

PhotoSpeak

1. What is PhotoSpeak?

Photo Speak is a photo-elicitation technique designed to cater to a diversity of communication styles and facilitate discussion (Shaw, 2020). The foundation of photo elicitation is the idea of inserting one or more photographs into a research interview, focus group, therapy session, team-building activity, etc. (Harper 2002; Bigante 2010) to generate verbal discussion (Thomas 2009). This approach involves the facilitator providing the images and participants then choosing a photo to describe their answer to a question, perspective on a topic or feelings/ emotions. The methodology has been informed by the value of narrative research (Andrews et al., 2008), giving participants ways of communicating events, emotions and experiences through not just speech but also visual media (Tolia-Kelly 2004). A multi-modal approach to data collection acknowledges the diversity of young people and the way in which they see the world. Visual methodologies enhance the richness of data by acknowledging and breaking down the disparities in power and status between the researcher and the participant (Rinaldi, 2006). However, photographic images alone do not empower; it is the shared construction of knowledge around conversations with the young people based on their chosen images, which enables the participant's meaning to prevail (Cook & Hess, 2007). Thus, data collection that is both person-centred and hands-on, enables participants to construct meaning through the research process and share it with researchers (Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006).

(Shrestha 2024)

Photos were provided by the researcher from an official Photo Speak deck and placed on the floor, in the centre of the focus group, so participants could walk around and select an image in response to each question (See Figure X). This was optional and presented to participants as such.

2. Is PhotoSpeak and PhotoVoice the same thing?

PhotoSpeak (photo-elicitation) and PhotoVoice are both research methods that involve the use of photographs, but they differ significantly in purpose, approach, and the roles of

participants and researchers. PhotoSpeak differs from PhotoVoice due to its approach and methodology. Using PhotoSpeak (photo-elicitation) the researcher/ facilitator/ youth worker etc. provides the images. Whereas using PhotoVoice participants take the photos themselves to document their experiences. A summary of the distinction:

Key Differences at a Glance:

Aspect	Photo-Elicitation	Photovoice
Photo Source	Provided by researcher or others	Taken by participants
Purpose	Elicit responses, evoke memories	Empower participants, advocate for change
Participant Role	React to/interact with photos	Actively create and interpret photos
Researcher Role	Selects prompts, leads discussion	Facilitates and supports participants
Common Focus	Understanding perspectives	Empowerment and advocacy

3. How can PhotoSpeak be used?

PhotoSpeak can be used in a number of different ways. The photographs are designed to be used in a wide variety of ways from simple icebreakers to deeper personal sharing to social analysis issues. The only constraint to how they can be used is down to the creativity of the facilitator.

4. Who developed PhotoSpeak as a tool?

Current PhotoSpeak deck used by primary researcher (Topaz) is acquired from an organisation called Partners in Faith:

<http://www.partnersinfaith.ie/new/index.php/publications/66-photospeak>

I received this tool on a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) module in UCC. Partners in Faith is a religious organisation based in Ireland. Thus, a lot of the images have religious connotations or are specific to Ireland's historical and cultural context – Therefore, it is necessary to develop a new deck with a broad range of images applicable to a diversity of religious/ cultural backgrounds and to be used within a broad range of settings. This deck will

be designed through a lens of nature connection but can be used in a range of different settings.

5. What is the PTN PhotoSpeak tool?

This is for us to decide and the team to collaborate on. I envision it as a tool to support a diversity of different communication/ learning styles (visual, metaphorical etc.) We will design our PhotoSpeak deck through the lens of nature connection drawing on a socio-ecological lens but ideally this deck will be flexible enough to be used in a diversity of different settings and contexts.

6. How was the PTN PhotoSpeak tool developed?

Again, this is up to us to decide. I would say we have the flexibility to design the tool however we envision while drawing on existing guidelines for photo elicitation and ethical considerations. We can choose whatever images we see as most appropriate, establish the logistics (how many images in a deck, with images be coloured and numbered so facilitator can identify the chosen image etc.) We can consult experts in photo-elicitation as well as practitioners e.g. youth workers with a wealth of experiential knowledge regarding what actually works in practice with young people. The key guiding principle here is that the tool is developed in collaboration with a diversity of individuals with a range of expertise – drawing on transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral expertise. Once we have a draft deck developed we can pilot it on a group of young people and get their thoughts as well as involving them throughout the design process? (Something to discuss further)

7. How can the PTN PhotoSpeak tool be used?

See questions 3 & 5 – This is something we need to discuss as a team linked to our hopes and visions for this tool as well as what's needed at the moment i.e. what are the gaps in research and practice? See question 4, the original PhotoSpeak tool is linked to a specific cultural context with heavy religious connotations.

8. Should an instruction manual accompany the printed photos in the PTN PhotoSpeak collection?

Yes. The original deck came with an instruction manual so we can draw on this as well as current guidance on the procedure for photo-elicitation.

References – Further Reading

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004430.2012.733944>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14733285.2014.887812>

Photo-Elicitation Interviews with Vulnerable Populations: Practical and Ethical Considerations

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01639625.2017.1407109>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1743727X.2020.1755248>

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-05900-2_13