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Using Photovoice for Assessment in Teacher Education and Examining the Impacts of Globalisation on China

Dr Ting Wang

ting.wang@canberra.edu.au

**Faculty of Education
University of Canberra, Australia**

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Abstract: Photovoice is a qualitative participatory research methodology that puts cameras in the hands of participants to document the realities of their daily lives. This article explores the efficacy of Photovoice as an assessment method in teacher education and utility of Photovoice as an innovative qualitative method to examine the impacts of globalization on China. A group of sixty Chinese students who were enrolled in an Australian transnational program, Master of Education, participated in this Photovoice project in 2008. The Photovoice narratives and photographs, participants' reflections and evaluations provide evidence that Photovoice can be used as an effective and participatory assessment tool in teacher education. This study suggests that Photovoice may contribute to understanding the impacts of globalization in ways not addressed by other approaches. The methodology offers a novel way to tap the creativity of people from diverse perspectives. This article also highlights the need for the academics in higher education to provide context-specific, transferable, and innovative assessment and evaluation designed to promote learners' critical thinking and problem solving skills in a globalized world.

Key phrase: Assessment, Photovoice, Transnational Education, Chinese students

Introduction

Photovoice is an approach that incorporates photography with participatory action (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 2003). Participants represent their world with their own photographs, which they then analyse to surface their meanings. In recent years, there is a growing body of literature on using Photovoice as a participatory action research method in the areas of health, community development, and management (McIntyre, 2003; Wang et al., 1998; Wang et al., 2004; Warren, 2005; Wilson et al., 2007). However, there is a paucity of research that comprehensively defines using Photovoice in the discipline of teacher education (Chio & Fandit, 2007; Feldman, 2005). This article specifically focuses on the use of Photovoice as a unique assessment method to engage students as they take photographs capturing issues in their lived, local experiences related to globalization. Rather than attempting to discuss this process from a theoretical standpoint, this article intends to further develop this field by describing the practical experience of Photovoice with a group of transnational Chinese students who studied Master of Education. It reports how students experienced the Photovoice process, moving from taking photographs and composing narratives based on their experiences to developing critical consciousness about issues related to globalization. At the same time they learned a new, unique qualitative research method and went through a knowledge transfer process.

Literature review

Photography is only one element of the field known as "visual research" or "visual methodology". These terms have variously been used to refer to a range of loosely connected and diverse empirical research practices that have some relationship with the visual appearance of the world around us (Warren, 2005). Since Wagner's (1979) seminal text on photography as a research method - "*Images of Information*", there has been a steady growth in interest in handing the camera to those whose lives we wish to explore, because photography offers opportunities for research participants to express their subjectivities as their view of the world. Collier and Collier's (1986) landmark text explored how the

researcher can systematically evaluate visual content. The power of photographs, according to Brinton Lykes et al. (1999, p.127), “is unlike any other forms of communication as it is universally comprehensible and accessible, and can be used to facilitate discussion, document experience, and facilitate critical analysis of social reality and problem solving”.

Photovoice was originally developed as a participatory action research method in which individuals photograph their everyday health and work realities. It is also structured as a mechanism that engages participants in group discussion about their images and to present the images in public forums (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The goal of Photovoice is to enable people to gain “the possibility of perceiving the world from the viewpoint of the people who lead lives that are different from those traditionally in control of the means for imaging the world”(Ruby, 2000). The intervention was first used with rural Chinese village women and was intended to function as a participatory process in a large-scale needs assessment. Since that endeavour, a series of Photovoice projects have been documented in the literature and the approach has been used effectively with diverse groups (e.g. Baker & Wang, 2006; Killion & Wang, 1999; Kroeger et al., 2004; Strack & Magill, 2004; Wang, Yuan, & Feng, 1996; Wang et al., 1998; Wang et al., 2004; Wang & Pies, 2004; Wilson et al., 2007). Researchers employing Photovoice have demonstrated the utility and success of group discussion among rural Chinese women living in abject poverty (Wang, 1999), homeless people (Dixon & Hadjialexiou, 2005; Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000), lower income urban youth (Wang et al., 2004), and older U.S. women living with HIV/AIDS (Gosselink & Myllykangas, 2007). Photovoice projects have been conducted with a variety of populations to empower participants to explore and communicate important messages about their lives and communities (Berman et al., 2001; Gallo, 2002; LeClerc et al., 2002).

Photovoice’s theoretical foundation is grounded in Freire’s (1970, 1973) theory of critical consciousness and feminist approaches to photography (Wang et al., 2004). This theoretical approach allows individuals from various social and economic status to use the Photovoice method to address their needs and concerns through a powerful means: the visual image (Wang & Burris, 1997). Freire (1970) noted that one means of enabling people to think critically about their community and to begin discussing the everyday social and political forces that influence their lives is the visual image. The process of creating visual images is often a source of empowerment, as are group dialogues that affirm individuals’ collective struggles and insights (Fournier et al., 2007; Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988).

Photovoice helps people to use visual evidence to recognize and voice their problems and potential solutions to policy makers (Wang & Burris, 1997). The process begins with participants photographing personally relevant objects, items, or activities around a specific topic or issue. Once the photographs are developed, each participant chooses a subset of pictures to share. The participants come to a series of scheduled meetings to engage in dialogue about their photographs. Group interactions address the relation of each picture to the designated theme, the issues depicted in the photograph, and the relevance of those pictures to stakeholders’ lives (Carnahan, 2006).

Photovoice is a qualitative participatory research methodology which is designed to specifically tap into daily realities and the core meanings and significances of these realities as defined by research participants themselves (Fournier et al., 2007; Harrison, 2002; McIntyre, 2003; Nowell et al., 2006; Wang & Burris, 1997). The photographic component of Photovoice provides additional information not available in traditional qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups. Photographs aid the researcher by providing a window

into the subjectivity of participants' reflections. The process of discussing the content of photographic imagery allows participants to both share and guide researchers through an external view of the participants' internal realities (Collier, 1979; Nowell et al., 2006).

There is a growing interest in using Photovoice in the education field in recent years. For instance, Gallo's (2002) research investigated the ways in which English as a Second Language learners used photography in a learner centered workplace literacy program to solve problems and facilitate language learning. Feldman (2005) used Photovoice in science teacher education and contended that "a teacher is in the role of community member who can come to understand his or her own practice in a new way through creation of a Photovoice essay". Mueller (2006) explored the perceptions of Canadian southern teachers through using Photovoice to see how one might better prepare and support them in their efforts to teach their Inuit students. Carnahan (2006) described how Photovoice led to improved engagement with peers and learning materials for two young boys with autism, and how teachers used Photovoice to articulate their strengths and needs related to teaching students with autism and other disabilities. In a recent study, Chio and Fandit (2007) explored pedagogical and teaching possibilities offered by Photovoice and provided a response to calls for more self-reflective and inclusive pedagogy. Extrapolating Photovoice to the context of the diversity classroom, they discussed how the methodology can aid management educators in developing approaches and activities that foster greater participatory engagement between students and subject matter, knowledge, and learning. They argued that educators can adopt or adapt the Photovoice for their own use.

This study also intended to determine the efficacy of Photovoice as an innovative research method examining the impacts of globalization on Chinese society, culture, education, and training. Globalization has drawn increasing attention from scholars working from diverse perspectives. Globalization refers to the impact of global changes that cannot be easily fended off by national governments (Chan, 2004) and "the growth of hybrid world cultures created by the mingling of global-brand culture and indigenous traditions" (Scott, 1998, p.122). Recent studies of cultural globalization propose more dialectic and multifaceted cultural exchanges between the "west" and "the rest" of the world (Hall, 1992; Ma, 2006). Globalization breaks down national borders, reduces national power, disrupts national structures, and blurs the differences between societies (Urry, 1998). Globalization brings about increasing social, economic, financial, cultural, and technological integration of different countries and regions, especially in recent decades. This process articulates with and is mediated by national and local forces, social circumstances and conditions, and histories (Weber, 2007). A number of scholars debate the impacts of globalization on education in the past two decades (e.g. Mok, 2007; Mok & James, 2005). Some scholars believe that globalization has brought about negative effects on educational developments (e.g. Stewart, 1996; Woolf, 2002), while other commentators argue for its positive impacts on education (Rohani & Kishun, 2004). Mok (2007) contends that Asian scholars should be more critical about what they have learned from the West, guarding against the logic of becoming globalized, meaning Americanized, and against copying without proper adaption and contextualization. Many scholars have examined the impacts of globalizations on China (e.g. Chan, 2004; Liang & Lauderdale, 2006; Mok & James, 2005; Ngok & Zhu, 2007). However, limited research has been conducted to employ the Photovoice method to investigate the impacts of globalization on contemporary China from multiple perspectives of Chinese students. This study examines an alternative method and seeks to enhance our understanding of the impacts of globalization on China.

As an exploration of this method, I designed an assignment to determine the utility of Photovoice as an innovative assessment tool to examine the impacts of globalisation and develop transnational Chinese students' critical thinking in the context of globalisation. The intent is to examine the potential use of Photovoice for assessment in teacher education. This type of analysis is particularly imperative in view of recent suggestions that university academics adopt more non-traditional methods for creative teaching and assessment.

Research method

Research purposes

The research aimed to help students gain a better understanding of lived experience with globalization while providing an opportunity for them to have a hands-on experience of using Photovoice as a research method and to transfer what they have learned into practice. This study explored whether looking at globalization from their own perspectives could translate into a greater sense of empowerment and critical awareness in their lives and workplaces. This research is particularly important in that it offers an alternative approach to assessment, offering the possibility that Photovoice related learning can be emancipatory and transformative. The participants were 60 students enrolled in an Australian transnational program, Master of Education, in China. The majority of participants were teachers from higher education institutions in Helongjiang Province. The participants ranged in age from late 20s to 40s, and their seniority in their universities also ranged widely from several years to more than twenty years.

Assignment requirements

One assessment of the subject "Training, Development and Knowledge Transfer" (TDKT) delivered in January 2008 was a Photovoice project. It consisted of four selected photographs, a photo-essay and individual reflections. Participants were instructed to choose four photographs, provide a title for each photograph, and compose a brief narrative describing how the photograph depicted their experiences with globalization in China. The stated assignment was to write down explanations of how the picture expressed his/her personal observation of the impacts of globalization on a particular aspect of their lives, i.e. society, culture, education, and training. Participants were given one week to complete the narrative and submit photographs. They were asked to reflect on their experience as a photographer and their overall experience with using Photovoice as an assessment. Group reflection pieces were also collected from each group on the last teaching day. Students were encouraged to get below the surface description of a photographic image to describe the meaning of the picture, display thinking deeper than surface description of phenomena to analyse the social/political context that causes the situation, and produce analytical responses in their essays. They were required to select the photographs which they have taken recently rather than downloading images from websites or using other people's photographs.

Photovoice process

The subject TDKT was delivered in an intensive teaching week, with five class hours per day. Students spent approximately one hour each day on Photovoice. On the first day, I introduced the Photovoice concept, methodology, ethics issues and informed consent, and clarified requirements for the Photovoice project. They then met regularly in small groups to discuss what their photographs meant to them and how the photographs reflected their experiences of globalization. Eight groups were comprised of up to eight participants and were facilitated by me and four tutors. The purpose of group work was to provide participants with the opportunity to share their photographs and reactions with others in their group and to generate

deeper reflection and dialogue amongst participants. Participants engaged in dialogue with one another and the facilitator about the meaning behind each of chosen photographs. The project used an elicitation approach that specifically called for critical reflection by focusing attention on both positive and negative impacts of globalization. This was a pivotal key to emotional engagement and the critical reflection necessary to raise critical consciousness. Students demonstrated enthusiasm and engagement when they began to document and share their life experiences. They took photographs of their experiences, discussed them in a group, wrote narratives to accompany selected images, and prepared PowerPoint presentations to share with peers. The data collected include 60 Photovoice essays and 244 photographs, participants' individual and group reflections, and evaluations of the subject.

Privacy and confidentiality

The ethics of a Photovoice project revolve around capturing a person's image and include protecting privacy, not intruding into personal space, not placing someone in a false light, and not using a person's likeness for commercial gain (Goodhart et al., 2006). Students were promised that their identities would be known only to the researcher/teacher. They obtained informed consent from people shown in their selected photographs. I secured consent from all the participants with the understanding that their confidentiality would be maintained and that all publication would remove any identifying demographic information.

Data analysis

The actual process of coding began by transferring the titles and key descriptors onto yellow sticky notes so that I would be able to manipulate and move around the data into different categories. The resulting piles of yellow notes from each photograph and narrative were then sorted into categories that seemed to "make sense". This process was based on grounded-theory approach in which categories are developed as they emerge from the data rather than according to performed categories based on assumptions about what might be discovered (see Amsden & VanWynsberghe, 2005). Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s. The analysis involved grounded theorizing using the data to develop the emerging categories as opposed to a predetermined coded response (Caraher, Baker, & Burns, 2004). Initial analysis resulted in the development of 11 categories in Society, 12 categories in Culture, 7 categories in Education, and 8 categories in Training. However, these emerging categories did not exist as separate entities, because there were overlaps between the various aspects. Reanalysis resulted in combinations of some of the categories and rejection of others. The emerging categories were then reduced to 9 in society and culture, and 8 in education and training. When all of these categories were pooled together, I revisited some of the data in categories to ensure that the final set of themes adequately reflected the data set as a whole. I also analyzed students' individual and collective reflections on their experiences of completing the Photovoice assignment.

Findings

Using Photovoice as an assessment tool and a data collection method, students engaged in a reflexive dialogue about their experiences in a globalized context. The project produced an unanticipated unleashing of enthusiasm that resulted in new levels of individual and collective responsibility and participation. This section presents the emergent themes on the impacts of globalization on society/culture and education/training. Eight selected photographs and accompanying narratives are provided to illustrate some key findings. Students' narratives were translated from Chinese into English. To safeguard confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, each student was given a coded number (Student 1 through 60, e.g. S1, S2.).

Impacts on society and culture

- Rapid economic and financial development
- Deterioration of environment
- Consumerism and leisure culture
- An increasing variety of food cultures
- Influence of Western architecture and sculpture
- Influence of Western festivals and weddings
- Cultural exchange, interaction, and integration
- Popularity of cyber-culture and Western pop culture
- Concerns about global issues

Impacts on education and training

- Popularity of bilingual education and English training schools
- International education and studying abroad
- Cross-border/transnational education
- Participating in activities with foreign experts or teachers
- Overseas visits and study tour
- Adapting Western ideas to practice
- Engaging with the international research and education communities
- Information Technology in education and training

Selected photographs and narratives

The first theme on “rapid economic and financial development” emerged as some students photographed fancy stores and Neon lights, streets with Neon signs of transnational companies and foreign banks, and people engaged in stock investment. For instance, a photograph captured an impressive Coca Cola advertisement board (Figure 1), and another showed a busy street in Shanghai, a commercial and financial centre in China (Figure 2).



Narrative: This advertising board is located in a corner along Nanjing Road, Shanghai, which has the same height as a five-story building nearby. There is no other word except “Coco Cola” in English. However, its uniqueness and outstanding feature makes it very conspicuous in the CBD area of Nanjing Road.Coca Cola has changed from a rare commodity to an ordinary soft drink accepted by the general public.... Its development in China clearly indicates the impacts of economic globalization on Chinese society.Nowadays, the world economy is no longer dominated by the European nations and the U. S. A. Developing countries like China and India are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the world economic development strategies. (S59)

Figure 1 Coca Cola advertisement in Nanjing Road



Narrative: In terms of economy, culture, and education, Shanghai closely follows the global trend. It can be seen from the photograph that many international famous brands (Canon, Toshiba, and Samsung) have an important market share in China and some foreign banks (Chartered Bank, Netherland Bank) have established their branches in Shanghai. The phenomena indicate that globalization promotes economic development and international trade across the globe. (S43)

Figure 2 International finance in a prosperous metropolis

The second theme on “deterioration of environment” emerged as students photographed grey skies, cities covered by smog, and streets packed with cars. A student (S51) took the image of a newly established shopping mall in a small city and indicated that “globalization’s antenna” has reached remote areas in China. Globalization has brought about development opportunities for China, but China has become “the world’s factory” and therefore “is facing serious environment problems, explorative use of resources, and energy crisis” (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).



Narrative: It was not taken during the rush hours. Nor was the vehicle emission most serious during the day. However, it can be seen clearly that the city of Harbin was covered by the polluted air and smog. Globalization has a two-fold impact on environment; it intensifies global environment crisis while helping to promote global environmental collaboration and management. Globalization leads to an increasing number of private vehicles as well as serious air pollution in China... Up till now, the negative impacts of globalization are much greater than its positive impacts. Nevertheless, globalization is an irreversible trend. (S25)

Figure 3 Endless cars in the street: Air pollution and traffic jam

Students seemed to be more likely to show certain types of visual concerns and less often portray topics less easily photographed. However, some students were creative and used visual metaphors in their photographs (see Figure 4).

Narrative: This photograph was taken in Harbin Economic Development Zone.From the smog we can see that industrial development has polluted our local environment. However, we should not “stop eating in fear of being choked”. Sunrise penetrating the smog represents our hope and bright future.....Globalization leads to labor-intensive, resource-intensive, and polluting industries relocating to developing countries..... On the one hand, we should continue to bring in labor-intensive industries with advanced technologies, increase employment opportunities, expand exports, and complete the industrialization process; on the other hand, we should take opportunities, develop high-tech industries, refuse to let polluting industries come to China, and speed up our modernization. (S47)



Figure 4 Sunrise penetrating the smog

While some students photographed exotic restaurants to illustrate “an increasing variety of food cultures”, other students told powerful stories about “consumerism and leisure culture”. One photograph, showing a Russian resort in Harbin resonated with other students, who photographed Korean stores, NBA games in Shanghai, and Beijing Olympic Games National Stadium. Some students were interested in the influence of Western architecture and sculptures in Chinese cities (see Figure 5), and the Western style weddings in China. An interesting photograph shows a bride in white wedding dress wearing a traditional Chinese red veil, which is a perfect example of a mixture of western and Chinese weddings in the globalized context.

Narrative: The bronze sculpture depicts three beautiful violin players with the background of European style buildings. People may have such a feeling that they are strolling in a street of a European city.....Nowadays, it is common for us to see buildings, sculptures, and decorations with exotic features in Chinese cities. People have been gradually influenced by cultures from other countries since China opened to the outside world. In terms of food culture, western restaurants, pubs, and fast food are popular; as for leisure culture, people like Hollywood movies and KTV clubs. People celebrate New Year and Christmas in addition to traditional Chinese New Year. These influences are changing Chinese culture. We are happy to accept exotic cultures and now experiencing changes brought about by them while maintaining our traditional culture. (S10)



Figure 5 This is not in Europe

Another important theme emerges which illustrates the dynamic cultural interaction, exchange, and integration. One photograph shows several foreigners performing Beijing Opera at the stage while in another, a group of Russian young men were playing *Taiji* (Shadow boxing). A photograph entitled “A foreign sculpture wearing Beijing Opera Mask” struck me, and as explained by the student (S9), “Westerners also gradually accepts Chinese traditional culture because they appreciate unique Chinese arts and cultural traditions”. As with the examples given earlier illustrating creativity in what they photographed, I observed that some students were highly inventive and motivated to couple visual metaphor with narrative to convey deep meanings behind the photograph (see Figure 6).

Narrative: This photograph was taken in Lanzhou city. It was the first time for me to visit the Northwest region of China, the origin of Chinese culture. I was overwhelmed by the unique regional scenery and richness of Chinese culture. I appreciated the inclusiveness of “Yellow River Civilization”, which is like the mother shown in the photograph, ready to hold everything in her arms, accept various exotic cultures, and adapt them to the Chinese context..... The emergence of multiculturalism facilitates interaction and integration between different cultures..... However, we will not allow one dominant culture, cultural imperialism or cultural hegemony. China is opening her arms to welcome diverse cultures and building a modern society with multi-cultural influences. (S56)



Figure 6 The Great Mother

Participants expressed concerns about some issues in contemporary Chinese early childhood and school education. For instance, a student (S35) photographed two Mickey Mouse cartoon figures and told a powerful story. When she collected her niece from the kindergarten, she was instantly attracted by various Disney cartoon figures posted on the walls. On the way home, when she asked her niece if she liked Monkey King or Ne’za (heroes in Chinese traditional literature), the little girl was puzzled and asked who they were. This student reflected, “What is wrong with our education with children and isn’t this an important issue for Chinese educators to address?” It should be noted that many students photographed various bilingual pre-schools/kindergartens and English training schools to illustrate the impacts of globalization on Chinese education. They documented the importance of English language skills over-emphasised in China, and parents’ enthusiasm and even craziness for their children to study English in order to prepare them to be “competitive global citizens” (see Figure 7).

Narrative: This photograph was taken in an English training school. My son is a Year One student and attends English class twice a week in this school. The vision of the school is to make students complete a 12-level English course and realize the dream of achieving high level English proficiency within three years.....I personally experienced Chinese people's craziness for English. Besides taking a range of tests, children rushed to the teacher to recite English lessons before and after the class and during the break, and they were rewarded with prizes. Hearing children's voices up and down and seeing parents' eager faces, I was astonished and seemed to see children in ancient China reciting "Classic Books" and preparing for "the Imperial Examinations". Crazy English! When a country's children are all crazy about learning English, this is the ultimate sadness! (S29)



Figure 7 Children eager to recite English lessons

Studying abroad, cross-border education, overseas visits and study tours, educational exchange opportunities are also important themes related to the impacts of globalization on contemporary Chinese education and training (see Figure 8). However, students also expressed concerns about the dominant Western culture and cultural imperialism. Some made it clear that globalization should provide win-win situations for both developed and developing countries. Globalization is not Americanization. Nor English should be the dominant language in the world. There is a need to adopt an open and discerning attitude towards globalization and external influences.



Narrative: In a globalized world, education has become borderless. In the past, Chinese students had to go overseas to study in foreign universities. Nowadays, thanks to this transnational education program, we are able to undertake the Australian postgraduate course without crossing border. Therefore, we do not have to go through complicated visa application procedure or pay for expensive tuition fees. Through learning, I have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding about globalization of education and international education. Australian academics not only introduce many advanced Western educational ideas, but also teach us how to apply theories into practice. (S14)

Figure 8 Receiving Western education without going abroad

Individual students and groups reflected on their learnings from completing the assignment. They reported Photovoice to be an effective, interesting, new, and unique research method. Students have developed their observational and analytical skills. The Photovoice assignment has developed their critical consciousness and deepened their understandings about impacts of globalization on China. They came to understand the procedure and importance of obtaining informed consent when conducting research. Students also critically examined the applicability of Photovoice in their future teaching and research practices.

When a series of photographs were presented in front of me, I was actually shocked because I did not realize that Chinese culture and education have gradually changed and globalization would have such a great impact on China.... I did not pay much attention to this issue before but completing the Photovoice assignment makes me reflect on what to carry on as essence of our culture and what to discard in a globalized context. (*An individual reflection entry*)

Photovoice as a research method is very useful for sociology and education areas which can not be simply measured by quantitative approaches." (*An individual reflection entry*)

Discussion

This study suggests that Photovoice has cognitive and cultural appropriateness for the transnational Chinese students. Sifting through recent photographs or taking photographs during the intensive teaching week triggered participants' reflection on their experiences and what they wanted to convey to others about living in a globalized world. Talking about their photographs with the group prompted deep discussions of significant issues that had not surfaced previously. The participants' images and narratives conveyed their concerns about the challenges and opportunities brought about by globalization to contemporary China. Their reflections on learnings from completing the assignment showed that Photovoice is a unique research method and a creative assessment tool.

The Photovoice project developed the students' abilities to discern the significant meanings behind the photographs and enhanced students' critical reflections on globalization, including both negative and positive impacts on China. Photovoice is a unique way to engage these participants because as university teachers they can personally see its benefits and decide to employ such process in their future teaching and research practice. Photovoice is a way for them to take class information (about knowledge transfer, research methods, and critical reflections) outside of the classroom to see where and how it applies to their everyday life.

Photovoice is valuable because it empowers the participants to become more aware of their surroundings. They see themselves as researchers, photographers collecting data, analyzing those data, and doing something with them to help improve critical consciousness and solve problems. The process of Photovoice allows them to pay attention to their workplaces and environment from a different point of view, potentially sharpening their awareness of the issues they face. Photovoice allows participants to see the causes and effects of the problems brought by globalization and start finding solutions.

This study suggests that Photovoice may contribute to understanding the impacts of globalization on China in ways not addressed by other approaches. Photovoice serves as a way of gaining input from people directly affected by globalization. The methodology offers a novel way to tap the creativity of people from diverse perspectives. When conducting interviews or questionnaire surveys, respondents are often limited by how questions were framed. In this study, Photovoice gave us an opportunity to learn about perceptions of globalisation issues through participants-produced information.

As with all research this study has limitations. Although I found Photovoice as an engaging assessment method, there are several study limitations that must be acknowledged. A limitation was the substantial modification to the original Photovoice protocol. Variation in the method did not allow for sufficient group discussion and presentations of the participants' images and narratives at public forums. Although the participants experienced a sense of achievement with the completion of their projects, most students did not develop participatory social actions. Due to limited time for group sharing during the intensive teaching week, group reflection pieces which the students submitted on the last teaching day did not generate enough data for me to perform in-depth analyses of their collective reflections and responses to social actions. Future Photovoice projects could allow a much longer period with more time allocated to participants for sharing the images, analysing the data, and deciding social actions. The photograph exhibits could be held to disseminate results and inform policy making. Most students valued the experience and felt empowered, whereas a few did not seem to understand the rigor of this research method. I noticed that most students were

excited to share their ideas and examine the meanings behind their photographs, while some continued to figure out what the teacher wanted as the “right answer”. A few students chose similar photographs to what I showed as sample photographs in class to demonstrate the Photovoice process.

Conclusion

This study captures the efficacy of Photovoice as an assessment method in teacher education and reveals that educators can adapt Photovoice methodology for their own use. Most students found the Photovoice assignment engaging and interesting. It was apparent that the enthusiasm generated by sharing images positively impacted meaningful discussions going on in the class. In this study, Photovoice was used to honour each individual’s perspective and value multiple voices. It acted as a clear lens to link research concepts to the lived, local experience of participants. Through this assignment, participants found that Photovoice offers key strength as a data collection technique, all of which are based on valuing of individual and collective voices. This study suggests learner-generated photography was central to students’ experiences of critical reflection, creation and transfer of knowledge, and critical awareness of change making.

The Photovoice approach provides an opportunity for participants to actively engage with their social environment through photography, to participate in critical analysis and respond to the issues they identify as important. Involving people in research about their lived experience may increase relevancy of research to real life situations. These students have a diversity of experience and can bring considerable vitality to organizations and events with which they are involved and the wider social and cultural contexts. There is sufficient evidence to claim that the Photovoice assignment has had positive implications for participants. The process evaluation that was performed (via essays and reflections, discussions with participants, and an end of intensive teaching week evaluation) gave me rich findings from which to plan for future Photovoice projects.

This article highlights the need for the teachers to provide context-specific, transferable, and innovative assessment and evaluation designed to promote learners’ critical thinking and problem solving skills in a globalized world. Although the practical use of Photovoice among students warrants further study, Photovoice could be used as an alternative method to enhance understanding of the impacts of globalization, therefore allowing researchers to understand more fully and identify the dimensions of the dynamics involved in globalization not captured through more traditional quantitative measures. Photovoice can serve as a unique method vivifying participants’ subjective experiences with other social phenomena. Even the most experienced education researchers might learn from images and stories generated through this method.

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