



Assignment 3: Photovoice/Videovoice

Background:

This exercise is inspired by work I am not deeply versed in yet. As we've read, photovoice (and similar methods drawing on the ever increasing abilities of hand-held technology) can empower storytelling in some interesting and unexpected ways.

Learning Objective(s):

- Gain practice with Photovoice (or videovoice) methods
- Engage in an imaginative process that involves 'framing' an image or video
- Practice complementing an image or video with a short bit of text

Core concepts/terms:

- Photovoice
- Videovoice
- Storytelling

Evaluation Criteria: You will be graded based on your demonstration of your ability to:

- Try and make connections that are not necessarily obvious.
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Your task is to do a short photovoice or video-voice project wherein your own voice is the 'voice.' The following guidance is provided, but since I am new to this method myself, I'm leaving the instructions fairly open. Have fun!

Thematic-wise:

Aim to focus on core themes of the semester:

- Climate change: could be now, could be near future, could be far off in the future
- Lawrence/Douglas County: keep the images/videos local; could be on campus, your neighborhood, a more natural space like a river or wetland or forest, so on.
- Compassion and emotions: what feels are associated with the image/video? What did you feel or do you want to make the viewer feel? Or even, what might the people/animals/trees/buildings or whatever else is in the picture feeling?

Product-wise:

Aim to produce a photo presentation or video presentation that could be digested by a viewer in less than five minutes.

- For photovoice perhaps 3 to 5 slides (.ppt or similar) with one image filling the entire slide; the notes part of the slide could include 40 to 60 words that serve as a notes or a caption for the viewer of the slide. The captions could either make it very clear what the image means to convey or could take a more poetic or reflective approach (or something else entirely).
- For videovoice perhaps 3 to 5 short videos of a minute or less each, with some sort of voiceover to provide a bit more interpretation. Here, too, the words could be direct or indirect in helping the viewer digest the material.

PS: each student must turn in their own unique assignment, but you can certainly go out in pairs or groups to take photos/videos, talk through your ideas and feelings, and share tips on how to organize your product.

Questions to help you plan your project:

1. What is the scope of your focus?
 - a. Do you want to focus on a particular place, like a stretch of road, a grove of trees, a specific building?
 - b. Do you want to focus on a particular issue, like stormwater and flooding, trees and shade, hard surfaces and heat islands?
 - c. Do you want to focus on a particular relationship, like mother-daughter, or planner-neighborhood activist, or human-animal?
2. Who is your audience?
 - a. Elected officials? City staff?
 - b. General public? Lawrence city residents? Rural Douglas County residents?
 - c. KU students? High school students?
 - d. Climate activists? Climate deniers?
3. What do you want people to feel?
 - a. What are you feeling? One main emotion? A mix of emotions?
 - b. Do you want to help soothe people? Agitate them and make them uncomfortable?
 - c. What does the literature we've read say about emotions and communication around climate change?
4. What do you want people to ponder in the hours and days after seeing your PV/VV?
 - a. Do you want them to be having deep thoughts about humanity? Relationships? Values?
 - b. Do you want them to be thinking about a specific problem and potential solutions? More street trees? More green infrastructure? Elevating building along rivers?
 - c. Do you want to model for them PV/VV projects they could do themselves? Going to a favorite place and contemplating its future? Walking a familiar route and imagining how it could be more sustainable? Talking with a loved one in a frank and honest, but caring way?