A session, all 17 field school students and four additional study abroad students<sup>2</sup> (16 female, 5 male) completed the anonymous questionnaire (30 minutes) and participated in a 17-minute discussion lead by SB. In parallel, MW and NS facilitated a 40-minute discussion with guides and mentors elsewhere. Both discussions were audio-recorded. Students were explained the purpose of the evaluation but we deliberately did not tell students why the photovoice project was carried out to avoid inadvertently biasing their responses.

[Insert Table 1 around here]

The questionnaire responses were read in full and discussed by MW and NS, then typed-up, and auto-coded by question using NVivo11 (QSR, 2016). MW thematically coded the responses by question with attention paid to commonality and difference between students and the re-occurrence of themes across responses to different questions. Both discussions were audio-coded (Wainwright & Russell, 2010) for emergent themes.

### Findings

This section is organized around the overarching questions captured in our questionnaire, followed by brief mentor and guide perspectives. Quotes are referenced with a number and either FS (field school students), SA (the additional study abroad students), G (guides) or M (mentors). In quotes the name of the neighborhood in Khayelitsha has been replaced with "the neighborhood".

---

<sup>2</sup> These four students also used the church as a headquarters and were accompanied by guides, so the photodocumentary was both relevant to them and their perspectives relevant to us.

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

**What Did Students Learn From the Photodocumentary?**

When asked what they learned from the photodocumentary, 12 of the 21 students explicitly mentioned having learned things about Xhosa cultural traditions and customs and emphasized that these aspects are “less visible” or harder to see. “I learned about practices that occur in the home that I would not have otherwise since it’s less visible” (FS\_11).

I learned about things “behind the scene” in Khayelitsha. Although we see things going on, the day to day things and weekday things, we are not here to see a lot of the personal, inner working that exists in the neighborhood. The photo documentary gave us some insight into these things. (FS\_3)

They also mentioned learning about the drug problem in the community, differences in perspectives, other neighborhoods, positive and negative aspects of the community, the ways unemployed people make a living, services on offer, the unexpected significance certain things have, and how their view is only a partial one. For some, the photodocumentary highlighted the multiplicity of perspectives and opinions.

I learned that everyone who lives in the community itself takes away a different perspective on the life around them (based on the pictures they chose) but that those choices broadly represent an underlying theme of pride in their culture as Xhosa people and a collective focus on the difficulties they encounter in their living space as well (i.e. crime). (FS\_14)

**Did Students Think They Would Have Learned This Anyway?**

Only two students thought they would have learned the photodocumentary content through their presence in the community. The most common theme emerging for why most did not think they would have learned these things was that their view had been narrowed by

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

their focus on their research topics. “Some of these things the guides may not bring up or we may not think to ask about when we have a certain research question in mind” (FS\_15).

I think I might have missed some of the finer points of the guides’ thoughts on specific elements of the neighborhood, and the contrast to how it has changed over time maybe, without the video. This is because you can hear the guides exploring it here without asking them, and most of the time the questions we have for them have to do with our projects only. (FS\_14)

The second most common theme emerging in the responses to this question was that it was more difficult to learn some of the cultural traditions and family practices. “Some of the things brought up in the documentary were not surprising but other things I didn’t know about at all. I don’t think I would have known about the details of the traditional Xhosa things without the documentary” (FS\_3).

**What New Questions Did the Photodocumentary Conjure?**

Not surprisingly, when it came to thinking about what new questions the photodocumentary raised for them, while the responses were diverse, seven students reported that it had raised more questions around the topics of local customs, traditions and rituals. “I’d like to know more about some of the ancestral beliefs and practices. Who participates? Why? What traditionals [sic] have they kept? Which do they not use?” (FS\_4). “Do the Christians in the community still practice the traditional beliefs?” (SA\_3). Students also came away with wanting to know more about the drug problem and the intersection of race and identity. Other questions raised were, why would they not otherwise learn these things, why these images were chosen, and what the overall purpose of the photodocumentary was.

**What Did They Find Most Interesting About the Photodocumentary?**

We were not expecting that the most common theme in response to this question

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

would be appreciation of the guides’ narration, including their explanations for taking the photograph. “I really appreciated the guides’ commentaries on each photo, they often contained far more information about intent, focus and values than the picture could convey” (SA\_4).

I liked hearing the guides explain their photos and why they took them. I liked when there was back and forth between them during a photo explanation. It was great to get inside the heads of the guides to see what they wanted to represent about the neighborhood. (FS\_15)

Some content was also specifically mentioned, most commonly, and unsurprisingly the topic customs, traditions and rituals but also local informal employment. “The photos about things sights unseen were most interesting. Cultural things like the new man, new woman” (SA\_2). “The most interesting aspect was just learning about the way people live in the neighborhood. It seemed like even if some people aren’t officially employed, they find some sort of income to help support their families” (FS\_9).

**How Did They Respond Emotionally to the Photodocumentary?**

Feelings were varied and usually tied to specific topics or photographs in the photodocumentary. For example, some expressed sadness and concern around the problems of drugs and child abuse and others confusion about reconciling the fact that despite this there is a sense of development and pride. However, ten of the responses clearly had to do with feeling an increasing connection to the guides and to the place. The sensory experience of hearing familiar voices and seeing familiar sights came into play. “The documentary also made me feel more connected to the guides because recognizing each voice showed me that we are all gradually getting to know one another” (FS\_16). “A bit of the pictures made me

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

happy because I recognized the places. I also like the familiar voices accompanying the pictures” (FS\_8). “Now I could finally match a story behind an image or scene” (FS\_9).

Hearing and seeing from the guides’ perspective also enabled them to see their guides and their surroundings in a new light: “It was good because their perspectives made it seem more like a place to live in than just a place to research” (FS\_11).

It made me happy to see the guides in a role which they were able to choose what to show us - because I often feel like they are doing what we want (translating our questions, walking us where we want to go) - So I liked seeing them in a little bit of a different, more personal note. (FS\_2)

**What Images Made the Biggest Impression on Them and Why?**

While the theme of cultural traditions and customs prevailed when students reflected on what they learned or found interesting about the photodocumentary, quite different images were mentioned when asked which ones made the biggest impression on them. Rather, those images that made an impression on students were framed as *negative* or *positive* stories in the community. For example, the images about child rape, shared power lines, ATM theft, stigma at the clinic, tik (crystal meth), a flooded and unusable soccer field, and shared toilets were mentioned. Others mentioned *positive* stories in the community such as the orange seller wanting to be photographed smiling, the son helping his mother, people making a living through small business, and the good reputation of the primary school. Three students not only mentioned the orange seller photograph but made reference to his smiling and apparent happiness: “He seemed very happy despite his economic situation, which I would think would make people feel less happy. It shows that even in a place like this neighborhood people can find happiness and purpose” (FS\_9). “He looked so happy and said that his expression was a genuine feeling of how he felt about life here which struck me, and made me feel happy, too” (FS\_3).

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

Sometimes the impact of the photograph came from the contrast between the image and the narrative. For example, the colorful image of the words “Love and protect all children” on an organization’s wall and the sinister story behind the image. “Learning about the man who was abducting and murdering children stood in jarring contrast to the cheery mural picture it narrated. That photo/story would be very hard to forget” (FS\_16). “The photograph of the sign of the children’s center and the stories of how children are kidnapped was evocative. The juxtaposition of the brightly colored positive sign with the harsh reality was jarring” (FS\_6).

**Guide and Mentor Perspectives**

A key theme emerging from the discussion with guides and mentors was pride in their achievement. The following was a sentiment expressed widely in the discussion and informally by all guides throughout the photovoice process:

Sometimes you don't believe “did I do that?”, am I dreaming? Hearing myself speaking. Wow, I can do such things. You tell yourself, I'm nobody, but when you see your work, [you think] ok, somewhere, somehow, I did something. It was a learning curve, but it was something big. (G\_1)

Another theme emerging from the discussion was around what questions students wanted to ask, and what they were hoping they would ask. This raised the question of whether Q&A needs coupling with a facilitated discussion. “There’s a lot they didn't ask about. I expected questions about the number of houses supported by one electricity pole. They were more interested in cultural things, rather than what is a danger in the community” (G\_2). One mentor suggested “... Having it [the photodocumentary] being a segue into a facilitated conversation. Now we had questions and answers, but it raised important questions” (M\_1).



## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

**Discussion**

This project is an example of how photovoice can be a strategy for enriching classroom experiences by creating space for community perspectives in mainstream academia – in this case academic teaching (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002). Students' questionnaire-responses brought to our attention the risk of topic-based group work drawing attention away from more overarching characteristics of community life. Our results suggest that the photodocumentary was an effective pedagogical tool for broadening students' perspectives at a time in the program when they were becoming increasingly focused on their topics.

For example, guides' photographs brought to our attention the reality that students get very little formal teaching around Xhosa traditions, and are less likely to experience them as they are less frequently in the private domain of the home, especially at night or on weekends when and where such activities are likely to occur. The mention of these photographs across various responses in the questionnaire show that the photodocumentary was an effective tool for communicating some of these aspects of Xhosa culture. Though the Q&A period was dominated by questions about cultural practices and rituals, (a point of disappointment for Guide 2), we can see in students' questionnaires that the topics of shared and lacking resources, informal employment, drugs and violence were topics effectively raised through the photodocumentary. Students had questions about these topics but it may be that the Q&A format was not conducive to discussing these.

Our recommendation to the course convener was therefore that for the following year, the Q&A session should be followed by small group discussions where a mentor and a guide per group draw on the photodocumentary as a segue to discussion around key topics. This format could help address the feeling among some guides and mentors that opportunities were

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

missed by students to talk more about issues of poverty, race and infrastructure. In fact, the most vibrant discussion in the Q&A session was instigated by a mentor who asked a guide about how and why she identifies herself as sometimes *black* and sometimes *Xhosa* in the photodocumentary. One student was prompted to self-reflect on their own outsider status in the community, “what is it like to have white and foreign people in the neighborhood?” From reading the questionnaires we also reflected on the importance of deconstructing the binaries we see forming in students’ minds (e.g. positive vs. negative, Christian vs. traditional, happy vs. sad), and challenge students to think critically. Deconstructing emotional reactions and assumptions around the image of the orange seller being a case in point. Providing additional context around the co-creation of the photodocumentary is also an important learning opportunity for students.

By employing photovoice and co-creating the photodocumentary we not only have a new pedagogical resource that enabled greater community-partner “control in the creation of ethnographic representations” (Povee et al., 2014, p. 24) but one that brings these topics to the fore in a compelling way and acts as a catalyst for greater community-partner involvement in more formal aspects of the curriculum. Leading on a more formal aspect of the curriculum gave guides an opportunity to be seen and heard, and see and hear themselves, in a different light. In the photovoice process, this took the form of guides taking an active role as *researcher* and later through leading the introduction of the photodocumentary and the Q&A session. They learned new skills that they valued, and took pride in what they achieved.

It is interesting that students report both a deeper sense of connection to guides and appreciation of their wide-ranging knowledge. We believe this is in no small way influenced by the choice of an audio-visual medium where guides’ voices could literally be heard - something a number of students mentioned explicitly when they were asked what they found most interesting about the photodocumentary. While we recommend this photodocumentary

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

be embedded in each year's curriculum, it is unclear how a future change in guides could affect its use and students' perspectives. If this occurs, further evaluation is warranted and a new photovoice project could be considered.

Finally, as a team of academic and community-partners, photovoice and the photodocumentary created space for prolonged and enjoyable engagement, taking us a step further in incorporating the principles of engaged scholarship into our practice of experiential education.

**Reflections on voice and co-construction**

Issues of voice and representation are critical issues facing photovoice methodologies (Chio & Fandt, 2007; Evans-Agnew & Rosemberg, 2016; Harley, 2012; Holtby et al., 2015). Though we were intentional in creating a space where guides photographed what mattered to them and expressed their thoughts freely, the entire process was one of engagement, teamwork and inevitably, co-construction. For example, we expect guides drew inspiration from each other's photographs, and from discussions, that shaped their subsequent rounds of photographs. We also experienced instances where voices clashed. For example, a heated debate about mob-justice revealed a stark division between the views of the younger guides and the older guides (a difficult situation in which the democratic approach of photovoice confronts a cultural context where elders traditionally command considerable power over voice, but younger generations are actively subverting it). MW, though younger and female, carefully mobilized her power as an outsider and organizer of the project to reinforce certain ground rules such as not interrupting while someone else was speaking to their image.

The photodocumentary is also the product of co-construction shaped by MW and SB's editorial decisions which took into account aesthetic factors (such as sound quality), ethical requirements (e.g. exclusion of photos for which written consent could not be obtained) and

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

guides’ censorship. In addition to certain images being removed, there was also an instance of silencing the female guide’s voice. Male guides insisted that her voice in the discussion on male initiation to manhood be edited-out because it was culturally taboo for women to speak on these matters. In retrospect, time could have been built-in, as suggested by Holtby, Klein, Cook, and Travers (2015), to reflect on issues of representation explicitly with guides.

While we did hear and witness signs of great satisfaction among guides, we were not confident guides would feel comfortable expressing dissatisfaction to us openly. Mindful of this, we focused our evaluation on students, as they were the object of our collective work. Only SB had met the 2016 students previously, MW and NS met them for the first time on the day of the screening. Lastly, to minimize the risk of mis-attribution or manipulation for unintended purposes of images and narratives (Harley, 2012) we assigned the photodocumentary a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License when put online.

Conclusion

Photovoice was an effective approach for strengthening engagement with community-partners around curriculum and pedagogy. We were able to see and understand what aspects of community life our students may not easily see or experience from the guides’ perspective. The results of our student questionnaire showed that they did consider some of these topics to be a gap in their knowledge. Turning the images and recordings into a jointly created photodocumentary helped fill this gap in the experiential curriculum and raise new questions for students.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

**Acknowledgements**

This contribution to the academic literature would not have been possible without Luphelo Ndlani, Amanda Mocha, Vusumzi Mzuzwana and Monwabisi Maqogi, who participated in the photovoice project and co-produced the photodocumentary. We are also very grateful to Christopher J. Colvin for his support of this project. Thanks also go to the Engaged Scholarship Programme at the University of Cape Town.

**Funding**

This project was partially supported by the SASH Programme at the University of Cape Town, an initiative supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development of the National Institutes of Health (Award #R24HD077976). SB's travel to and subsistence in South Africa was funded by a Minerva Award from the University of Virginia.

**References**

- Allen, D., Hutchinson, T., & Wainwright, M. (2008). Living with kidney failure: A three part film. Retrieved from <http://www.mcgill.ca/wholepersoncare/esrdqualityofliferesearch/3partfilm>
- Allen, D. & Hutchinson, T. (2009). Using PAR or abusing its good name? The challenges and surprises of photovoice and film in a study of chronic illness. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(2), 1-14. doi:[10.1177/160940690900800203](https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800203)
- Castleden, H., Daley, K., Morgan, V. S., & Sylvestre, P. (2013). Settlers unsettled: Using field schools and digital stories to transform geographies of ignorance about indigenous people in Canada. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 37(4), 487-499. doi: [10.1080/03098265.2013.796352](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2013.796352)
- Castleden, H., Garvin, T., & Huu-ay-aht First Nation. (2008). Modifying photovoice for

PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

community-based participatory indigenous research. *Social Science and Medicine*, 66(6), 1393-1405. doi:[10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.11.030](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.11.030)

Cheney, G., Wilhelmsson, M., & Zorn T. E. (2002). 10 Strategies for engaged scholarship. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16(1), 92-100. doi:[10.1177/0893318902161006](https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318902161006)

Chio, V. C. M., & Fandt, P. M. (2007). Photovoice in the diversity classroom: Engagement, voice, and the “eye/I” of the camera. *Journal of Management Education*, 31(4), 484-504. doi:[10.1177/1052562906288124](https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562906288124)

Evans-Agnew, R.A. & Rosemberg, M-A.S. (2016). Questioning photovoice research: Whose voice? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(8), 1019-1030. doi:[10.1177/1049732315624223](https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315624223)

Glass, M. R. (2015). International geography field courses: Practices and challenges. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 39(4), 485-490. doi:[10.1080/03098265.2015.1108044](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2015.1108044)

Gubrium, A., & Harper, K. (2013). *Participatory visual and digital methods*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Guiness, P. (2012). Research-based learning: Teaching development through fieldschools. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 36(3), 329-339. doi:[10.1080/03098265.2012.696188](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2012.696188)

Handler, R. (2013). Disciplinary adaptation and undergraduate desire: Anthropology and global development studies in the liberal arts curriculum. *Cultural Anthropology*, 28(2), 181-203. doi:[10.1111/cuan.12000](https://doi.org/10.1111/cuan.12000)

Harley, A. (2012). Picturing reality: Power, ethics, and politics in using photovoice. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(4), 320-339. doi:[10.1177/160940691201100402](https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691201100402)

## PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

- Hawthorne, T. L., Atchison, C., & LangBruttig, A. (2014). Community geography as a model for international research experiences in study abroad programs. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 38(2), 219-237. doi:[10.1080/03098265.2014.908351](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2014.908351)
- Holtby, A., Klein, K., Cook, K., & Travers, R. (2015). To be seen or not to be seen: Photovoice, queer and trans youth, and the dilemma of representation. *Action Research*, 13(4), 317-335. doi:[10.1177/1476750314566414](https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750314566414)
- Iris, M. (2004). Introduction: What is a cultural anthropology field school and what is it good for? *National Association for the Practice of Anthropology Bulletin*, 22(1), 8-13. doi:[10.1525/napa.2004.22.1.008](https://doi.org/10.1525/napa.2004.22.1.008)
- Massengale, K.E.C., Strack, R.W., Orsini, M.M., & Herget, J. (2016). Photovoice as pedagogy for authentic learning: Empowering undergraduate students to increase community awareness about issues related to the impact of low income on health. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*, 2(2), 117-126. doi:[10.1177/2373379916639066](https://doi.org/10.1177/2373379916639066)
- Mathers, K. (2010). *Travel, humanitarianism, and becoming American in Africa*. New York: Pelgrave-MacMillan.
- Minkler, M., & Wallerstein, N. (2008). *Community-based participatory research for health: from process to outcome* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: John Wiley.
- Morrissey, J., Calvin, A., & Reilly, K. (2013). Field-based learning: The challenge of practising participatory knowledge. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 37(4), 619-627. doi:[10.1080/03098265.2013.794333](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2013.794333)
- Novak, D. R. (2010). Democratizing qualitative research: Photovoice and the study of human communication. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 4(4), 291-310. doi:[10.1080/19312458.2010.527870](https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2010.527870)
- Núñez, G. G. (2014). Engaging scholarship with communities. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(2), 92-115. doi:[10.1177/1538192713515911](https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192713515911)



PHOTOVOICE AND PHOTODOCUMENTARY

Povee, K., Bishop, B. J., & Roberts, L. D. (2014). The use of photovoice with people with intellectual disabilities: Reflections, challenges and opportunities. *Disability and Society*, 29(6), 893-907. doi:[10.1080/09687599.2013.874331](https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2013.874331)

QSR International. (2016). *Nvivo11*. Australia.

Saal, L. K., & Minson, C. W. (2016). Working to learn together: Engaged scholarship addressing long-term unemployment. *Adult Learning*, XX(X). doi:[10.1177/1045159516687742](https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159516687742)

Sandmann, L. R. (2009). Placing scholarly engagement "on the desk". Retrieved from <http://www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/sandmann-final.pdf>

Solis, P., Price, M., & de Newbill, M. A. (2015). Building collaborative research opportunities into study abroad programs: a case study from Panama. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 39(1), 51-64. doi: [10.1080/03098265.2014.996849](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2014.996849)

Sutton-Brown, C. A. (2014). Photovoice: A methodological guide. *Photography and Culture*, 7(2), 169-185. doi:[10.2752/175145214X13999922103165](https://doi.org/10.2752/175145214X13999922103165)

Taylor, M. J. (2009). Student learning in Guatemala: An untenured faculty perspective on international service learning and public good. *Journal of geography*, 108(3), 132-140. doi:[10.1080/00221340903133323](https://doi.org/10.1080/00221340903133323)

Wainwright, M., & Russell, A. (2010). Using NVivo audio-coding: Practical sensorial and epistemological considerations. *Social Research Update*, 60(1), 1-4. Retrieved from: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU60.pdf>

Wang, C. C. & Burris, M.A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24(3), 369-387. doi:[10.1177/109019819702400309](https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819702400309)

Wang, C. C., & Redwood-Jones, Y. A. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from flint photovoice. *Health Education and Behavior*, 28(5), 560-572.



doi:[10.1177/109019810102800504](https://doi.org/10.1177/109019810102800504)

### Author Biographies

**Megan Wainwright** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Cape Town. She is a medical anthropologist with a keen interest in qualitative research training, medical education and participatory audio-visual methods and outputs.

**Shantell Bingham** is a postgraduate independent researcher based in Charlottesville, VA, USA. Her interests include human centered design research, participatory engagement, and audio-visual methodologies.

**Namhla Sicwebu** is a Masters student in the School of Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town. Her background is in Social Anthropology and her research interests include HIV-positive adolescents.

Table 1  
*Student Questionnaire*

- 
1. What did you learn about life in this neighbourhood and Khayelitsha from the photo documentary?
  2. Do you think you would have learned these things anyway by spending time in the neighbourhood? Why or why not?
  3. What did you find the most interesting about the photodocumentary?
  4. What photograph and story made the biggest impression on you?
  5. How did the photodocumentary make you feel?
  6. Did the photodocumentary raise new questions? If so, what were they?
  7. What difference did the discussion after the film make (if any) to your interpretation of what was presented in the photodocumentary?
  8. What did you think about screening the photodocumentary at the church and having the guides facilitate discussion? Should we change anything next year?
  9. What did you think about the timing of the screening (i.e. it being in the second week). Did it come at the right time in your stay or would you have liked to see it earlier or later?
  10. How difficult or easy was it to understand what was being said?
  11. How useful were the subtitles? Suggestions for improvement?
  12. What worked well about today's screening and discussion?
  13. What didn't work so well and could be improved next year?
  14. Do you have anything else to add? If so, please do add it here.
-