

Can you see me learn?

Using the photo narrative process to
evaluate student experiential learning

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Photo Narrative Process

- Intersection of communications (visual + written) and reflection in experiential learning
 - Purposeful, experiential education method
 - Self-identity through photo and text
 - Visual autoethnography
 - Prevalence of technology (extension of self)
 - Multi sensory stimuli (engaged senses)
 - Focused reflection on subject (values, memories)
 - Shared communication improves understanding

Photo Narrative Steps

1. Capture images representing a topic or idea
2. Write field notes (Where was photo taken? What captured your attention? What does it represent? How will it help tell your story?)
3. Choose a succinct set of “best rep” photos
4. Reflect on image set, and write narrative
5. Conduct double-blind peer reviews
6. Debrief and share narratives (self vs. peer)

Discuss

- What experiential education settings would benefit from the photo narrative process?
- How would you evaluate student learning using the photo narrative process?
- How do we promote creativity while practicing life skills (communications, etc.)?

A picture is worth...

- Visual communication in society
 - Prevalence of digital image communication
 - Millennial image consumption
- Symbols and images
 - Think of a green circle
- Visual literacy



Images as Data

- Content vs Context
 - Metonymic vs metaphoric
- Semiotics
 - Iconic
 - Indexical
 - Symbolic



Images as Data

- Six Perspectives of Imagery
 - Personal
 - Historical
 - Technical
 - Ethical
 - Cultural
 - Critical



Selecting Images

- “Rules” of photography
 - Composition
 - Exposure
 - Impact



Simplicity

Nothing in the photo that doesn't contribute to its overall quality



Rule of Thirds

Works well with asymmetrical subjects



Leading space:
area “in front”
of your subject

Helps with
spatial clues

Leading Lines

Dominant lines help
organize the photo

Provide visual backbone
to structure the photo



Framing



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Images without Impact (no story)



Focused Reflection

- Where was the photo acquired?
- What drew your attention to the subject of the photo?
- What aspect of your culture or heritage does the photo represent to you?
- What were your emotions and/or thoughts when you took the photo?
- How will this photo help you tell your cultural heritage story with/without text?

Communication (visual + written)

1. Choose three (related) photos from your collection that best represent your personal cultural heritage.
2. Describe how these photos best represent your Cultural Heritage (~200 words).
3. Participate in double-blind peer reviews (i.e., students analyze peers' photo sets and write narratives describing the peer's cultural heritage).

Participate: What is the narrative?



Double-blind Peer Reviews



Author: This image represents my personal cultural heritage in several ways. My family takes time to eat together. However, this image describes me beyond the general idea of food. I grew up on a ranch; many in my family were farmers, and my great uncle owns a barbeque house in Seguin, Texas.

Peer: When I first opened this picture, I loved it! The juice puddled and shining on the top of the meat made my mouth water. I could feel the heat of the grill and smell the aroma of the meat. I pictured a family gathered outside telling jokes, drinking lemonade and sweet tea, and swatting mosquitoes as the sun goes down. This is a typical American scene when we think of a stereotypical all-American family during the summer.

Participate: What is the narrative?



Double-blind Peer Reviews



Author: I chose this photo...took me back to my great-grandmother's house in Yoakum, Texas. Sitting in the auditorium, the faded décor, chilly atmosphere and faint, old smell sent me back to Christmas at Granny's farm. When we arrived in the milk pasteurizing room, this lovely older woman was separating the milk from cream — working diligently, like we do at Granny's place.

Peer: The peer of mine who chose this most likely picked it because it reflected their cultural heritage in agriculture. This woman is working with an agriculture product in this photo, representing hard work, tradition and farming. I believe my peer felt a connection with this picture and this woman within it because of that similar and familiar background. Agriculture is vital and connects so many cultures and generations.

Participate: What is the narrative?



Double-blind Peer Reviews



Author: Passion for agriculture runs deep in my blood. My ancestors farmed America's fertile soil dating back to 1767. While stepping into the milking parlor at the University of Namibia–Neudamm, the familiar dairy farm aroma wafted in the air. I laughed and commented, "The smell is universal!" I started 4-H at nine years with one meat goat.

Peer: Taking care of and showing livestock instills a sense of responsibility and is typically a family affair. Owning land poses different challenges and lifestyles than living in suburban or urban areas. The goat in this photo is dependent on a person. The person benefits from taking care of and raising this goat. This photo tells a story of life and interactions between humans and animals.

Participate: Time to Pair-and-Share

- Open your digital photo collection; take a few moments to reflect on your images
- **Choose three photos** that best describe your culture or heritage
- Write a few sentences succinctly describing the image set as it relates to your culture or heritage
- Pick a peer and **share your image set only**, not text
- Write another narrative for your peer's image set

Participate: Compare and Contrast

- After writing the narrative for your peer's image set, share reflections and narratives
- Do the narratives reflect consistent meaning?
- If not, how can the process be improved?
 - Thinking processes when taking photos
 - Reflection processes when selecting photos
- How or where can the photo narrative process be incorporated into your teaching duties?

Debriefing Sessions: Shared Perspectives

- Share and discuss results from peer reviews
- Note similarities and differences in narratives
- Relate to...
 - Intercultural learning
 - Expression of heritage
 - Messaging and audience



Photo Narrative Outcomes

- Ownership of subject matter/learning processes
- Deepened learning, increased retention (sensory)
 - Vivid communication (photo + narrative)
 - Visual literacy
 - Focused reflection on meaning/value of personal artifacts
- Transferability to other settings
 - Personal uses (family vacations, reunions, etc.)
 - Career uses (soil profiles, animal/plant species, etc.)
- Meets university-related initiatives to expand students' global/intercultural learning requirements

Texas A&M – COALS’ Global Learning Rubric

GLOBAL LEARNING & INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE VALUE RUBRICS_MODIFIED FROM AAC&U

(see <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics> for originals)

Definition

Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability. Through global learning, students should 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably. Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. The following rubric represents only three of many criteria indicative of proficiency in global learning and intercultural knowledge and competence.

	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1	No Evidence 0
		3	2		
Global Self-Awareness	Effectively addresses significant issues in the natural and human world based on articulating one’s identity in a global context.	Evaluates the global impact of one’s own and others’ specific local actions on the natural and human world.	Analyzes ways that human actions influence the natural and human world.	Identifies some connections between an individual’s personal decision-making and certain local and global issues.	Does not identify any connection between individual decision-making and certain local and global issues.
Personal and Social Responsibility	Takes informed and responsible action to address ethical, social, and environmental challenges in global systems and evaluates the local and broader consequences of individual and collective interventions.	Analyzes the ethical, social, and environmental consequences of global systems and identifies a range of actions informed by one’s sense of personal and civic responsibility.	Explains the ethical, social, and environmental consequences of local and national decisions on global systems.	Identifies basic ethical dimensions of some local or national decisions that have global impact.	Does not identify basic ethical dimensions of local or national decisions that have global impact.
Attitudes Openness	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change.	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment.	Not receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending judgement in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is unaware of own judgment.

Thank You, and CHEERS!

