



# More than Words: Using Photovoice in Multi-Disciplinary Settings to Illustrate Client and Student Experiences

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Oh to live a dog's life right now... 🐶



## PHOTOVOICE:

A participatory action research (PAR) method

Individuals are *empowered* to share their words and photographs as a way to reach decision-makers and implement positive change in their lives and/or communities.

Photography found to be an effective method of *discovering and interpreting* your experiences for others.

# What Makes Photovoice (PAR) So Unique?

Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris

-Reproductive health in Yunnan Province of China in 1992

Based on the work of Paulo Freire

-Research should hinge on education, relationship, and personal experience

Ideas:

- (1) Involves community
- (2) Mutual education
- (3) Reflective and convicting experience
- (4) Empowering process
- (5) Balance between researching, analyzing, and taking action



Wang, C. C. (1999). Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health, 8*(2), 1-9.

# Photovoice/ Phototherapy in Direct Service

- Concrete representation
- Reference tool
- Photography requires no skill
- Non-threatening—work around defense mechanisms
  - Photographs are “a nonthreatening method that can allow a client to convey meaning, struggle, and emotions that cannot easily be verbalized” (p. 311)
- Breaks through resistance
- Empowers clients
- Shown effective in case studies

Ginicola, Smith, & Trzaska (2012); Stevens & Spears (2009)

I am drawn to abandoned buildings. I find great beauty in their decline. They were once thriving, productive, useful—a place where people lived, worked, built relationships, had a career.

Now they are left to rot and be slowly consumed by the brutality of weather, nature, and time. Yet there is beauty in this transformation and in what “once was”. The spirit of its past lives on—it’s just different.

I relate. It’s so easy to see myself as a rotting, sad, declining, worthless human being. Then I think of these buildings and am reminded that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I have a great spirit, a rich past inside me and every day I choose whether I see myself as rotting and abandoned, or as a transforming treasure.





“Sometimes in life you have to work around the system and extemporize temporary solutions to permanent problems. Majority of the time, my days seem to feel incessant. I am now a senior and have to balance planning ahead, afterschool clubs, volunteer work, working out, homework, and studying. Due to all these factors, there are a lot of late night drives home. For most college students, the answer would be caffeine. However, I gave up drinking coffee a year ago. This is a photograph of two seats put together on the third floor of Benner Library. I place the chairs in this position to form a small bed. I take naps inside and roll myself up to a little ball. It can be quite comfortable, especially when I take my shoes off and my feet hang off the top of the cushion. I do not have the luxury or the money to afford living on campus. I cannot take a nap in my dorm or apartment. Instead of driving forty minutes home every time that I feel sleep deprived, I work around with what I am given.”

# Detroit Youth Passages Photovoice project

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[ak0.pinimg.com/236x/f3/19/18/f319185a023a](https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/f3/19/18/f319185a023a65bb29f561caa9a3fdb0.jpg)

[65bb29f561caa9a3fdb0.jpg](https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/f3/19/18/f319185a023a65bb29f561caa9a3fdb0.jpg)

## Immersed in Intimidation



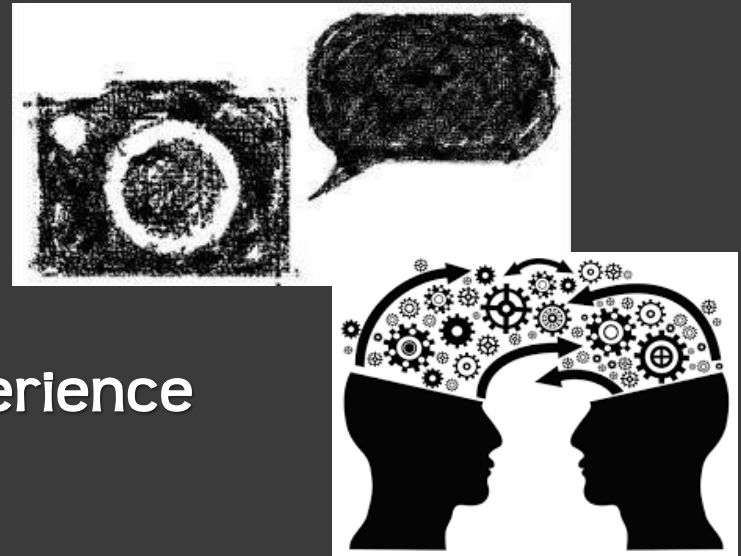
When families are destroyed and businesses close, gangs and drugs fill the void.



# Photovoice and Traditional Research Methodologies

## Ideas:

- 1) Involves community  
*(University Commuter Students)*
- 2) Mutual education  
*(Focus Group)*
- 3) Reflective and convicting experience  
*(Empathy)*
- 4) Empowering process  
*(Policy Input)*
- 5) Balancing research, analysis, and action  
*(Submission, Coding, Policies)*



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# Gathering Data

## SHOWED

- What do you **See**?
- What is **happening** here?
- How does this relate to **Our** lives?
- **Why** does this situation, concern, or strength **exist**? (why is it this way?)
- What can we **do** about it?

## The three stages are:

- (a) selecting photographs that most accurately reflect the participants' concerns
- (b) **contextualizing the photographs**
- (c) codifying issues, themes, or theories that emerge.

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# Application in Social Work Practice and Research

## Why Should I Utilize Photovoice in My Practice or Classroom?

- ✓ Photovoice does not require literacy/writing ability
- ✓ Photovoice is a culturally competent approach to research (SW Code of Ethics)
- ✓ Photovoice respects the dignity and worth of the person (SW Code of Ethics)
- ✓ Photovoice incorporates many of the “person in environment”(PIE) factors

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