

# Engaging the participant: Use of a photographic method

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# Disclosure slide

- Author's name: Sue Anderson, PhD, RN, FNP-BC
- The learner will be able to:
  - 1. Develop an understanding of the process of utilizing photography in a research project.
  - 2. Describe some benefits and challenges of using photography in qualitative research.
- Conflict of Interest Statement: Nothing to declare
- Employer: Indiana University South Bend, Vera Z. Dwyer College of Health Sciences, School of Nursing
- Sponsorship: Self-funded study

# Question and method

- The research questions:
  1. How do Hispanic families describe leisure time activities?
  2. How do culture, family, and the community environment influence a Hispanic child's participation in after-school, leisure time physical activities?
- Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (1979)
- Co-creation of knowledge
  - Spradley (1979): *"Before you impose your theories on the people you study, find out how those people define the world"* (p. 11).

# The method

- Recruited mothers of children aged 6-12
  - Invited them to photograph their children engaged in fun leisure time activities
- After pictures were developed
  - In-depth analysis of each photograph
    - Spradley's (1979) 9 dimensions of social interactions
    - Space, objects, acts, activities, events, actors, time, goal, feelings
  - Invited the participants to:
    - Engage in a photo-elicited interview
    - Sort their photographs into categories
    - Name the categories
    - Discuss each category and photograph in detail

# Why use photography?

- Based on principles of Photovoice
- *“Photovoice gives cameras to people who might otherwise not have access to such a tool, so that they may record and catalyze change in their communities, rather than stand as passive subjects of other people’s intentions and images”* (Wang & Burris, p. 370-371).
- Helpful method:
  - Reduces researcher bias
  - Less intrusive

# Using photography

- Give clear instructions
  - How to use the camera
  - What you would like for participants to focus on
  - How soon to return camera
- Organize photographs
  - Participant identification number
  - Each photograph is chronologically numbered
- Photo-elicited interviews
  - Longer interviews; less repetition and fatigue
  - Sharpens memory, reduces misunderstanding
  - Reveals multiple meanings
  - Invites participant to demonstrate expertise and take the lead

# Ethical issues

- Invasion of privacy – private space and confidentiality
  - Full disclosure of how pictures will be used
- Disclosure of an embarrassing act
  - Only photograph activities you would be comfortable with others seeing. Avoid pictures in “private situations.”
- Being placed in a false light
  - Photo unintentionally gives false impression of participant
- Use of pictures for commercial benefit
  - Selling pictures for monetary gain
- Photography of children
  - To blur or not to blur
- Research with immigrant populations
  - First do no harm

# Challenges

- Timelines
  - Requested cameras back within a week
  - Requires multiple meetings with participants
- The Camera
  - Film vs. Digital
  - Using the camera – explain the nuts and bolts of photography



# Reality?

- The question about participant-produced photographs
  - “Is it reality?”
- A camera:
  - Is an inanimate object that provides highly-sensitive reflection of photographer’s attitude
  - Provides an image of photographer’s reality
  - Photographs: “communication bridges” that portray multiple meanings

*“I’m thinking she need to be a student”*



*“They’re on sharing behaviors”*





*“This is our Mexican bingo”*



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