



### **Acknowledgments**

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## **Disclaimer**

In support of Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY)'s mission as the main stakeholder of this learning design, (unless quoted) the word "womxn" will be used with an "x" throughout this paper to "represent the intersectionality of what it means to be a "woman" or "women," denouncing patriarchy and whiteness while extending beyond heterosexuality and cisgender identities to include the LGBTQIA+ community" (Home).

## **Problem**

If you search YouTube for photography educational videos, you'll see that the presence of Black womxn and girls is so scarce that it's almost nonexistent compared to the number of white people and men that show up. Currently, Black girls who aim to enter the expensive medium of photography face financial inaccessibility, minimal learning opportunities to explore the art form, and there's a lack of representation in the educational spaces and content that is available to them. The programs and content at their disposal isn't culturally relevant or typically led or created by Black womxn to provide a sense of belonging that would motivate them to continue their learning and presence in photography.

## **Analysis/Context**

As a Black womxn photographer who aims to create a learning design to close this gap specifically within my hometown of Philadelphia through my arts education nonprofit called Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY), here's what I've found to be essential context to consider through my research. My chosen design framework is the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model, therefore my research consists of a needs, learner, and task analysis.

## **Needs Analysis: Why is the learning design needed?**

For my needs analysis, I felt it was important to start off gathering findings from the learning experience that birthed SIMBY as an organization: The Philly Factor Photo Workshop. In 2019, I co-instructed this experience as my first photography workshop ever alongside a fellow Philadelphian and Black womxn photographer, Ruby Johnston. It was held in-person at the Philadelphia School District's TV Station (PSTV) for ten middle school aged Black girls who are athletes on a track team called Philly Factor where I assistant coach and volunteer as a photographer. They often expressed personal interest in trying their hand at photography whenever they saw me capturing their track meets. I was someone they felt comfortable enough with to ask, "Can I use your camera?" So, I decided to put together this after-school workshop

experience for them to all learn at once. Afterwards, they shared their thoughts on the experience through filmed testimonials. Below is a summary of what they had to say in the video:

These students believe that workshops are not available through school and if they were, they feel like teachers wouldn't let them be hands on or have fun as kids. In contrast, they enjoyed having this experience with their friends doing something fun during the week. They also value the representation of Black womxn photographers leading this workshop. Nyla Coleman explained, "At my school they don't really do anything like this and she was Black like me. So, it was like, educational and fun." Some even walked away able to see the possibilities of what they could be from this experience. Taylor Jones expressed that she loves anything involving a camera and this exposed her to what she could do when she's older. Laylah Smith mentioned wanting to be a photographer after seeing me as an example of one that she knows. Payton Drumwright also expressed intrinsic motivation for wanting to be a photographer to capture memories, showing further interest beyond this two hour workshop and portraying the need for more opportunities like this to help develop these young creatives (Stories In My Backyard [SIMBY]).

Following up on their concerns about not typically having access to these types of learning experiences in school, I then set my sights on analyzing if there were any other photography offerings available to them as Philly students. My search began with PSTV as SIMBY's partner organization that provides us with access to their network of Philly students, educators, and schools. As the education channel for The School District of Philadelphia, PSTV's mission is to provide "ALL enrolled students in a K-12 who have a current school-issued ID, including public, charter, private and parochial schools...equitable access to multimedia tools, digital and media literacy training, and industry experience." They have a production studio at the school district building downtown where students are able to gain hands-on experience in a professional setting. Media created by and for students is broadcasted on their cable channel 24/7 and they are responsible for filming the district's news and town hall meetings. The station and its programming is led by Shelley Wolfe who is the Executive Director of Media & Production Services. During the pandemic, their offerings have shifted to a virtual format. During the fall of 2021, their courses included options for music production, a writer's room, and a workshop that switched creative topics every month. Since SIMBY is on a break from programming, none of their offerings have been photography specific. In terms of instructors, only two of their fall offerings included names of those leading these workshops but there's no further information like images or bios to provide insight on who those people are (PSTV Office of Information Technology and Data Management).

To extend their student programming in schools, PSTV partners with ArtistYear's Philadelphia lead, Betsaleel (Bets) Charmelus. Founded by Margo Drakos, ArtistYear is an AmeriCorps service year fellowship for recent higher education graduates across artistic disciplines that provides training for them to become full-time teaching artists in underserved

Title 1 schools. The organization is dedicated to “addressing inequities in K-12 arts education” and prompts fellows to collaborate with teachers to incorporate arts into academic subjects, lead arts clubs, and provide arts intervention for at-risk youth. They are expected to serve “between 50-250 unduplicated K-12 students providing about 2 hours of arts education per-week, per-student during a typical school year.” There are five geographic areas that the program services: Philadelphia, PA; Denver & Aspen Valley, CO; Queens, NY; and Sandhills, NC. Amongst the program’s 2022 cohort lies one photographer, Grace Wong, who is not a Black womxn (ArtistYear).

Outside of ArtistYear, students are also able to apply to WHYY’s youth education programs located in center-city. According to their website, “WHYY is the leading public media organization in the Philadelphia Region, including Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and beyond” with accessible “on television, radio, in the community and right here online.” They are a “Member-supported and a not-for-profit organization” that is partnered with NPR and PBS. As a part of their social responsibility mission, “WHYY offers a voice to those not heard, a platform to share everyone’s stories, a foundation to empower early and lifelong learners and a trusted space for unbiased news.” In line with this mission, they host summer camps and after school programs for teens (grades 6 to 12) to have hands-on learning experience in photography, stop motion and animation, video production, and podcasting. During the pandemic, these offerings have been made virtual and they utilize technology students have access to at home like mobile phones as cameras and internet access as well as a computer are specific requirements for the video production workshop. Their offerings are held 2 or 3 times per week for up to 4 weeks, hosting 8 or 9 90 minute sessions total for each program. In these learning experiences, teens are encouraged “to explore their own worlds through media, as they create projects on topics they select themselves.” However, there is no information on who the instructors of these workshops are (For Students).

For learning outside of Philadelphia, students can pay to attend National Geographic’s photography expeditions. Having started up again in 2022, their hands-on immersive experiences allow amateur photographers to gain insight from National Geographic’s professional photographers. It’s designed for those of any interest and all levels looking to improve their skills. Those who attend will gain tips and techniques while in scenic environments of their choosing from a list of international offerings. The cheapest expedition option is a nine day family trip to Morocco for \$2,149 per person. The itinerary includes exploring markets, sand dunes, musicians of Amazigh heritage, rock formations, and green oasis’. In the description of this expedition, there is a disclaimer that notifies travelers about the moderate activity level, stating that it is required for them to be comfortable walking or standing for extended periods of time and in good health. They also provided examples of activities that may include “longer hikes, kayaking, snorkeling, or biking.” There are seven dates offered and a maximum of 20 travelers are allowed. Furthermore, the most expensive expedition is a 24 day around the world trip by private jet for \$92,995 per person (Photography).

Student expeditions were previously offered in the summer for middle and high school students ages 13+ but are no longer available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As an alternative, they direct student traffic to Putney Student Travel (Live Your World). On the Putney website, there is one summer photo excursion offered and it's specifically for high school students interested in wildlife photography. It's a three-week long trip to Namibia departing from New York that costs \$7,990 plus airfare (Namibia).

Thousands of dollars per student for National Geographic's and Putney's youth photography learning experiences is an example of the opportunity gap based on race and socioeconomic status that Black girls face coming from the city of Philadelphia. Black womxn aren't creating and leading educational photography experiences like these for our youth and Black girls aren't considered as a target demographic in terms of pricing for these offerings and in their content matter as well. In a larger context, Dr. Treva Lindsey discusses this gap and the lack of priority Black girls receive in social justice work in her essay, *Let Me Blow Your Mind: Hip Hop Feminist Futures in Theory and Praxis*. She states:

“In 2014, President Barack Obama introduced the My Brother's Keeper Initiative. The initiative seeks ‘to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential’ (White House, 2014). This racial justice-centered program specifically targets young men and boys of color. One thousand Black and Brown feminists such as Angela Davis and Salamishah Tillet and many self-identified hip hop feminists such as Brittney Cooper, through the African American Policy Forum, wrote and signed a letter to President Obama demanding the My Brother's Keeper Initiative be a gender-inclusive racial justice initiative that recognized similar and unique issues Black and Brown girls and young women confront. These feminists responded to the perpetual framing of racial injustice solely in terms of Black and Brown men and boys.” (Lindsey 71)

Because Black girls are typically forgotten, there is a need to create a space that focuses on the issues they face that hinders their ability to reach their full potential as well.

In continuation of this work, Dr. Monique Morris brings attention to the issues Black girls face in schools as they are often left out of conversations that support the challenges of Black boys in our nation. Her book turned documentary, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*, uses first-person narratives to underscore “the challenges Black girls face with insight from experts across the country who have worked extensively in the field of social justice, gender equality and educational equity. These experts give context to the crisis and provide a roadmap for how our educational system and those who interact with Black girls can provide a positive rather than punitive response to behaviors that are often misunderstood or mis-represented.” In the experiences shared by Black girls between the ages of seven and nineteen, we see that our girls aren't seen, heard, educated properly, or even treated as children.

Black girls aren't understood beyond their attitudes and there's a larger focus on their punishment instead of restorative practices, leading to the school to prison pipeline and their adultification –“seeing them as older and more sexually mature than they really are”– which “impacts the response of adults.” Many Black girls go through a lot just to make it to school and aren't met with support. So, this film “profiles teachers, mentors, judges and principals who have found new ways of working with Black girls that emphasize their inherent value and dignity.” The schools and organizations that are featured for “making a difference in Black girls lives –includ[e] African American Female Excellence (Oakland Unified School District), Columbus City Preparatory School for Girls (Columbus, Ohio), National Crittendon (Portland, Oregon), S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective (Miami, Florida), and EMERGE (Oakland, California). All discuss alternatives to suspensions and expulsions, inculcating community-based and more culturally appropriate responses” (The Film, *Pushout*). Here are some key takeaways from the film that can directly impact any learning environment where Black girls are present:

- Representation and cultural responsive education is important
- There should be fun and joy in school (learning)
- Awareness of childhood trauma to help them redirect their lives (The Film)
  - Create space for guided trauma discussion, both historical and personal
- Treat Black girls like children, not suspects
- Seek resolve not punishment
  - Sometimes students misplace their anger
  - Look at the reason behind behavior before consequences
- Teachers should build relationships with parents
- You push a girl out of school (or a learning environment) and you push her into the streets
- When working with Black girls, you have to start from a place of loving Black girls
  - Don't interact with them from a deficit lens; they are more than capable.
  - Sometimes they just need to hear, “You're ok and we got you.”
- When girls have agency, things shift

(*Pushout*)

As stated earlier, students of The Philly Factor Photo Workshop also expressed this issue of representation in school through the presence of Black womxn as their teachers. So, I researched the Philadelphia School District's racial demographic of students compared to their demographic of teachers. According to a 2018-2019 study of 221 schools where all full-time faculty were included, 23.5% of teachers (~1,911) were Black whereas 48.4% of students (~31,484) were Black. This leaves a deficit of 24.9% and about a 16:1 ratio of Black students to Black teachers. White students made up 14.3% (~18,081) of the demographic but 68.3% of teachers (~5,554) were white, which is about a 3:1 ratio of white students to white teachers. This data combined with the *Pushout* case study and the demographic of instructors in the



photography workshops available to Philly students further shows the need for Black womxn instructors in their learning experiences. Doing so in this learning design would be an intentional decision to combat the experiences of being misunderstood and underrepresented that Black girls often have and improve their learning outcomes as research shows that “children benefit in many ways from having a teacher of the same race or ethnicity.” (Ordway). Essentially, the goal would be to create a safe space for Black girls to learn photography through representation, support, and social norms that contribute to their belongingness.

Artist, director, choreographer, and entrepreneur Teyana Taylor expresses her approach to creating a safe space for young creatives with her Black womxn led production company, The Aunties Inc, built with her business partner and professional dancer, Courtney Gilbert. The two sat down in conversation about their company and being Black in the workplace with Gia Peppers on REVOLT Black News sponsored by State Farm. They expressed that the company is set out to be a home for the underdogs who lack big budgets and support to live out their creative dreams. Their appeal as the co-founders of this company is their nurturing spirit for young creatives who would otherwise be called weird for their creative ideas but are instead embraced by Teyana and Courtney. Teyana went on to state, “I think it’s important to create a safe space for us because there is no safe space for us. We can’t even go to the store...and to save our people from the streets because they get turned to the streets when they family don’t agree with what they got going on and don’t believe in their dreams. So we’re like the aunties...Create. What do you need to create?” (REVOLT). This statement expresses the power of arts spaces as a survival tool for Black people looking to escape racial injustice and criminal activity. The same extends to Black girls who may have been seeking refuge from trauma and in turn were pulled into the street life unwillingly, a dynamic Dr. Morris also highlights in the *Pushout* documentary (Pushout).

Like The Aunties Inc, the Authority Collective was formed to combat the lack of workplace support for Black womxn photographers, specifically in the newsroom where the presence of Black womxn photojournalists is rare. It consists of a group of 200+ womxn, non-binary and gender expansive people of color working in the photography, film and VR/AR industries to empower these creatives with resources and community that isn’t found in the workplace. The New York Times reported on this systemic issue and the group’s work against it in 2019:

“While statistics on the number of women of color in photography are hard to come by, Akili-Casundria Ramsess, the executive director of the National Press Photographers Association, said there were few working as photojournalists in newspapers and magazines in the United States. African-American women staff photographers are like ‘unicorns,’ she said, because they are so rare. ‘I literally know every black woman photojournalist in the United States, and I can count them on both hands,’ said Ms.

Ramsess, who became one of the few black female directors of photography when she was hired by the Orlando Sentinel in Florida.”

They went on to include that in 2018, “the Authority Collective, in cooperation with [Diversify](#), created the ‘[Lit List](#)’ a group of 30 photographers ‘of marginalized identities’ to watch, which led to an exhibition at Photoville in New York” (Estrin). So, to advance the careers of Black womxn photographers, there’s a current push by several organizations to create databases, share career tips, and encourage more professional job hirings. But what about Black girls and providing more opportunities to support them in their interests in photography as well? I mean, they are the people who will grow into Black womxn. That’s where my learning design comes in.

### **Learner Analysis: Who is the learning design for?**

The starting point for my learner analysis was the sign up form and the entry survey for SIMBY Presents: The Black Girl Photo Club held in partnership with PSTV. Here is the description we promoted:

“Are you a Black girl in a middle school in Philadelphia or Pennsylvania looking to connect with others your age who have a mutual interest in photography? If so, then this virtual photo club is for you! In our four weeks together on Zoom, we will discuss images, photographers, and social issues related to Black life. Our goal is to build community through conversation and help young Black girls initiate the development of an intentional mindset surrounding photography. Upon request, we will also share information and resources to help advance your ability to both interpret and create visual art. Curated by Black womxn photographers Ruby Johnston and Kyra Williams, this is a safe space to ask questions and explore the realities of modern Blackness with a focus on Black girlhood, storytelling, and a love for photography.” (The Black Girl Photo Club)

To collect data on students participating in this club, we created Google forms for them to sign-up and an entry climate survey. The sign-up survey gathered information on their age, grades, schools, favorite kind of art, their personal interest in photography, their familiarity with common Black history terms, and their personal motivations for social change. The climate survey was built to gauge their feelings on belongingness, where they learned about Black history most, how they feel about their identity, support system, and if and when conversations on social change occur in their lives. Key takeaways from these surveys are:

- Sign-Up Survey (16 responses)
  - Our learners ranged from ages 10-15 (one high schooler joined us)
  - The middle schools they attend include:
    - Julia R Masterman
    - PA Virtual School
    - Pennbrook Middle School
    - West Oakland Charter
    - Penn Alexander School

- Cedarbrook Middle School
  - George Washington Carver of Engineering and Science High School
  - General Louis Wagner Middle School
  - Robert E Lamberton
  - Olney Elementary
  - Camelot High School
  - Grover Washington Jr Middle School
  - John Hancock
  - G W Childs
- Their top 3 favorite kinds of art were music, dance, and visual art (photography, film, music videos)
  - Students understand the common and most painful Black history topics more than the terms that could empower them specifically as Black females and creatives who have a history that extends beyond the arrival of the first slaves in North America
    - They know about slavery, the Civil Rights Movements, Jim Crow, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and Black Lives Matter
    - They aren't as familiar with topics like Black feminism, the Harlem Renaissance, and the African Diaspora
  - Students were asked "Why are you interested in photography?" Most of them were more specific about their reason and others just knew that they wanted to know more about the art form or that they just enjoyed taking pictures. Here are their responses:
    - "I love the art of photography. I love how you can express yourself and capture really beautiful images."
    - "I love capturing things!"
    - "Pictures capture memories and details that we usually do not see."
    - "I am interested in learning more about visual arts."
    - "I love taking photos of me!"
    - "I'm interested because I think photography is like art and I think it's really cool to learn how photography impacts people from different perspectives."
    - "I enjoy seeing objects in a still position."
    - "I'm interested in photography because it tells a story and keep memories my forgetful brain can't."
    - "I am interested in photography because I want to capture a lasting memory. I want people to be able to see that there is a story behind every picture. I also want to treat other people how I want to be treated and I like to relate to other people."

- “I love taking photographs and I would love to see how I can update my pictures.”
- “Because it can be anything; it’s a form of art.”
- “I enjoy photography because it has given me the opportunity to share in people's most special moments on a regular basis.”
- “I love capturing moments so u never forget them. It makes me happy.”
- “I love choreography. I love photography and more!”
- “Arts and entertainment is my interest.”
- “I just like to take pictures.”
- Students want to learn:
  - How to edit pictures
  - More about photography but mostly “Black women photographers”
  - How to show themselves through photos
  - How to show their life experiences through a camera
  - How digital cameras work
- To gauge social change motivations, students were asked “What is something that you have experienced or noticed that you want to change? This should be something that doesn't sit well with you. It doesn't quite feel right. It could be something that doesn't make you happy, yet it seems like something you may be expected to do. Think about this for a couple of minutes before you answer. What makes you angry? Sad? Uncomfortable? What do you want to change?” Some students were unclear but others responded:
  - “Black Women Inequality. As a little black girl watching the world and my surroundings, I feel as though black women are always under estimated just because of our sex and/or color. Black women have to work twenty times harder than other races, in particular caucasians. As the great Mary Jackson stated “Every time we as black women get a chance to get ahead they move the finish line.” The way the system is devised can make it very frustrating for black women to get what we want and deserve. It’s time to make a change, and it starts now.”
  - “I am mixed and I have experienced racist incidences.”
  - “Something that I have experienced/noticed that makes me frustrated is the fact that I know who I am as an American, but I know nothing about my African heritage. I get frustrated about the fact that it is very difficult to even trace where my ancestors came from and other people can visit the house their ancestors lived at.”
  - “Not enough focus in school about the celebration black achievements and contributions.”

- “I want systemic racism to end because I really want to feel included in this world and I want to feel like I belong. I don't want my race to be the only thing that defines me.”
- “Police brutality and people being hungry upset me. We live in one of the richest countries in the world but we still have people who go to bed hungry at night. And recently police brutality has been brought into the spotlight more due to the recent events that have happened over these past few years.”
- “I want to change peoples mindset. I want to show them that a black girl/woman can be successful and powerful. A lot of people don't know it but they say things that make it seem like women/girls is less then a men/boys. This makes me mad and sad because they don't truly know what women/girls go through to get to we're they are. This is something I would like to change.”
- “I want to change society and people because everyone is equal and everyone should be treated like humans the world shouldn't be fighting there should not be racism.I just wished every race would get along.”
- “When I was in Jersey, I saw people with Teslas, and Rolls-Royces and it made me wonder, people can afford this but yet our neighborhoods are poor and there's trash on the ground?”
- “I want to change how some parents think being apart of the LGBTQ is sinful. I don't like being called out of my name. I want to change how people judge a person by what they look like but don't think about their feelings as well. I want to change how u can't judge a book by its cover like some people think I'm just African American but I'm Hispanic.”
- “Racism doesn't make me happy and if I could perform on zoom or google meet just to speech I would love to I love to use my beautiful mouth to speak and I'm tired of people taking our color as triggers guns crimes and more and I would love to stand up and fight for what is right I would love to speech! I would love to be in as many programs as I can! Whatever is available I'm in!”
- “Now the judge has made a new rule that the white [people] can't say the N word.”
- “I want everything to change. That's all I can say.”
- One Black girl outside of the city in another Pennsylvania county reached out to join the club because she wanted to build community with other Black girls but lacked the opportunity to do so.
  - “I just finished registering for your program, but am not sure if I am allowed. A friend sent me the link but I do not live in Philadelphia. There are not many black

girls where I live, or opportunities to be in a club like this, so I wanted to be honest and ask if it was ok for me to join?”

- Climate Survey (13 responses, answers submitted on a scale of 1 to 5)
  - These Black girls love themselves
  - ~54% of them don't feel like they have a community of Black girls who share their interest in photography
  - 70% of them are aware of opportunities to learn photography
  - ~60% of them feel like they have a good understanding of how a camera works
  - ~54% feel strongly represented in school
  - ~85% of them feel some sense of representation in the media (TV, music, movies, news, etc.)
  - Over 75% of them have been exposed to photography as a hobby or career
  - 38% of students feel like they aren't really heard and respected by authority
  - ~85% feel confident that they can discuss societal issues with someone they trust
  - ~62% feel confident that they can discuss personal issues with someone they trust
  - ~62% of students feel like they got their Black history education at home, in their community, or online
  - ~62% of them feel like they have a fun relationship with their education
  - They all feel some sense of satisfaction with their education

These responses show that Black girls need a learning environment that doesn't just help them meet their creative goals but also allows them to feel represented, more informed on their history, makes room for them to discuss their personal issues, expands their community, and gives them a voice on social issues.

To analyze these learners in the learning environment, I reviewed the hour long Zoom recording from our third photo club session where we covered shot composition, exposure, lighting, and how to take self portraits on an iPhone. Here are my notes led by questions to determine the effectiveness of SIMBY's current learning design:

- What topics were covered?
  - Warm Up
    - Black womxn photography feature of the week
    - What do you see, think, and wonder?
  - Exposure
  - Shot composition
  - Lighting
  - Self portraits on an iPhone
    - Students were assigned a photo challenge to take self portraits with an iPhone or camera
  - Community Circle

- Discussed whatever was on their minds at the end
- Was the lesson culturally relevant according to Culturally relevant pedagogy?
  - “Despite the current social inequalities and hostile classroom environments, students must develop their academic skills... Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning...Beyond those individual characteristics of academic achievement and cultural competence, students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.” (Ladson-Billings)
  - The club featured student runners and images paying homage to Flo Jo was relevant to them as Black girls, track athletes, and aspiring photographers. This led to comments that went into discussing what they see, think and wonder:
    - Issues with the perception that womxn can't be strong and feminine: “It looks like she's trying to say you can still be and act like a women doing a sport because a lot of people say sports are for men.”
    - It also led students to naturally analyze the shot composition of the images and what focused their attention before the lesson on the topic: “the lines going back in the 3rd photo”
    - The discussion about lighting was also initiated by a student before we discussed its importance to a photo: “The second one's sun”
      - We dove into how this image was captured against the sun with a flash.
    - One student recognized the iconic athlete: “She looks like Flo Jo.”
- What went well?
  - Felt like we were creating our own community despite being virtual
    - Able to joke, laugh, share lingo, share struggles and experiences, gain support in those experiences
    - Generational gap but it still felt like we related to them in a way
    - Offered our ears/contact to talk
- What needs improvement?
  - Encouraging students not talking to speak more so the most outspoken aren't the only ones talking
  - Checking the chat more often bc some comments were missed by students who didn't speak out loud
  - Creating the group chat, community in the beginning/week 1 and in the sign up survey getting contact info so that we don't have to spend class time gathering this info
  - Both of us have to use headphones and mics for consistent audio quality
    - Ruby's audio was almost inaudible at times
  - Having a more clear way for them to access PPT's and links

- Sharing links in the chat but they should have one central link to access all info
    - We had a website for the HS workshop but not this photo club which led to inconsistent access to info
    - How could we make sure they had access to the course site?
      - Should it have been added to the simby site?
      - Should it be added to our weekly emails?
  - We didn't measure comprehension of complex concepts
    - Implementing a takeaway or reflection would help
- How did students tend to participate? Chat or speaking? Camera on or off?
  - Students used both chat and unmuted themselves to speak
  - Non-track affiliated students had their cameras off for the most part except for one
  - The chat was used more as the only communication tool by students who weren't friends from track (may be a sign that they were uncomfortable speaking/felt left out)
- When did students engage with the most? (In discussion, answering questions, solving problems)
  - What do you see, think, and wonder warm up activity
    - Student comment: "It looks like she's trying to say you can still be and act like a women doing a sport because a lot of people say sports are for men"
      - Led to convo about black womxn narrative in sports and femininity vs masculinity
    - Another student commented: "The lines going back in the 3rd photo."
      - Reference to leading lines before the shot composition section
        - An example to refer to during the discussion on leading lines to root their learning, build schema
      - Prelude to the topic of the day
      - This shoot was a great way to start the discussion bc it portrayed different shot comps and it was a culturally relevant option
  - Community circle
    - Students could share anything on their minds
    - A student shared some photos she took
    - Students shared their grievances w/ virtual edu (cameras on, using chat vs talking, long breaks or minimal breaks)
- When were the students least engaged?
  - During the explanations of shot compositions
- What conversations intrigued the girls the most?
  - School and things that get on their nerves during zoom/virtual school
  - Missing their friends/hanging out with friends
- How would you describe the overall ambiance/vibe of the group?



- Some of the students knew each other from track and were longtime friends
- How could we make the students who weren't friends with them already feel more a part of the community/conversations? Pre-selected breakout rooms to get to know ppl you don't already know so they can feel more comfortable to interject in convos?
- Who participated in the assignments?
  - Two students in last session did the challenge
  - Can we allot class time for assignments to get students to participate who don't have any other time to do it?
- Did we hit the themes that we wanted to?
  - We hit every topic in our PPT that we wanted to review
- Did they demonstrate understanding of the takeaways? Did we even have clear takeaways?
  - Our main goals were that we wanted students to walk away feeling a sense of belonging having Black womxn photographers as their instructors in a space specifically created for them that used content reflective of their identities to teach the basics of photography.
    - We did provide a space that created this outcome of belongingness.
  - However, our goals pertaining to skills we wanted these students to walk away with in this short term of four weeks were unclear
    - Not every student submitted images or participated in discussions to demonstrate retention
    - We can't measure the success of our instruction based on skills acquired.
- How can we be better instructors?
  - Temporal contiguity: Using images at the same time they're referenced in explanations. We referenced images from earlier in the presentation without having them visible on the slides to ground their understanding. Think more ahead of how we can reincorporate images so that they are integrated into slides as they are referenced again.
  - Instead of asking if things make sense, maybe having them apply/exercise some of their knowledge in an interactive activity, poll, or game
    - The padlet could have been used here for engagement
  - Asking them questions to encourage them to talk more
    - We kind of left silence a lot and that could be a good thing but it felt like we didn't know how to engage them at times
    - So preparing questions in case they don't speak would help
  - Possibly creating 3 tiered ZPD tracks for students of varied expertise to learn and manage their expectations
- What did we do well as instructors?
  - Used images to show difficult concept as we explained: dual coding theory

- Complementing each other's work/photos of our own that we shared as examples
- Explaining photography concepts that may not be in the slides, showing our expertise
- Explaining how we got certain shots and why we would want to use certain angles
  - Technique we used to capture images like squatting
- How changing a technique could improve the image or create a different shot composition
- It comes off like we're having fun, we like each other and what we're talking about which is important
- Shared that camera functions are not exclusive to professional cameras but on their phones and how to access them
- Ruby is great at simplifying concepts in her wording like exposure discussion and sharing analogies and scenarios when you'd use a concept
- Recognizing when concepts can be confusing and changing the language to make them more understandable like Aperture point
- Chose a self portrait video tutorial that addressed their current reality of quarantine and their identity as black people who can find hope through creativity
- Addressing concepts that are referenced in our media that weren't covered
  - I.e. focal length
- Checking in to ask students if things make sense after every section

After realizing that student engagement could have been better during SIMBY's Zoom sessions and recalling that students had been online for a year by the spring of 2021, Zoom fatigue likely played a part in this dynamic. So, I conducted some research on how to manage this moving forward. In a Stanford article, it was argued that video chatting platforms tire out users because they increase cognitive load. "Professor Jeremy Bailenson, founding director of the [Stanford Virtual Human Interaction Lab](#) (VHIL), examined the psychological consequences of spending hours per day on these platforms." He identifies four contributors to "Zoom fatigue" that arise due to these video calls and provides suggestions on how to decrease fatigue while on them:

- 1) "Both the amount of eye contact we engage in on video chats, as well as the size of faces on screens is unnatural...In a normal meeting, people will variously be looking at the speaker, taking notes or looking elsewhere. But on Zoom calls, everyone is looking at everyone, all the time. A listener is treated nonverbally like a speaker, so even if you don't speak once in a meeting, you are still looking at faces staring at you...When someone's face is that close to ours in real life, our brains interpret it as an intense situation that is either going to lead to mating or to conflict. 'What's happening, in effect, when you're using Zoom for many, many hours is you're in this hyper-aroused state,'" says Bailenson.

- i) Solution: Exiting full screen and minimizing its size, alternating between looking on screen and elsewhere, and using an external keyboard.
- 2) “Most video platforms show a square of what you look like on camera during a chat. But that’s unnatural,” and seeing your reflection all the time makes you more critical of yourself. It’s taxing.
  - i) Solution: Disengage this feature by clicking the “hide self-view” button, which one can access by right-clicking their own photo, once they see their face is framed properly in the video.”
- 3) Unlike in video chats where you have to stay in the same spot, “in-person and audio phone conversations allow humans to walk around and move... ‘There’s a growing research now that says when people are moving, they’re performing better cognitively.’”
  - i) Solution: Set up the computer/camera to create space and flexibility in the space, set ground rules in the group that taking camera breaks is ok.
- 4) In-person, we interpret nonverbal and nonverbal cues but “in video chats, we have to work harder to send and receive signals...You’ve got to make sure that your head is framed within the center of the video. If you want to show someone that you are agreeing with them, you have to do an exaggerated nod or put your thumbs up. That adds cognitive load as you’re using mental calories in order to communicate.” And the gestures that you give may not mean the same in this video context.
  - i) Solution: Give yourself an audio only break so you can turn away from the screen and no longer give or interpret meaningless gestures.  
(Ramchandran)

For this learning design, I have to consider that teaching materials on Zoom comes with an even higher cognitive load. Incorporating some of these suggestions into the community guidelines and maybe developing my own would help offset that as much as possible given our current dependence on virtual sessions for safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To better understand these middle school aged students and their learning capabilities, it was essential for me to assess their cognitive abilities based on Piaget and Vygotsky’s theories on cognitive development. According to Piaget, the Concrete Operational Stage is from seven to eleven years old. During this stage, the child can have conversations around stability-change, realizing that change is inevitable in the world but some things remain the same. They can complete classifying tasks that require them to recognize similarities and differences in people, objects, and events. They can make these classifications across multiple dimensions simultaneously, leading to more “precise distinctions.” The child also develops the ability to decentrate, which means they can “adopt multiple perspectives in making judgements,” specifically considering multiple factors when making those judgments instead of just one. They can adopt the perspectives of others as well, wonder about others’ opinions, and aspire to seek peer approval during this phase. Ordering objects along one dimension is easily accomplished at this stage and their overall sophistication in understanding and ordering things exists primarily in

the physical world (Martinez 201-202). Because of this stage, students should be able to engage in conversations surrounding their identity as Black girls and social justice issues that they face based on the differences between their experience and those of other people. It's also important for us as instructors to encourage them to develop their own thoughts not dependent upon their peers or others in their lives because they're still impressionable and seek to fit in at this stage.

The Concrete Operational Stage is followed by the Formal Operational Stage, which covers those from eleven years old into their adulthood. This is Piaget's final developmental stage where flexible abstract thinking about mental concepts is obtained. One has the ability to consider multiple casualties in making complex classifications. Hypothetical "What if" thinking is engaged. The child/adult is able to systemically test competing hypotheses, resulting in sophisticated scientific reasoning that consists of logical thinking from "systemic isolation and control of variables." Engaging in the complex subjects of math and science is also a component of this phase, which includes thinking about multiple causal influences, their precise interactions, and proportional reasoning (Martinez 202-203). This stage should allow students to use their creativity not just to make art, but to also think about improving social issues and what it could look like to create a better world for themselves.

According to Vygotsky, he expanded Piaget's theory on the individual phases of cognitive development and added the impact of social interaction on one's development. One theory that arose from this theoretical evolution is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is described as "the difference between the competence of a person acting alone and what that person can achieve with the assistance of others." This is considered to be an area of "tremendous pedagogical potential" because a task is presented just above a learner's skill level so that it doesn't bore them by being too easy and doesn't intimidate them by being too hard. With guided and skilled assistance such as scaffolding, they can stretch their cognition with active engagement (Martinez 211). The instructors of this photography learning design will be tasked with assessing each learner's ZPD to ensure their learning experience fits their cognitive abilities and helping them in their learning as needed.

Higher order thought is another theory developed by Vygotsky that encompasses social interaction on cognitive development. As a witness to a social interaction or debate, one can process both sides of the conversation by internally weighing options and comparing these options to "competing values, promises, uncertainties, and hopes" before making and announcing their own decision to others. They are able to access problem solving and critical thinking skills that can be used in other social situations and by the individual in their own thought processes. "Forms of cognition originally presented to the individual learner as social processes can become internalized and so take on psychological value." This process is put into this sequence by Vygotsky: 1) social discourse, 2) individual thought spoken aloud, 3) unvocalized thought-going underground (Martinez 211-212). Since it's possible to internalize

the thoughts of one's social environment, that environment is a factor in the thoughts that one has developed. This means that the neighborhoods, schools, and family dynamics of students impacts their outlook on the world. Knowing that, this learning environment for Black girls interested in photography should aim to enforce the conceptual change of the negative perspectives these students may have developed about life, themselves, their peers, their learning, and possible careers.

Silence is a perspective that needs to be confronted in this learning design as well by valuing students' voices as Black children. In an article from the British Journal of Social Work by Dr. Mekada Graham, *Giving Voice to Black Children: An Analysis of Social Agency*, she highlights that in a racist society, the voices of Black children are devalued, specifically in the child care system. These children are approached and interacted with from a deficit based perspective instead of an asset based one, discounting their competencies to narrate their lived experiences. These children are seen as problems that need to be fixed instead of "competent witnesses to their lives" (Graham 1306). The history of research on children lacks consideration for "social contexts and lived experiences of oppression" impacting Black children because of implicit bias in the fields of psychology and sociology. Childhood studies has grown to provide children with agency to "speak for themselves about their own lives" (Graham 1307). Providing space for students to do just that is essential to validating their perspectives and opinions.

When I think of other fields that devalue the student voice, I think of education and the public school system in the United States. For "much of the twentieth century," its theoretical framework was behaviorism and students were and in some ways still are looked at as empty vessels who need to be filled with information, stimulated, and expected to respond in a particular way. Later, constructivism and social constructivism were introduced where the individual is an "exploratory agent, actively making sense of the external world" and "knowledge is not something to be 'acquired' but a state of understanding to be discovered afresh by the learner through their own exploratory (and constructing) actions" (Crook & Sutherland 12,15). And since the world is often a static and passive place, "the most dynamic form of engagement the learner could experience would be engagement with other people—where those others also become 'learning materials' in some sense" as opposed to static books and worksheets that are fixed." A multimodal design is another option for a richer form of interaction" (Crook & Sutherland 15). Considering the reliance of public schools on texts which were written from a white lens, are rarely updated or replaced, and have to be shared because of low spending budgets, public school students today still face an outdated model of education founded in behaviorism that inhibits their ability to bring knowledge to the table and explore reality, contributing to their oppression. Constructivism and social constructivism are needed in this learning design to combat this dynamic.

Brazilian philosopher Paulo Friere also addresses the dynamic of silencing and power dynamics in schools in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, calling this method the banking model

of education where students are just “receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” because “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Friere 58). This assumption perpetuates the oppression of students as a power dynamic that neglects the knowledge they bring into learning. He also sees it as a structure that promotes adaptation and passiveness, deterring students from developing critical consciousness about the world around them so that they can change that world (Friere 60). So, he introduces problem posing education which “embodies communication” between teacher-students and student-teachers so that everyone both teaches and learns (Friere 66). Everyone is responsible for growth. Students are “co-investigators” of content as,

“the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and reconsiders his earlier considerations as the students express their own...Problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality...Students as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obligated to respond.” (Friere 68)

All in all, this method represents “education as a practice of freedom” that “bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality” (Friere 69, 71). In this learning design for Black girls, it’s critical that we create a non-oppressive environment built on a problem-posing framework that uses dialogue to build consciousness and promote freedom through investigation and action instead of presenting information as fact.

In the “Miss Buchanan’s Period of Adjustment” episode of Malcolm Gladwell’s Revisionist History podcast, he revisits the history of our public school system through the *Brown v. Board of Education* supreme court ruling that is often incorrectly credited as “a major civil rights victory.” He flips this misconception on its head by interviewing the Brown family and telling the truth about the aftermath of this ruling that deemed white schools and white led education superior to Black schools in order to allow integration and the creation of bussing systems. Black men were pushed out of the teacher profession, Blacks schools were closed, and dark skinned Black teachers were fired (Gladwell). This added layer of Black inferiority following this decision in a racist and segregated America further devalued the voices of Black children through a deficit lens in a school system that wasn’t made for them from the beginning. Intentionality is required to combat this harsh reality.

Moreover, Black children face silencing not just in school and society, but also in the home. Dr. Richard Grossman argues that many parents approach their role by enforcing their children to enter their world instead of providing them with agency and validating the world of the child. Without counseling, many parents fail to realize that their own voices were silenced as children by their parents. And now as parents themselves, they’re fighting for their own agency by repeating the cycle and forcing their children to listen to them. If the child’s early stage of developing their own voice is interrupted and passes by, this voicelessness can result in a child feeling prisoner to their parent, loneliness, or behaviors of acting out that last a lifetime without

therapy. The Black community and family has a long standing stigma against therapy and discourages such assistance, allowing the cycle of silencing Black children to continue (About Us). But by embracing help, this generational curse can be broken. Here's how Dr. Grossman describes a child with a voice: "They have a sense of identity that belies their years. They stand up for themselves when necessary. They speak their mind and are not easily intimidated. They accept the inevitable frustrations and defeats of life with grace and keep moving forward. They are not afraid to try new things, to take appropriate risks. People of all ages find them a joy to talk with." To help the child get there, a parent should abide by three rules: "1) Assume that what your child has to say about the world is just as important as what you have to say. 2) Assume that you can learn as much from them as they can from you. 3) Enter their world through play, activities, discussions: don't require them to enter yours in order to make contact" (Grossman). Although educators aren't parents, these rules can be applied to the teacher-student or instructor-learner relationship as well to foster the development of their voices in learning environments.

In Philadelphia, some students have already begun using their voices to advocate for themselves and their communities. As of December 14, 2021, the city has experienced its deadliest year ever, surpassing a 1990 record of 500 murders with 529 homicides (Crime Maps & Stats). Nearly 200 children were shot in that count and 32 of them have been killed (6abc Digital Staff). In early November, students from Mary McLeod Bethune School spoke at a press conference with city officials to express their fears due to gun violence that include not feeling safe around their school, coming to, and getting out of school. A few teachers shared stories about students they've lost to gun violence as they were coming home from work with young siblings, shopping, and getting off of a bus:

"Even though I feel safe in my school, I don't feel safe around my school," Herman admitted.

'I don't feel safe coming out of school. I get anxiety because just around the corner, eight murders have been happening to students my age.'

'I have my children afraid to come to school,' said Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School of Philadelphia Founder and Chief Administrative Officer Veronica Joyner, who has added a grief counselor to her staff, and has implemented a 'stop, drop and take cover drill' in her school.

'I've lost students who were shopping and getting off a SEPTA bus,' she said.

'I lost another student that heard gunshots and ushered his brothers and other family members into the home, and got shot in the back and killed. I had another coming from

working at Burger King to help support his family, and he was shot and killed.””  
(Johanson)

Students signing up for SIMBY’s photo workshops are likely to have these same concerns and fears, which should be considered when creating this learning design.

Aware of the city’s high crime rate and the gun violence epidemic, some students may feel called to action as well. According to a research study led by Deanna A. Ibrahim, an NYU Steinhardt doctoral fellow in the psychology and social intervention program, arts programming develops critical consciousness and social action for youth of color. Building off of Paulo Friere’s thoughts on dialogue and critical thinking as crucial components to fostering “reflection and action” amongst youth to “reject oppressive systems,” scholars have found that socialization, perspective-taking, critical curiosity, socio-emotional skills, parental socialization, and “support from peers, family, and community to challenge social injustice” is also important in developing critical consciousness (Ibrahim 2). Ibrahim argues that “art is a tool for creative expression and imagination that has historically been leveraged to challenge social injustice.” She adds that:

“Many of the same processes that are active in socially engaged art are present in general arts, including opportunities for creative expression and imagination... arts participation has been shown to stimulate the development of socioemotional and cognitive skills such as tolerance, empathy, perspective-taking, and critical thinking.” (Ibrahim 3)

Providing the space for students to develop their voices on social issues is inherently a part of arts programming and creative expression. Therefore, SIMBY’s creative learning environment for Black girls interested in photography should intentionally lean into a social justice focus.

### **Task Analysis: What does the learning design require?**

My first step in determining what this learning design would require is reviewing SIMBY’s mission, which will be the basis of the design:

“Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY) is a Philadelphia based arts education and social change nonprofit that provides online and in-person learning to Black womxn and girls through arts workshops, community events, and creative content. We are a Black womxn led initiative that believes in the power of Black storytelling, amplifying Black femxle voices, and tapping into our imagination for liberation. Our goal is also to create social awareness and action through art, discussions, and environments that tackle social justice issues impacting our livelihood. Through representation and access to information, we’re developing the creatives of tomorrow while uplifting the artists of today. To extend our reach, we’ve partnered with the Philadelphia School District’s TV Station (PSTV) to host workshops for middle and high school students.



We use the “x” to represent the intersectionality of what it means to be a “woman” or “women,” denouncing patriarchy and whiteness while extending beyond heterosexuality and cisgender identities to include the LGBTQIA+ community.” (Home).

Accessibility, cultural relevance, social change, and representation for Black girls in content and instructors is at the forefront of SIMBY and therefore must be the priority of this design.

Next, I analyzed the topics previously covered in SIMBY Black Girl Photo Club and other components that were effective. The four one hour virtual sessions included:

- Creation of community guidelines
- Sharing of student learning goals and expectations
- Sharing photos of and/or by Black womxn and girls
  - Warm Up Images and Discussions at the beginning of every session: Students answer, “What do you see, think, and wonder?”
  - Students sharing images they’ve taken
  - Images by instructors included in lessons
- Examples of Black womxn photographers who are merging art and social change to make a difference
- Explanations of exposure, shot composition, the importance of lighting/a well lit subject
- Instructions on how to take self portraits using iPhone/smartphone photography
- Community circles at the end of every session where students and instructors could talk about anything

Talking with subject matter experts was next in line. In the fall of 2021, I interviewed my mentor Shelley Wolfe, who is the Executive Director of Media and Production Services at PSTV. In our conversation, she shared that the station’s future of media programming in the next year following the pandemic will be centered around engaging more students by creating more equitable access and providing more ways for them to interact with PSTV by offering more learning opportunities. This is needed because kids are looking for a safe space to explore, tap into their creativity, and socialize with new people. However, there are challenges to making this happen. The pandemic has caused a change to staggered dismissal times from school, impacting students’ ability to attend after school programming. So, PSTV now has to think about how to expand the opportunities they offer beyond their studio in the central school district building downtown. Changes have also been made to how many swipes students get on their free Septa public transportation card. They get eight per day and some students use all of those to get to and from school, so they’re not able to add another destination to their journey. Shelley also faces censorship on which students are allowed to attend workshops at the studio; If students don't attend school, they can’t come to PSTV. She believes that it shouldn’t matter if they went to school because the studio serves as a safe space for students that they should always be welcome to visit. There are concerns around COVID safety to consider as well, even if students do make it to the station. As a precaution, Shelley decided to withhold in-person programming until February of 2022 in hopes of a clearer way to manage safety by then. And since the pandemic,

she also hopes to always have a virtual component to PSTV moving forward, allowing more access and flexibility (Wolfe). Unfortunately for Shelley and PSTV, the station flooded in January 2022 and all of their equipment was destroyed, so they're no longer able to operate as planned. Now their programming has to be brought to students and is bound to virtual spaces or the media hubs that Shelley and her team has created for schools across the district to have access to their own photography equipment.

In terms of photography specific offerings, PSTV has previously offered photo training, targeted programming with SIMBY, and photowalks. These offerings were not led by Shelley but instead her team members Manuel, Marc, Ruby, or myself. In the future, she hopes to host more photowalks, sessions on proper headshots to promote oneself, exploring landscape and architecture photography with students, and providing the exposure of being out and using the camera in different types of settings. In the past, she has taken video students to a concert, the Democratic National Convention, and the NFL Draft for media coverage and it was nerve racking for her to be responsible for them. Since this experience, she isn't as interested in expeditions unless she has more chaperones. But she does believe expeditions are important because it can be the first time students get to see outside of their neighborhoods. As I develop this photography learning experience for Black girls, she advised me to keep in mind that students may not even know what they want to do or what they're interested in. They may just need to get by and don't have time to think or aren't encouraged to think that a photographer is something that they can be when they grow up (Wolfe). This advice was something that I hadn't really considered but also rings true for many inner city Black kids.

My conversation with Shelley led to my research of Black Women Photographers, which is an organization founded in 2020 by Polly Irungu that inherently shows Black girls what a profession in photography could look like. I aimed to see if there were any key components of their work that could be implemented into this learning design for SIMBY. According to their website, "Black Women Photographers aims to disrupt the notion that it is difficult to discover and commission Black creatives. Dedicated to providing a resource for the industry's gatekeepers." Black womxn photographers sign up to be accepted into this network and "it supports its members through promoting their work in an active database distributed to photo editors, directors, curators, and art buyers. The collective also offers free educational resources such as regular programming of webinars, workshops, trainings, and portfolio reviews." They have a YouTube channel with informational videos and they also host monthly photowalks in London, LA, NYC, and Washington DC. They provide exclusive grants and giveaways as well to support Black womxn photographers in their creative journeys (Black Women Photographers). The overarching theme of this organization is career development and their educational content mimics this goal. However, their use of photowalks to build community and grow in the art form as well as their creation of educational videos stood out as essential components to add to SIMBY's learning design.

In this theme of seeking guidance from sources specific to the Black femxle identity, I contacted a Black womxn photographer named Brianna Lopez who encouraged me early on in my photography journey as someone who took the time to impart advice. She's an LA based photographer from the Philadelphia area (Camden, NJ/Philly) who deeply values travel photography and educating the next generation of photographers to close the gap of access within the art form for people of color. She taught a photography course at Venice Arts and conducted workshops with organizations like National Geographic and Las Fotos Project. Her educational work has been primarily with high school students from ages 14 to 18 years old. In her experience at Venice Arts, she expressed that her students were people of color and founders of the program weren't, so Black and brown students had no connection to the curriculum. From this experience, she also realized that teaching highly structured photo courses in the classroom isn't the right fit for her. She wanted her students to be outside and to have more autonomy over the content and concepts she taught them. So, now she aspires to create her own learning experiences while partnering with others. Primary concepts of her workshops include self reflection and journaling to help students develop their voices, providing the space and quiet for them to do that reflection, traveling to expose students to somewhere new as they photograph, and teaching them how to use their camera equipment (Lopez).

Since SIMBY will be working specifically with middle school students, Brianna went on to share some advice on best practices that should be considered in the learning design. She advised the educators to ensure that those students are 100% invested in learning the art form. Once that is established, there isn't anything too advanced for them to learn. Then it's important to ask what the students want to learn to ensure that they're engaged in the experience. She believes in keeping the art first and not allowing the politics or business of photography to cloud the learning experience as they discover the craft. Keeping it fun, making relationships outside of the digital world, and encouraging them to just do it is important. They should take photos and explore different types of photography before finding a niche. It's also essential that educators reassure them that this art form is a medium to tell their stories where they can find their voices and meaning in life. Their focus should be on being people who create and less on professional success. That's not something that they should stress right away. Many creatives found their calling later in life and social media often makes them feel like they don't have time or need to rush the process. Reminding them to slow down, go with the flow, create, have fun, enjoy the ride, and just be people is key. "They won't find their own meaning if they're not able to be people," mentioned Brianna. The world often doesn't acknowledge their humanity and this creative learning experience is a way to change the tide, allowing them to look inward and figure out what they want for themselves (Lopez).

Following our conversation and hearing that Brianna partnered with Las Fotos Project, I conducted some research to learn more about their work as an organization that focuses on girls in photography like SIMBY. Founded in 2010 by an LA based photographer named Eric V.

Ibarra, Las Fotos Project was an answer to “a need for teenage girls throughout Los Angeles to have a skill that could help build their confidence and self-esteem.” Now the community-based foundation uses a participatory photography framework in their workshops to encourage teen girls of color to examine their “personal and social landscapes” through photography:

“This process of self-exploration is designed to validate and empower the participants’ perspective, while also providing an avenue for self-guided reflection, reconciliation, and group dialogue. Our program model further reinforces photography’s inherent ability to spark introspection, evoke deeper meaning, and serve as a catalyst for change by placing students at the heart of social justice efforts in their respective communities.” (Las Fotos Project)

The program is year-round and provides access to professional cameras and encourages them to find their voices as they “explore their identity, build leadership and advocacy skills, and strengthen their social and emotional well-being” (About Us). The components of self-reflection, group dialogue, and photography for social change all stood out as elements to add into SIMBY’s learning design as well.

I wasn’t familiar with what participatory photography entailed, so I decided to dig deeper into this framework. According to the Oregon Public Health Institute:

“Participatory photography (PP) is a methodology or tool to engage community members in creatively making change to improve their environments by using photography; it blends a grassroots approach and social action. PP is a type of participatory action research which involves engaging communities in actively examining together current conditions which they experience as problematic in order to improve it.” (Participatory Photography)

This method is broken down into three phases that can be done in any order or configurations and even overlap if needed. Those three phases are: 1) Sustainable Investment: Community Engagement & Preparation 2) Capturing the Environment: PP Data Collection & Analysis 3) Call to Action: PP Dissemination & Social Change/Action. Sustainable investment includes identifying the issue, goals and objectives to fix the issue, key stakeholders and policy makers to share findings with who can implement change, pinpointing community leaders, and performing instruction for those leaders and community members. Capturing the environment includes taking the photos, having group discussions about the issues (Barriers/Supports) and images, reflecting and assessing the images, and recording stories. Call to action includes connecting with policy makers and determining a decision for change, assessing program and policy implementation, and continuing community training and process. This method is seen as effective because images tell stories, the art form is relatively cheap compared to filmmaking, it’s accessible to all ages/skill sets/cultures, and photojournalism galvanizes with a call to action that impels change (Participatory Photography). This framework aligns with SIMBY’s social change focus, outlining a more specific pathway to creating that change while guiding young photographers in their active learning process and helping them develop their voices on

important issues. Due to this seamless fit, participatory photography will serve as a guiding framework for my learning design.

My final research interview was conducted with Dr. Deborah Willis; a fellow Philadelphian, University Professor, and the Chair of NYU Tisch's Photography and Imaging department. In her extensive career as a photographer, historian, curator, and author she has expanded the narrative of photography history to include the contributions and works of Black photographers. She has examined "visual culture, contemporary women photographers and beauty." And as an educator, she has taught courses on "Photography & Imaging, iconicity, and cultural histories visualizing the black body, women, and gender" (Deborah Willis). In my conversation with her, we spoke about her childhood in Philly, her beginnings in photography, the importance of representation, and her advice for creating educational spaces catered to the needs of Black girls.

Her introduction to photography was through her father who would take images of their family. She would create her own books and graphic stories through their photo albums. By the age of seven or eight, she says "I knew that I wanted to make photographs. I didn't know that it was a profession but it was an expression that I wanted to continue." The art form allowed her to consider other people, the lives of other people, the framing of a story about people, and not just seeing Black people as spectacles or as unfortunate bodies brutalized during the Civil Rights Movement. Recalling seeing the infamous image of Emmett Till's mangled face in Jet magazine, she thought this distinction was important. Dr. Willis went on to pursue her dream and studied at the Philadelphia College of Art. But in one of her classes, she was told by her professor that she was "taking up a good man's space" and that she only had a future of being a bedpan nurse or mother. He was putting her in "a place that he felt all women should be," she said. In connection to this moment, she found her way in photography when she saw womxn in Philly shopping for their families. This visual really influenced her to capture the role of womxn and their importance and the stories that her teacher didn't see. "His vision was blurred and skewed" and she thought "if people saw and explored more images, they wouldn't be trapped." Her career expanding representation of Black people and womxn in photography was born but not without more struggle. When asked about the barriers she faced as a Black womxn photographer, she expressed that there are limited opportunities to show your work and it's difficult to get your work shown in museums especially. Having access to curators who show and write about your work and are able to promote your work is important but not accessible (Willis).

Dr. Willis believes it's "important for young girls to have the opportunity to learn photography because it also gives them a voice, encourages them to recognize their beauty, and their place in society." She went on to add, "I love that photography allows us to dream," as she explained that it also affords them an "opportunity to imagine their lives through the photographic moment...It's important for young people to know that they're heard and that they



**Storyboard:** One to two Black women educators, staff, or Black womxn photographers will sponsor this club at each school after completing training on how to run the entire program. Photo equipment (smartphone/DSLR/mirrorless/film compatible) will be provided in media hub packs to each school to conduct this club. Students can complete assignments in school with access to everything they need online and in their building or they can do so on field trips. They are also able to complete activities at home with their own smartphones or equipment. The program will have weekly one hour sessions offered in-person, on Zoom, or in a hyflex format –the option to attend a synchronous session in-person or online– over 32 weeks of the school year (Lederman). One hour exercises (modules) are to be completed before each meeting to ground group discussions and allow for hands-on activities, supporting a flipped classroom model (“What, Why, and How to Implement a Flipped Classroom Model”). Students also have the opportunity to meet with their accountability partner if the general meeting time doesn’t work for their schedule. There are monthly photo challenges and weekly journal entries to be submitted for reflection, feedback, and space for students to explore their thoughts, feelings, and life experiences. As a precaution, support from Black womxn school counselors and therapists are needed to provide professional help to students who may need a safe space to unpack any trauma, identity issues, or even work through their visions for their lives that may conflict with their family and society. For extra practice and experience, as school and district wide events arise like performances, panels, games, and meets, students will be able to apply and receive approval to document these experiences as photographers, possibly earning extra credit negotiated with their school or a head start on their required community service hours for high school.

For this thesis, I’ve worked through the agenda in detail for the first twelve weeks in the fall and outlined the remaining weeks and spring semester. The fall semester is fifteen weeks long and focuses on discovery, exploration, storytelling, and basic technical concepts. Students have the option to use their smartphones or film cameras provided to take their images. This approach will allow students to transfer their knowledge over as they begin using professional grade digital or mirrorless cameras in the spring. In the new year after the winter holiday break, students will focus more on technical skills such as camera functions on DSLR or mirrorless cameras, review of types of photography, studio lighting vs natural lighting (Lighting shootout, Color gels, Strobes vs constant light source), event photography etiquette, review of compositions, editing in Photoshop or Lightroom, and more advanced set design techniques. Students will collaborate, engage more in real world scenarios where they’d apply their skills as photographers, and showcase their work to the public. Their original images will be featured on a photo wall in their schools and in a culminating exhibit at the end of the school year as both a VR and in-person display full of photos from across all Exposure chapters in the city.

## **September**

- **Week 1: Introductions**

- Welcome
- What is SIMBY?
- Warm-Up: Introduce yourself (name, grade, school, section of the city where you're from) and share an image that you just took to Padlet. Together we'll share what we see, think, and wonder about each person's image?
  - Instructors go last
  - Everyone will explore their environment for five minutes to take a photo and upload them before introductions begin
- In-class discussion on learning goals and community guidelines: hopes/fears/norms protocol (McDonald)
  - What do you hope to learn? (hopes)
  - What are you fearful of in their learning experience? (Fears)
  - How can we make this learning experience the most meaningful for you? (Norms) What does the ideal learning environment look/feel/sound like?
    - Community guidelines
      - This is an opportunity to address Zoom fatigue and provide tips for engaging on this platform in a way that minimizes cognitive load
- Allot time for students to create written individual learning plans for the fall with goals, class/extracurricular schedules, and specified paths of interaction with course materials
  - Indicating if they are hybrid, self-paced online, synchronous or asynchronous, and if they're able to attend in-person opportunities scheduled
  - Dates given for when they they'll do what
  - This is where returning or more advanced students can curate details about their experience like the use of DSLR/Mirrorless cameras in the fall, curating their own project ideas, or displaying interest in submitting applications as event photographers sooner than the spring
  - Submission by next week
- Accountability Partners: Introduce the idea of selecting or assigning pairs by the next session
  - Talk about ideas, projects, discussion topics, journal entries, and support for weekly exercises (modules)
- Decide on and activate the Google group chat
  - Sharing photos we love, photos we took, and announcements weekly
  - Reiterate community guidelines in this virtual space also
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss



- A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: What do you think you want to do in your lifetime? (not who do you want to be)
    - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Assignment
    - Finish individual learning plans and submit on Teachable
    - Journal Entry 1: What do you think you want to do in your lifetime?
    - Journal entry 2: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
    - Weekly Images: See a photo, take a photo
      - With smartphones/film, capture whatever captures your eye and share your favorites in the group chat thread for feedback (film or digital versions)
      - Film cameras are provided for you
        - When you run out of film, we'll get them developed for you and create a photo wall/album full of student images
        - As they're developed, share the digital versions in the group chat
      - You're encouraged to take and submit whatever photos you want every week for your own practice and growth but it is not required to be that frequent
        - Submit something at least once a month
    - Complete module #1
- Week 2
  - Introductions for new comers
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Sharing images by a Black womxn photographer
    - Include images that represent Black girlhood/womanhood and cultural practices that promote healing and creativity like hair salon, jump rope, hand games, hopscotch etc.
  - Discuss module #1 on camera functions and operation tips for smartphone/film cameras (completed before meeting)
    - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor for the module
    - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands On Activity: Kahoot game to practice recognizing compositions, charades to identify which camera function is being engaged or searched for by person demonstrating the steps, etc.
    - Sample topics to include in module:

- Steady hand unless intentionally creating movement for desired effect
- Engaging grid lines
- Natural lighting tips
  - The importance of your subject facing the light source or in a consistent lighting setting such as overcast or a shadowed area
- Exposure (Aperture, Shutter Speed, ISO)
  - Focal points, tap to focus
- 10-15 mins completing simulations and adjusting/exploring phone settings
  - Break down simulations into short video clips separated by step where the student has to press next to move on after completing the task on their phone
- Composition
  - The most common compositions using images of/by Black womxn/girls
  - 10-15mins of games incorporated to have them practice recognizing these compositions
    - Ex: Add Hubs VR activity in module for them to practice naming them
  - Resources to explore more options of shot comps (ideally originally designed with more cultural relevance)
  - Video explaining how to practice shot compositions by exploring/photowalks
- Challenge: Explore a new place and take photos to document your experience. Show us this place through your eyes.
  - Use 5 different shot compositions in your images
  - Due next week
- Accountability partner: Where/what do you think you want to explore for your challenge photos and why?
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: Where/what do you think you want to explore for your challenge photos and why?
  - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
- Assignment

- Journal Entry 1: Where/what do you think you want to explore for your challenge photos and why?
  - Journal entry 2: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Challenge Submission: Explore a new place and take photos to document your experience. Show us this place through your eyes.
    - Use 5 different shot compositions in your images
    - Submit 5-10 of your challenge images to Teachable in a comment explaining where you took the photos and why in a few sentences
    - Due next week
  - Complete module #2
- **Week 3**
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Sharing student challenge images and providing feedback in a spreadsheet/group discussion using what do you see, think, and wonder protocol
      - Reiterate community guidelines
    - Instructors share written feedback on submission platform and a few comments during the discussion
  - Accountability Partner: Meet and discuss your experience taking photos to explore a new place. Submit this reflection as a journal entry by next session.
    - Did you like the place?
    - Did you run into any problems while taking photos?
    - What did you learn from taking these photos and exploring a new place?
    - Would you do anything differently?
  - Discuss module #2 on Vision Boarding Module
    - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
    - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands On Activity: Building a vision board as a class on a random concept
    - Sample topics to include in module:
      - The importance of clarity on your ideas before creating/shooting
      - Using pinterest or google slides to collage
  - Challenge: If you could create your own dream photoshoot or gallery of images, what would you want them to look like?
    - What would the theme be? Where would the images be taken? What would you take images of?
    - Create a vision board using pinterest or google slides to share with the class.

- Add the link to your pinterest board with a description of your idea to Teachable in a comment or Add the image of your google slide to teachable with a description of your idea in a comment
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: If you could create your own dream photoshoot or gallery of images, what would the theme be/who or what would you take photos of?
  - Reflect on your experience taking photos using compositions and exploring a new place
  - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
- Assignment
  - Journal Entry 1: Finish reflecting on your experience taking photos using compositions and exploring a new place. Submit to Teachable in a comment.
    - Did you like the place?
    - Did you run into any problems while taking photos?
    - What did you learn from taking these photos and exploring a new place?
    - Would you do anything differently?
  - Journal Entry 2: If you could create your own dream photoshoot or gallery of images, what would the theme be/who or what would you take photos of?
  - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Challenge submission: Vision board due in two weeks to Teachable
    - Instructor uploads submission to the padlet for in class warm up discussion
    - Students comment their feedback under the corresponding Padlet posts
  - Last week for your monthly “see a photo, take a photo” submission if you haven't already
    - Share in the group chat
  - Complete module #3

## October

- **Week 4**

- Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?

- Sharing images by a Black womxn photographer
  - Include images that represent Black girlhood/womanhood and cultural practices that promote healing and creativity like hair salon, jump rope, hand games, hopscotch etc.
  - Ex: Share vision board for SIMBY Presents: The Voices of Sisterly Affection and VR exhibit (let them explore)
- Discuss module #3 on examples of multiple Black womxn photographers and their work
  - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
  - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
  - Hands On Activity
    - 10min: Do you know any other Black womxn photographers?
      - If not, Google, search on instagram/socials, and find some images to share with us in the Padlet
      - Protocol for Discussion: Everyone shares one thing they find interesting in the images they found.
- Challenge: Complete vision boards and submit for next week
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: If you could follow a Black womxn photographer around for a week, who would it be and why?
  - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
- Assignment
  - Journal Entry: If you could follow a Black womxn photographer around for a week, who would it be and why?
  - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Challenge submission of vision boards. Submit to Teachable with a description of your idea.
  - Complete module #4
- **Week 5**
  - Warm Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Students share vision boards and receive written and oral feedback from peers and oral feedback from instructors
    - Written instructor feedback given later on submission

- Discuss module #4 on photo Storytelling, symbolism, and emotion that includes a breakdown of the types of photography
  - Landscape, Product, Portrait, Event, Concert, Sports, Food, Wedding, Fashion/editorial etc., Studio vs Outdoor photography
  - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
  - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
  - Hands On Activity: Writing a short story and then describing the image we would take to tell that story (type of photography, symbolic elements, subjects etc.)
- Challenge: If you were to tell a story about your home, neighborhood, school, or Philly, what type of images would you take and what locations, activities, or elements would be essential to include in these images? How would you include symbolism/emotion? Make another pinterest board/google slide to convey your ideas.
  - Indicate types of photography
  - Due Next Week
- Accountability Partner: Start discussing your home, neighborhood, school, or Philly with each other and some of the staple landmarks, activities, or elements you think you'd include.
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: What's something you love about your home/neighborhood/school/Philly and something you hate?
  - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
- Assignment
  - Journal Entry: What's something you love about your neighborhood and something you hate?
  - Weekly Journal entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Submit your vision boards with descriptions of your idea including: storyline, symbolism, emotion
  - Challenge submission due in three weeks
  - Review exercises (modules) as needed
- **Week 6**
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Sharing images by a Black womxn photographer

- Include images that represent Black girlhood/womanhood and cultural practices that promote healing and creativity like hair salon, jump rope, hand games, hopscotch etc.
    - Or share student vision boards again
  - Review exercises (modules)
    - Any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands on Activity if time permits
  - Accountability Partner: Continue discussing your home, neighborhood, school, or Philly photos. What story do you plan to tell about your neighborhood? When do you plan to shoot? What questions or concerns do you have?
    - Start writing your progress report responses in a journal entry.
  - Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
    - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: What story do you plan to tell about your neighborhood? When do you plan to shoot? What questions or concerns do you have?
  - Assignment
    - Challenge: Tell a story about your home, neighborhood, school, or Philly
      - Due in 2 weeks
    - Journal Entry: What story do you plan to tell about your neighborhood? When do you plan to shoot? What progress have you made so far? What questions or concerns do you have?
    - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
    - Catch up on whatever you need to
    - Research guest speaker and share a photo you like of theirs and explain why in the group chat
      - Think of questions based on your research that you'd like to ask the guest speaker next week and share in the group chat
      - Due by next session
- **Week 7**
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Sharing images by a Black womxn photographer
    - Include images that represent Black girlhood/womanhood and cultural practices that promote healing and creativity like hair salon, jump rope, hand games, hopscotch etc.
  - Guest Speaker (virtual or in-person)
    - Note taking protocol spreadsheet: Learn, Love, Inspired

- What did you learn, what did you love, and what inspired you about the conversation with our guest speaker?
    - Ask guest questions
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: takeaways from guest speaker
- Assignment
  - Challenge: Tell a story about your home, neighborhood, school, or Philly
    - Submit challenge photos with a description of your storyline, symbolism, and emotion to Teachable
  - Journal entry: Submit your notes from the talk using Learn, Love, and Inspired
    - What did you learn, what did you love, and what inspired you about the conversation with our guest speaker?
  - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Last week for your monthly “see a photo, take a photo” submission if you haven't already
    - Share in the group chat
  - Complete module #5

## November

- **Week 8**
  - Warm Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Students share images telling a story about their home/neighborhood/school/Philly and receive written and oral feedback from peers and oral feedback from instructors
    - Written instructor feedback given later on submission
  - Accountability Partner: Discuss your experience taking your images: Did you successfully execute your idea as you planned? What could you have done differently? What issues did you encounter? What questions do you still have?
  - Discuss module #5 photography and social change
    - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
      - Ex: Deb Willis
    - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands on Activity



- 10min: Search black hair on Google and share images in the padlet that come up
  - Discussion: How do you feel about the results?
- Sample topics to include in module:
  - What is social change?
  - What is the African Diaspora?
    - Video explaining the slave trade routes
    - Ex: Use NYU Prof. Amarilys Estrella as an instructor/voiceover
  - Include videos from the “Power of Photography” series by StrongBlackLens
  - Black experiences across the African diaspora through photos
  - How images documented Black struggles and truths to combat white supremacist narratives across the US
    - Emmitt Till
    - Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King use of press
    - Deb Willis books and exhibits
    - BLM protests 2020
  - Examples of Black womxn photographers combating social issues in their existence and creative works
  - Prompt discussion or reflection of the images and responses showing the international united struggle for freedom
  - What is participatory photography?
- Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that’s happening in their life that they want to discuss
  - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: Reflect on your photos. Did you successfully execute your story idea as you planned? What could you have done differently? What issues did you encounter? What questions do you still have?
  - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
- Assignment
  - Journal Entry 1: Reflect on your photos. Did you successfully execute your story idea as you planned? What could you have done differently? What issues did you encounter? What questions do you still have?
  - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Complete module #6

- **Week 9-10**
  - Take two weeks to write pitches, record and edit students explaining their images and the problems they represent
    - Instructor will be trained on video editing or receive support from SIMBY/PSTV
  - Accountability Partner: Discuss some examples of social issues? What social issues do you feel your images highlight?
  - Discuss module #6: Plea to State Reps
    - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
    - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands on Activity
    - Sample topics to include in module:
      - What is local govt, state reps, council members?
        - Visualization of govt ecosystem (city, state, country)
      - Simulation showing how to research a state rep
      - What is a pitch and how to write one?
      - Video tips for recording on camera
  - Activity: Research your state rep and submit their name, address, phone number, and key issues in a document to teachable
  - Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
    - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: What are some examples of social issues? What social issues do you feel your images highlight?
    - Who is your state rep? How do you feel about them so far?
    - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Assignment
    - Journal Entry 1: What are some examples of social issues? What social issues do you feel your images highlight?
    - Journal Entry 2: Write your 30 second-1 minute pitch to your state rep.
    - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
    - Catch up on whatever you need to
    - Research guest speaker and share a photo you like of theirs and explain why in the group chat
      - Think of questions based on your research that you'd like to ask the guest speaker next week and share in the group chat

- **Week 11 (Guest Speaker connected to social change)**
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Sharing images by a Black womxn photographer
    - Include images that represent Black girlhood/womanhood and cultural practices that promote healing and creativity like hair salon, jump rope, hand games, hopscotch etc.
  - Guest Speaker (virtual or in-person)
    - Note taking protocol spreadsheet: Learn, Love, Inspired
      - What did you learn, what did you love, and what inspired you about the conversation with our guest speaker?
    - Ask guest questions
  - Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
    - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: takeaways from guest speaker
  - Assignment
    - Journal entry: Submit your notes from the talk using Learn, Love, and Inspired
      - What did you learn, what did you love, and what inspired you about the conversation with our guest speaker?
    - Weekly Journal Entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
    - Last week for your monthly “see a photo, take a photo” submission if you haven't already
      - Share in the group chat
    - Complete module #7

## December (self portraits)

- **Week 12**
  - Warm-Up: What do you see, think, and wonder?
    - Share state rep video pitch with class
    - Develop plan for instructors to send the video to state reps on their behalf and offer for them to come into the club after winter break
  - Discuss module #7: Self Portraits and basic set design
    - Black womxn photographer or industry professional as the instructor
    - Review and any questions, concerns, comments from students
    - Hands on Activity
  - Accountability Partner: Discuss the ideas you have for your self portraits.

- Start discussing where you're going to shoot and some props you'll include.
  - Community circle: group conversation about highlights/takeaways from the lesson, something photo related they want to share, or anything that's happening in their life that they want to discuss
    - A question prompts discussion that is also the journal entry: What's something you love about yourself? These things can be physical, about your personality, your background, anything you want.
    - How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
  - Assignment
    - Journal Entry: What are five things that you love about yourself? These things can be physical, about your personality, your background, anything you want.
    - Weekly Journal entry: How was your week? How are you really? What happened in your life this week? What do you want next week to look like?
    - Submit your vision boards to teachable with descriptions of your idea including: storyline, symbolism, emotion next week
    - Challenge tell a story about yourself using self portraits due in three weeks
    - Complete module #8
- **Week 13 (share vision boards and plan for the shoot, explore lighting tips)**
- **Week 14 (progress report on shoot)**
- **Week 15 (submissions/sharing)**

### **Semester 2: 22 weeks (spring break and last two weeks of school not included)**

- **January**
  - Winter break, catching up on life
    - Share any photos you took of family, events, christmas lights etc.
  - What social issues do your self portraits highlight?
    - Ex: Send self portraits/class portraits of students to state reps to advocate for the passing of the Crown Act in PA
  - What other social issues would you combat using photography? Vision board
- **February**
  - Indoor Photoshoot: Portraits of one another in program (class photos) using studio lighting techniques
  - Class decides location and set design
  - Lighting shootout to practice set ups and help with the decision making
- **March/April/May**
  - Outdoor photos: Portraits, sports, landscape, real estate/architecture

- Indoor photos: real estate, product, food, fashion/editorial
- Field trips/photowalks/workshops
  - Some photowalks/workshops can be done in the school building
- Students conduct original projects and peer teaching presentations based on their chosen type of photography
- **May/June**
  - Editing photos and preparing for the end of year exhibit
  - Promoting, budgeting, event planning, and display set up done by instructor/sponsor and SIMBY professionals
  - Addressing the difficulties for up and coming photographers to showcase their work in notable spaces like museums and galleries
    - Importance of creating our own opportunities and collaborating to do so

### Logic Model

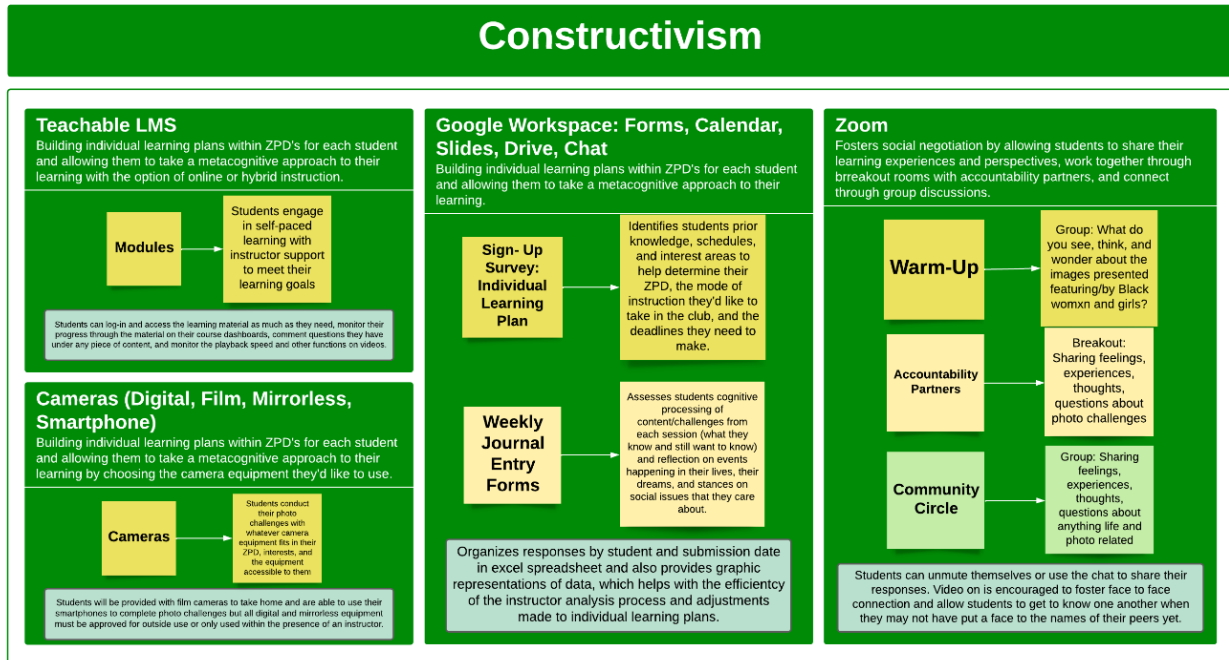


| Outcomes - Short-Term   |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Learners will practice using photo skills/concepts through gamification and explorative activities: self expression, capturing memories, documenting their communities, basic camera functions, basic editing | Learners will be able to track their progress through weekly feedback on their exploration images  | Learners will choose a social issue impacting them and their communities, get to know who their state rep is, and decide how they can use photography to impact change in their communities regarding this issue | Learners will use photography as a medium to discuss and be informed on Black experiences across the African diaspora and beyond present day | Learners will walk away with a community of like-minded peers and mentors of support in their photography journeys | Learners will identify examples of Black womxn photographers  | Learners will gain diverse hands-on experience as photographers in professional settings, recall the various types of photography available to practice, and walk away with community service experience | Learners will create photo narratives to tell Black stories  |
|   | Learners will practice skills for self-paced learning in photography that include scheduling, planning, research, and creative decision making |  | Learners will weigh options to improve their photos based on timely feedback from peers and instructors                                      | Learners will start to build self-awareness of knowledge construction through reflexivity and metacognition        | Learners will be able to practice methods to protect themselves from excessive blue light exposure and Zoom fatigue |  | Learners will reflect on their experience in a learning environment that prioritized their representation and cultural relevance |

| Outcomes - Mid-Term   |   |  |   | Outcomes - Long-Term   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Learners will be motivated to pursue photography as a career option, long term mode of creative expression, or area of further study after experiencing a sense of belonging in this club | Learners will share their experience in the program and recruit more of their peers to join | Learners will transfer knowledge of basic photography skills across types of photography and cameras (smartphone/film/DSLR/mirrorless) | Learners will develop an idea of the types of photography that interest them and conduct further study/practice | Learners will use the examples of Black womxn photographers engaging social change in their work as inspiration for their own future projects for change | Learners will seek other photo learning opportunities and experiences | Learners will be able to refresh their knowledge using their access to the program modules, materials, and contacts | Learners will develop self esteem in their academics and future careers due to this experience that provided them a sense of belonging as Black girls | Learners will use problem solving and critical thinking skills to confront social discourse surrounding the negative ideas they're fed about life and their capabilities as Black girls | Learners will develop a habit of creating community, discussions, and learning opportunities with/for Black womxn/girls in other environments | Learners will continue journaling to work through their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and dreams | Learners will further develop "what if" thinking using creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving to envision and seek social change |

| Context   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Black girls face inaccessibility, underrepresentation, and a lack of cultural relevance in photography programming and traditional learning experiences</li> <li>•Black children's voices are devalued in society, at school, and at home</li> <li>•Black girls face adultification in schools and other issues specific to their identity that should be prioritized in discussions and considered in the creation of learning environments</li> <li>•Arts programming is a way for Black youth to develop their voices and advocate for social change</li> <li>•Due to the pandemic and shift to virtual learning, students may be experiencing Zoom fatigue and an increased exposure to blue light</li> <li>•Students have a variety of dismissal times, limited key card swipes on public transportation, and personal obligations outside of school. Programming should be brought to them.</li> <li>•Students are in need of Black history learning that extends beyond pain and North America to empowerment, creativity, and knowledge of the African diaspora</li> <li>•Exploration, travel, and fun are essential to youth learning environments, especially for those of color and from impoverished communities</li> <li>•In SIMBY's previous club, students engaged most in discussions, expressing their appreciation for being able to speak and contribute to the learning environment with their perspectives and opinions</li> <li>•Currently, students face safety concerns due to Philly's gun violence epidemic during the deadliest year in the city's history</li> <li>•Participation by youth of color in arts programming can enhance awareness of social injustice and increase engagement in social action</li> <li>•PSTV flooded and has no equipment, programming must be virtual or conducted within school media hubs</li> <li>•There are district and school wide events throughout the year that require photography coverage that should provide opportunities for students to gain professional experience</li> </ul> |

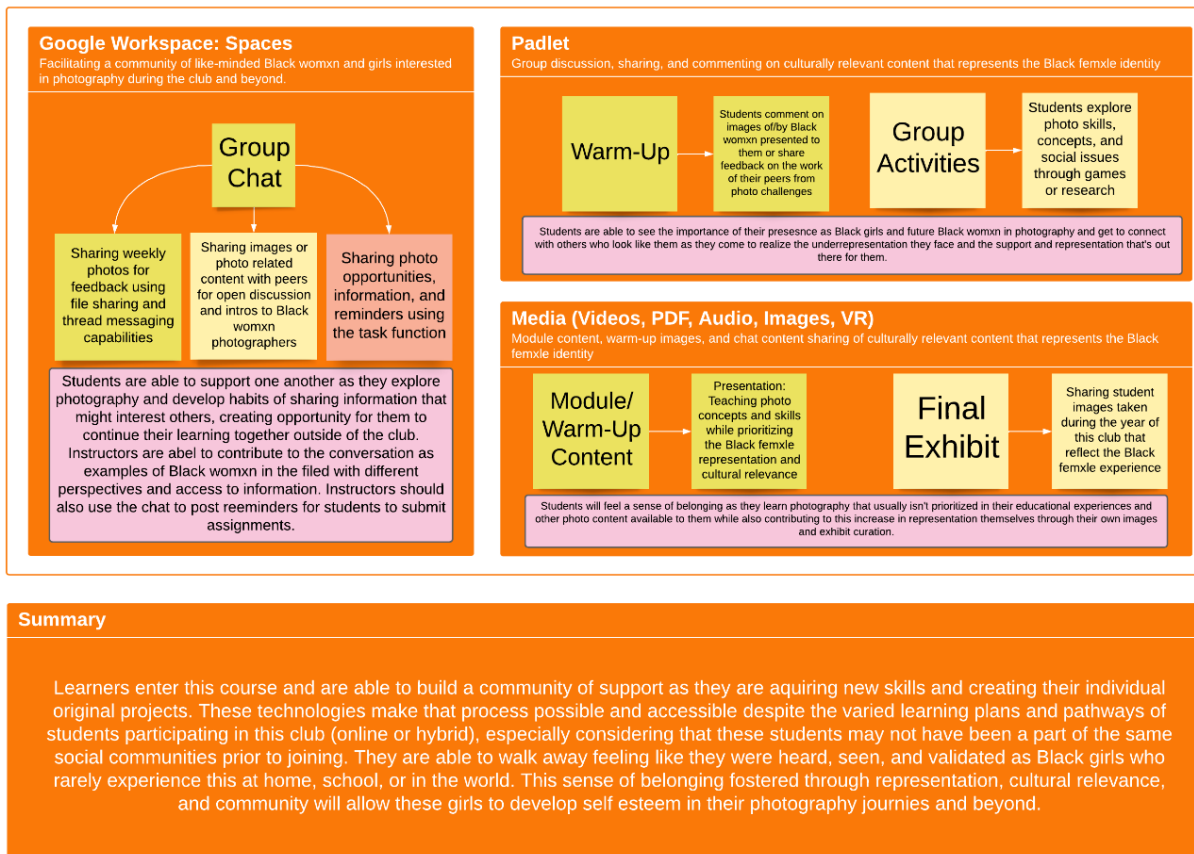
## Tech Rationale



### Summary

Each student is entering this learning experience with their own experiences, skillsets, and expectations of what they wish to get out of this club. These technologies allow them to share that information with instructors who will help them develop an individual learning plan that combines industry standards and individual interests where they can assess what they know and what they still would like to know every week of the club, especially after hands-on learning within photo challenges. They will also be able to engage in social negotiation with their instructors and peers during club meetings to contribute other perspectives and support to their learning process. Multiple modes of learning are provided through the hybrid or online options and the choice of cameras. Also, knowing that some students may not have access to certain equipment, the club provides cameras and other equipment needed to complete the photo challenges.

## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



The guiding theoretical frameworks of this learning design will include Constructivism, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Participatory Photography, and Hybrid Learning:

**Constructivism:** Constructivism argues that every learner comes to a learning environment with knowledge based on how they've made sense of their experiences in the world. Therefore, they're not empty vessels but "active organisms seeking meaning" (Driscoll 387). As such, they "identify and pursue their own learning goals." This allows learners to be motivated to learn through "meaningful activity" and to self-regulate their progress through independent study (Driscoll 390-391). This dynamic calls for a learner analysis to determine what skills they need to reach their desired learning goal, if they have those prerequisite skills, what their zone of proximal development is, and what scaffolding is needed by an instructor to provide just enough help to coach them through the learning process. This guidance is not just provided for those who lack prerequisite skills, but also to "persuade those who are unwilling or unmotivated to engage in instruction" (Driscoll 392). In a constructivist environment, "problem solving,



reasoning, critical thinking, and the active and reflective use of knowledge” are the goals and certain conditions should be in place to support this (Driscoll 393). Those conditions include:

- 1) A learning environment that is complex and relevant to teach the learner to deal with complexity in real life situations.
- 2) Social negotiation is fostered where students not only collaborate on projects and share their knowledge with one another, but they also put their minds together to solve a problem that would otherwise go unsolved. Also, the environment provides an opportunity for learners to understand points of views that are different from their own.
- 3) There are multiple perspectives and multiple modes of learning represented; The same content is revisited at “different times, in rearranged contexts, for different purposes, and from different conceptual perspectives” and it’s viewed through “different sensory modes (such as visual, auditory, or tactile)” allowing different aspects of it to be seen.
- 4) The learner has ownership in their learning, not just determining what they want to learn but also how and when. Therefore, they aren’t “passive recipients of instruction that has been designed for them. Instead, they are actively involved in determining what their own learning needs are and how those needs can best be satisfied.” If students are incapable of making these decisions on their own, instructors are to provide some guidance, help, hints, advice, or an organizational theme.
- 5) Self-awareness of knowledge construction is promoted through reflexivity (a student’s awareness of their role in the knowledge construction process) and metacognition (an awareness of their own thoughts and learning processes). This creates a critical mindset within learners on what structures create meaning for them that allows them to “come to realize how a particular set of assumptions or worldview shapes their knowledge” and are “free to explore what may result from” an alternative.

(Driscoll 394-401)

Learners in this design will have ownership over their learning goals by declaring them through an individual learning plan (ILP) constructed with instructor help as needed. They’ll also be able to choose their photo challenge topics from a few options or completely on their own. They’ll also decide how they can best meet their goals, either virtually, in-person, hyflex, or in a hybrid model depending on their personal obligations and schedules. Students will have access to support and scaffolding from instructors, time for reflexivity and metacognition through peer discussions and journaling, and access to challenges and travel experiences to test their photography knowledge in real-life scenarios. Learning will be conducted through visual, auditory, and tactile instruction. The implementation of social negotiation will exist beyond accountability partners and group discussions to include collaboration on photo challenges, peer teaching on types of photography, and opportunities to help one another during school or district wide live events that they sign up to shoot.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs:** Every human being is motivated to make decisions and there are theories on how we arrive at those decisions. Expectancy-value theories are a type of motivation

theories that describe the cognitive process or mental calculation that we go through in making decisions that are achievement based. This cognitive process includes two components: “expectancy refers to the likelihood that a particular choice will result in a particular outcome; value is the perceived benefit of that outcome.” It recognizes both the positive value of success and the negative value of failure (Martinez 165). One type of expectancy-value theory is Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs that also considers motivation beyond chances of success and failure to include the value we place on consequences. In this theory, Maslow argues that there’s an order of priority within human needs and every person must fulfill them in order to reach self actualization, which is the “rare instance...a person reaches his or her highest potential as a human being.” These needs are categorized in order of importance as 1) physiological, 2) safety, 3) social and belongingness, 4) self-esteem, and 5) self-actualization. As the lower needs are met, the higher needs rise in importance and focus. According to Martinez, “The need for self-esteem probably motivates a significant degree of effort in academic and career success. But if a learner’s more basic needs are not met, then activities motivated by self-esteem will not be important” (Martinez 166). As learners are tasked with activities that require self-esteem, in order for them to see themselves as capable of completing these activities they must feel a sense of belongingness in the learning environment. Our photo club places belongingness at the forefront of our design as we recognize their identity in the learning content and foster representation amongst their peers and instructors as a demographic composed of Black womxn and girls all interested in the same thing; photography.

**Participatory Photography:** As reference earlier in this paper:

“Participatory photography (PP) is a methodology or tool to engage community members in creatively making change to improve their environments by using photography; it blends a grassroots approach and social action. PP is a type of participatory action research which involves engaging communities in actively examining together current conditions which they experience as problematic in order to improve it.” (Participatory Photography)

This method is broken down into 3 phases that can be done in any order or configurations and even overlap if needed. Those three phases are: 1) Sustainable Investment: Community Engagement & Preparation 2) Capturing the Environment: PP Data Collection & Analysis 3) Call to Action: PP Dissemination & Social Change/Action.

The activities in this photo club include photo challenges where students are prompted to take photos of themselves, others, their homes, their neighborhood, their school, or Philadelphia at large. The images captured are a part of the data collection process of participatory photography. Accompanying these images will be reflections and discussions on social issues that are reflected visually and brainstorming on ways change can be made, which incorporates the sustainable investment phase of this model. State representatives will then be contacted with their images and pitches to initiate change in their communities with a call to action.

**Hybrid Learning:** Doug Bonderud describes Hybrid learning as a learning model that “uses online components for teaching and learning that replaces face-to-face classroom time.” Since the pandemic, it has evolved to include ‘having students at home part time and in class part time’ or having “certain grade groups home full time and allow younger children to return in person.” With this model, it’s important to consider that it’s only effective if educators are technologically savvy and the internet access is reliable. So that means both in-school and at-home wifi has to be accessible and measures to ensure this should be put in place. This model is seen as a lasting change to education that should be embraced, especially considering the hesitation some parents may have about their children getting vaccinated (Bonderud).

This photo club will require students who sign up to have reliable access to the internet and will give them the option to attend synchronous sessions on Zoom or in-person if they are available. If not, they can follow along with interactive modules to keep up with the content and reach out to the instructors for guidance as needed. And if possible, they can attend the scheduled in-person trips such as photowalks to expand their photography knowledge. As an alternative, they can also complete the activities covered in these photowalks on their own time and in different locations if they wish to make up for an absence or continue their learning.

The stakeholders of this learning design include Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY), The Philadelphia School District’s TV Station (PSTV), Philadelphia area middle schools, and Black girls signing up for this photo club. As a result of this hybrid interactive hands-on learning experience led by Black womxn and designed specifically for Black girls, financial and temporal access to offerings, limited photography experiences available to them, representation in the demographic and content, and social change on issues impacting their livelihood will be addressed for Black girls in photography. In an affluent white and male dominated field and a world that doesn’t consider their needs or perspectives, Black girls who attend this photo club will walk away empowered through their voices, their identity, and their creative skill sets.

### **Concept Testing: LoFi Prototype of an Online Module and Follow Up Interviews**

My concept testing with Black girls who’ve expressed interest in photography aimed to address three of my riskiest assumptions: students are experiencing scheduling conflicts when choosing clubs to participate in, students will interact with online modules for an after-school club post quarantine, and students will complete work alone on their own time during the week. The goal of the club is to spend more time hands on, answering questions, and building community in meetings than forcing them to sit through lessons after a long day at school. Their engagement is not high at that point in the day in general and then the presentation of technical concepts is not as lively as other components to photography learning such as exploration, learning by doing, and observing other photographers. To test this concept, I created a lofi

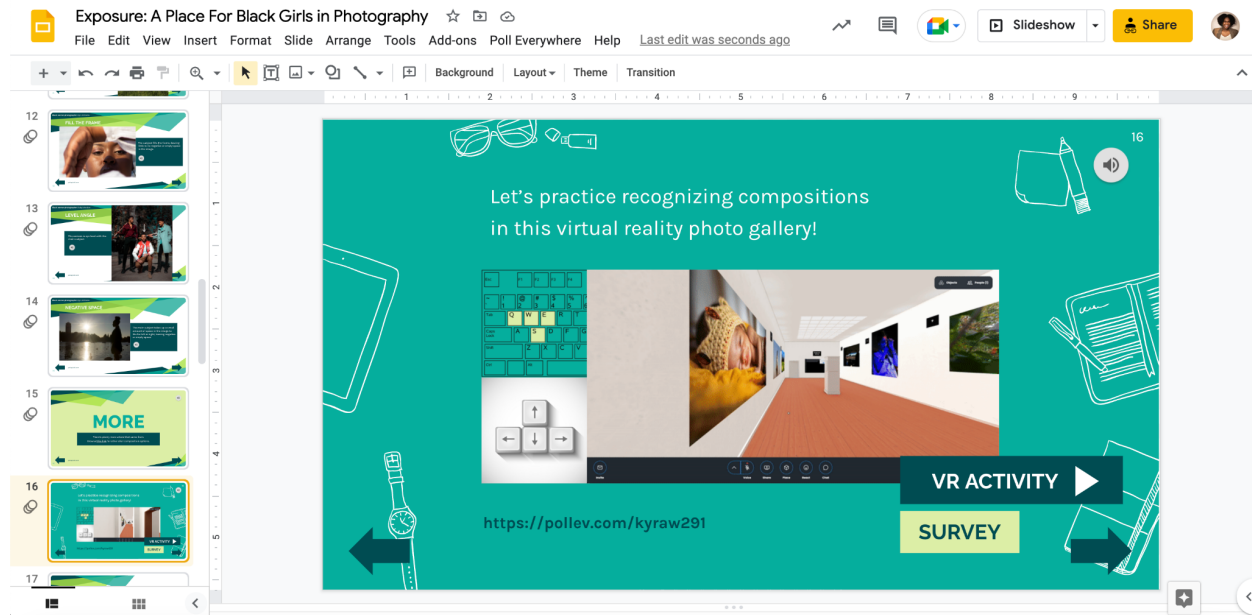
prototype of an online module for students to engage with covering the concept of composition. I imported a SlidesCarnival template into Google slides and added voiceover audio, interactive buttons for navigation, text, GIFs, images by me and Ruby Johnston, hyperlinks, music, and a VR activity via Hubs by Mozilla that included a PollEverywhere survey to practice recognizing compositions with new images which I also took myself. Throughout this process, I utilized Mayer's Multimedia Principles (Mayer & Fiorella).

Here's a look at this lofi prototype:

The image displays two screenshots of a Google Slides presentation titled "Exposure: A Place For Black Girls in Photography".

The top screenshot shows slide 2, titled "WHAT DO YOU SEE, THINK, & WONDER?". The slide content includes a speech bubble with three dots, a collage of fashion photographs by Renell Medrano featuring subjects Venus and Serena Williams, and a navigation bar with left and right arrows. The text at the bottom of the slide reads: "2 Photographer: [Renell Medrano](#) x Subjects: [Venus](#) and [Serena Williams](#)".

The bottom screenshot shows slide 10, titled "SYMMETRY". The slide content includes a large image of a suspension bridge, a text box explaining symmetry: "Evenly dividing the the frame in half (horizontally or vertically) to create a mirrored effect.", and a navigation bar with left and right arrows. The text at the bottom of the slide reads: "10 petapixel.com".

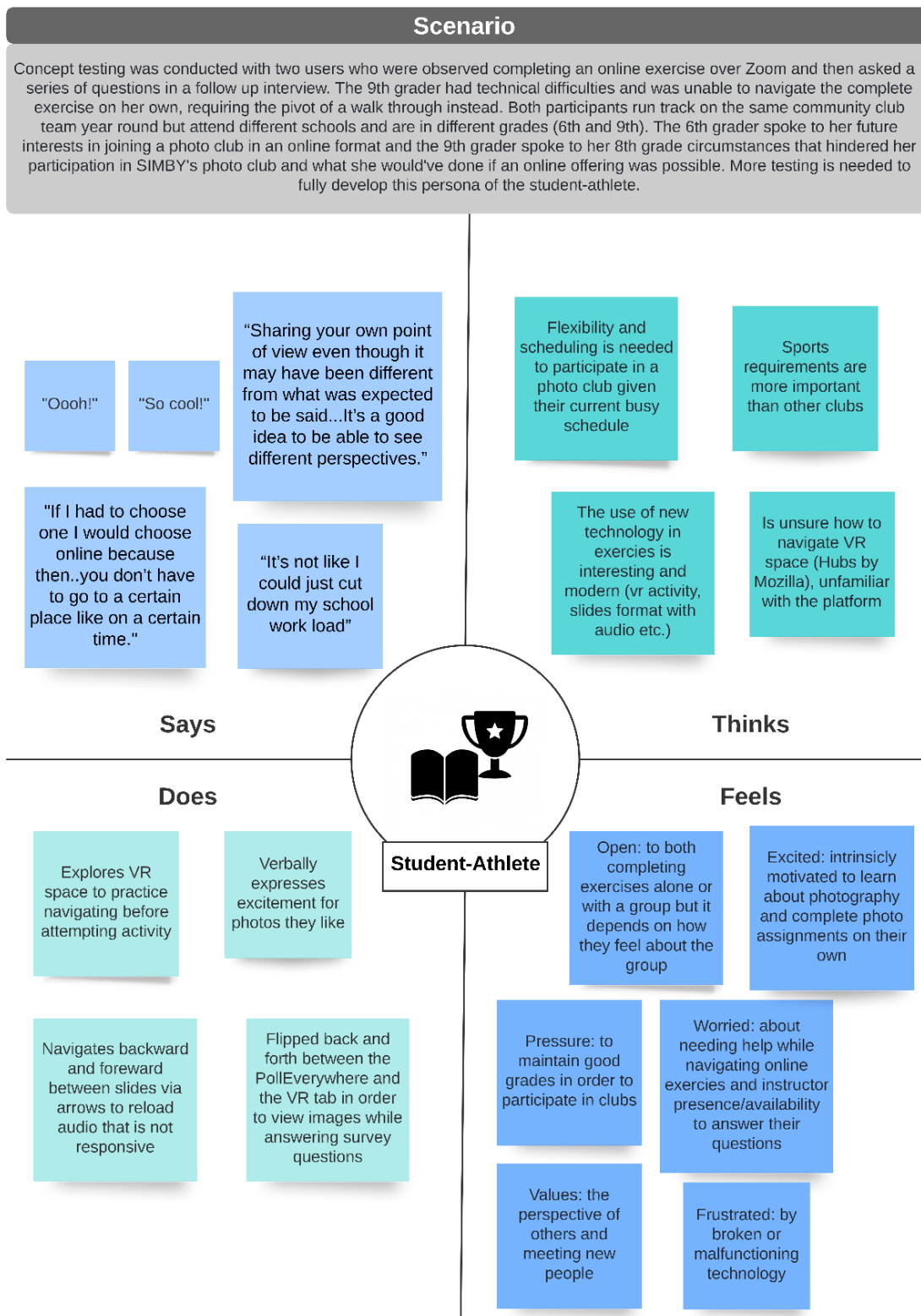


I was only able to secure two testing participants after pivoting from my original testing plan which was a survey that I sent out to educators inquiring about the after school club participation of Black girls in Philadelphia middle schools and their interest in a photography offering. Due to minimum survey participation of only four responses, a short timeline, and the realization that I had already proven interest with SIMBY's past photography club, I shifted to an observation as users navigated an exercise and a follow up interview. The first participant was a 6th grader and the other was a 9th grader who had previously expressed interest in joining SIMBY's photo club last year but was unable to participate due to other after school activities. Although not ideal, I have a personal connection with both girls and this presents bias even though honesty was conveyed to them as a key virtue in this test.

The first user was successfully able to navigate the exercise on her own but was unable to use her phone for the survey that corresponded with the VR activity, causing her to struggle as she flipped back and forth between the activity and PollEverywhere to come up with answers to the questions. The second participant also experienced challenges with technology, having unstable wifi and the inability to successfully share her screen on Zoom as she navigated the exercise on her iPad. She attempted to do so for a portion but ultimately I had to walk her through the activity and ended up having more of a conversation with her to unpack her thoughts on the VR photos.

Despite these hiccups that exemplify the importance of a stable internet as well as an LMS with this design that allows for the creation of multiple choice questions in modules and better tablet compatibility, both participants still demonstrated overlap in their responses and actions. They both shared experiences and challenges that they face, which point to online

components to a photo club offering as a solution. Here is an aggregated empathy map featuring the student-athlete persona that is currently forming but in need of more testing to validate:



Although my original concept testing method was inconclusive due to educators not being responsive to my outreach communications, the four responses that I collected via a branched Qualtrics survey provided insight into students' unfamiliarity with completing work for a club outside of their weekly meetings. It also showed that students may already have one or two clubs to attend that meet weekly for an hour, starting immediately after school between 3:00pm and 3:30pm. This would make a photo club number two or three for them. With this knowledge, a design that is more considerate of students' schedules is needed.

### **Refinement and Usability: Minimum Viable Product (MVP)**

I was unable to conduct usability tests with a more hi-fi model for this revised design due to time constraints after pivoting with my entire concept testing plan. However, I was able to begin developing a minimum viable product (MVP) using the free tier of Teachable as the learning management system (LMS) for this club. This platform was the most affordable and secure option that included useful advanced features such as dashboards with progress metrics, a private student community, embedded quizzes, the ability to drip content, theme customization, and comment monitoring. In the future when there's a budget, an annual subscription between \$348 and \$3,000 will be used to engage some of these key features and advanced metrics that are offered to collect learning analytics data that will aid in our evaluation of this club's success.

As indicated in our lo-fi concept tests, instructor support is a concern for students. To address that, this design will now include the use of Teachable's coaching feature to allow students to check in with instructors one-on-one as needed, which will be a relationship that begins when students join and are developing their individual learning plans to map out their engagement in the photo club. They'll be able to create a schedule, set milestones, and send private messages with their instructor in between sessions to ensure they're meeting their specified goals.

Both testing participants also pointed out that they would complete the extra work for this club on top of her school work because they signed up. This points to the presence of intrinsic motivation within students joining this club that will allow them to push themselves to participate. With that understanding, intrinsic motivation is a prerequisite for Exposure in order for students to keep track of their individual learning plans, which may be absent if students are forced to sign up by their parents or teachers.

Specifically regarding user two, it was pointed out that the compositions that she recognized in the VR activity varied from those intended as the correct answers in the PollEverywhere survey. Her observation challenged me to include multiple right answers in the multiple choice activities or allow open ended responses for students to explain their choices.

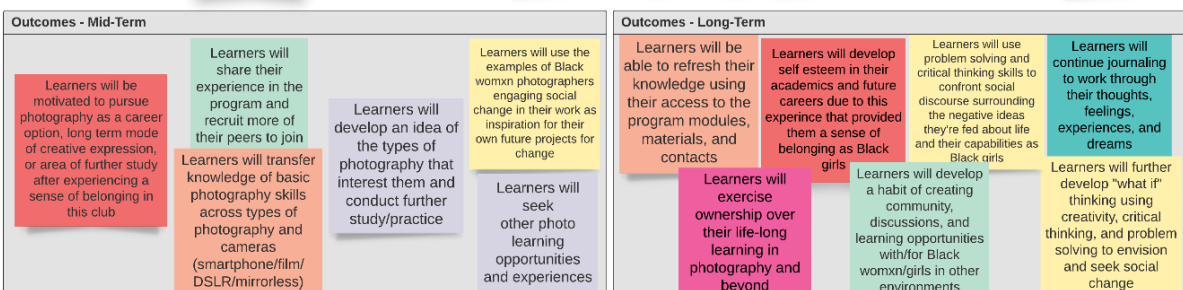
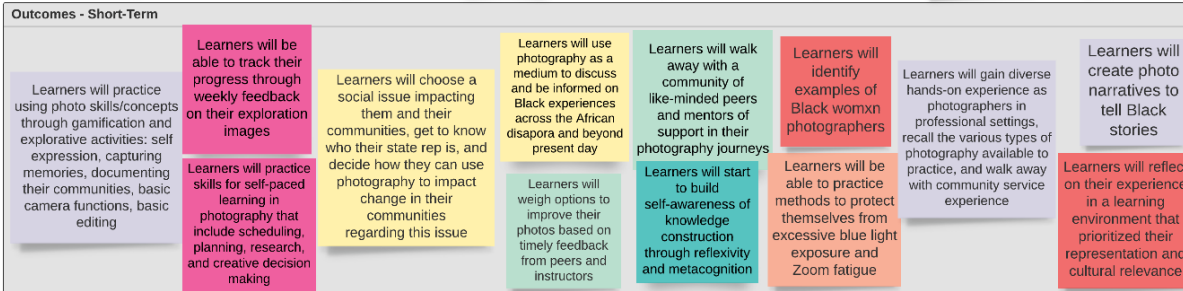
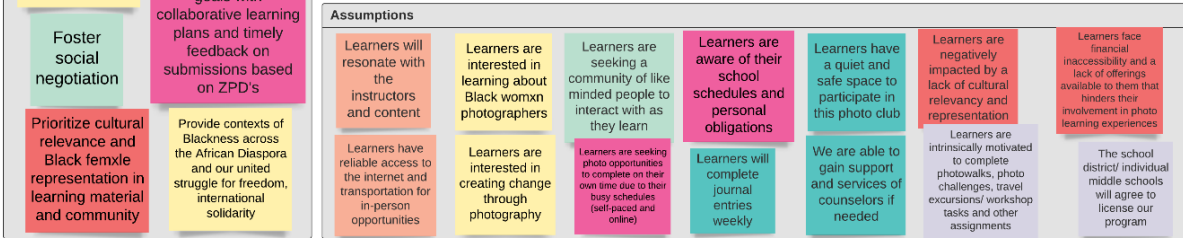
Another key pivot is the shift from a school year-round design to a calendar year-round design. During interviews, students placed emphasis on maintaining good grades while also having to juggle their current club commitments. This problem pointed to the need of a program where students aren't adding too much to their already packed schedules. Otherwise, students will opt to disregard their creative interests. This calls for a more stripped down design where students are able to spread out their exercises and challenges during the school year after learning the more technical concepts in the summer that are required pre-training for engagement in the club. This lean and more relaxed school year plan will include more time for trips, hands on activities, guest speakers, and a discussion series for students to unpack photography in relation to media and social issues. Those unable to attend in the summer who join in the fall and those who come along in the spring will have the opportunity to complete the technical exercises in the first six weeks of the semester to catch up while still being able to engage in discussions and activities with those in the group who have already completed the required exercises. They will be able to start with whatever challenge is designated for their beginning semester and make their way through the cycle of completing them all, starting with their smartphone and film cameras and progressing to DSLR or mirrorless cameras. No matter the challenges they begin with, they'll still engage in participatory photography and be prompted to connect their images to social issues that will later be presented to their state representatives.

Here's an updated logic model and an overview of how the entire photo club has been redesigned into semesters:

**Mission:** Led by Black womxn, Exposure is a free year-round hybrid photo club designed for Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY) that is created to introduce Black girls in Philadelphia area middle schools to photography as a medium to tell their stories, find their voices, implement change, discover meaning in life, develop a possible career, and build community with others in an environment that supports their personal, social, and creative development.



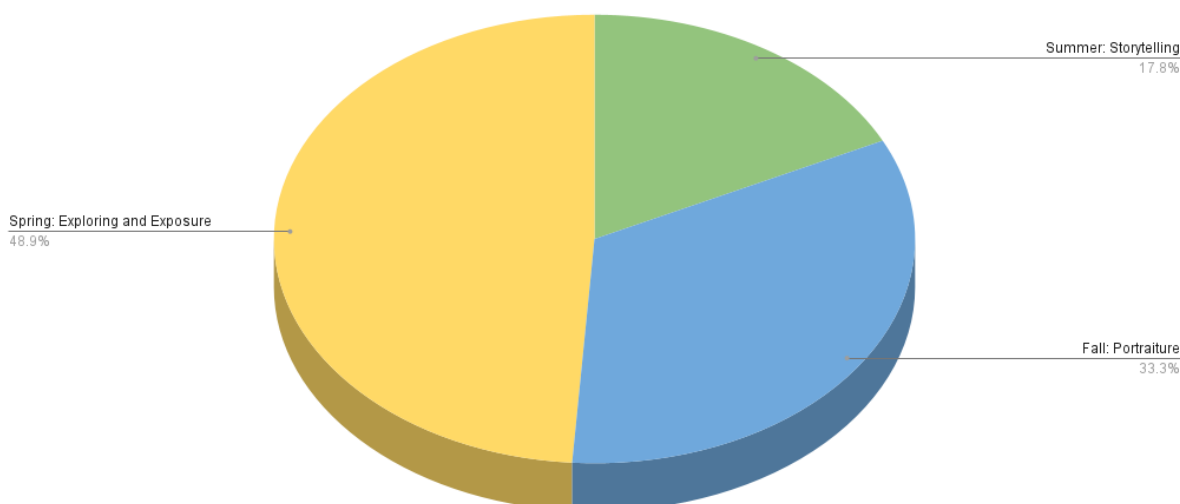
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**Context**

- Black girls face inaccessibility, underrepresentation, and a lack of cultural relevance in photography programming and traditional learning experiences
- Black children's voices are devalued in society, at school, and at home
- Black girls face adultification in schools and other issues specific to their identity that should be prioritized in discussions and considered in the creation of learning environments
- Arts programming is a way for Black youth to develop their voices and advocate for social change
- Due to the pandemic and shift to virtual learning, students may be experiencing Zoom fatigue and an increased exposure to blue light
- Students have a variety of dismissal times, limited key card swipes on public transportation, and personal obligations outside of school. Programming should be brought to them.
- Students are in need of Black history learning that extends beyond pain and North America to empowerment, creativity, and knowledge of the African diaspora
- Exploration, travel, and fun are essential to youth learning environments, especially for those of color and from impoverished communities
- In SIMBY's previous club, students engaged most in discussions, expressing their appreciation for being able to speak and contribute to the learning environment with their perspectives and opinions
- Currently, students face safety concerns due to Philly's gun violence epidemic during the deadliest year in the city's history
- Participation by youth of color in arts programming can enhance awareness of social injustice and increase engagement in social action
- PSTV flooded and has no equipment, programming must be virtual or conducted within school media hubs
- There are district and school wide events throughout the year that require photography coverage that should provide opportunities for students to gain professional experience
- Students face scheduling conflicts and are worried about maintaining good grades, which hinders their ability to participate in clubs (specifically student-athletes who are forced to sacrifice arts exploration)

## Exposure: Semester Breakdown



- **Summer: Storytelling (8 weeks)**
  - Telling stories about a new place (ex: summer vacays) and neighborhood/city/school/home to pitch to state representatives for social change with six exercises (modules) total.
- **Fall: Portraiture (15 weeks)**
  - Capturing self portraits and class portraits for the club with interactive activities such as workshops and photowalks, guest speaker, reading/watching/viewing of media, discussions and a field trip requiring two exercises (modules) total.
- **Spring: Exploration and Exposure (22 weeks)**
  - Exploring types of photography with field trips, workshops, guest speakers, reading/watching/viewing of media, and discussions followed by planning for the city-wide exhibit at the end of the school year requiring two exercises (modules) total. While planning, the struggle for exposure for up and coming talent, the importance of creating your own opportunities and building creative community will be emphasized.

Here is an outline of the design that includes the summer and fall weekly plan and an overview of the spring:

**Summer:** Students will be recruited before the end of their school year in June.

**Week 1: Warm up** (What do you see, think and wonder?) sharing photos they took in a five minute exercise and introducing themselves to the group. Housekeeping like community guidelines, accountability partners, group chat, and then community circle.

Assignment: Complete exercise 1 and write a journal entry on your summer plans.

**Week 2:** Warm up (What do you see, think and wonder?), Review Exercise 1 on photography basics and take a photowalk as a group to simulate how to complete the challenge assignment.

Assignment: Submit challenge photos exploring a new place using at least five different compositions, complete exercise 2, and write a journal entry describing where you went to take your challenge photos and a reflection on your experience.

**Week 3:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Using challenge photo submissions, Feedback with protocol, Accountability partners discuss how it was exploring a new place, Review Exercise 2 on vision boarding and complete a group activity creating one together on a random topic, community circle.

Assignment: Complete exercise 3, submit a vision board, and write a journal entry detailing your dream photoshoot that this vision board reflects.

**Week 4:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Sharing vision boards. Review Exercise 3 on storytelling, symbolism etc., Accountability partners discuss the stories they'd tell about their neighborhood and how. Community circle.

Assignment: Complete exercise 4, create a vision board and journal entry describing the story you'd like to tell about your home/neighborhood/school/city.

**Week 5:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Review Exercise 4 on Black womxn photographers. Complete photoshoot plans and share with accountability partner. Community circle.

Assignment: Take challenge photos telling your story and submit a journal entry explaining what you were able to capture and why you captured it.

**Week 6:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Presenting challenge images that tell a story about your home/neighborhood/school/city, Feedback with protocol, Accountability partners discuss their experience taking their photos. Community circle.

Assignment: Complete exercise 5 and write a journal entry reflecting on your experience taking you challenge photos.

**Week 7:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Share vision board and VR exhibit for SIMBY Presents: The Voices of Sisterly Affection, Review Exercise 5 on photography and social change referencing SIMBY exhibit emphasis on Philly's Black music herstory. Group activity looking up Black hair and discussing the portrayed images. Community circle discussing social issues important to them.

Assignment: Complete exercise 6 (students will research state reps as a part of this) and write a journal entry on a social issue you'd like to tackle through photography and exploring the social issues your challenge images may already represent.

**Week 8:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Review Exercise 6 Plea to State Rep and spend time writing 30sec pitches. Sharing pitches with accountability partners and then

submitting. Community circle reflection on the photo club and next steps that will be taken on their behalf with state reps, and option to continue on with this club during the school year.

Assignment: Write and submit a final journal entry reflecting on your experience in this club.

**Fall:** New students can complete exercises 1-6 by week 7 without completing challenges 1 and 2 from the summer.

**Week 1:** Introductions warm up activity sharing student images taken in five minutes, community guidelines, individual learning plan writing and scheduling a coaching session, accountability partner matching, group chat formation, and community circle

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 2:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A for new students, group activity practicing compositions with a photowalk around the school, sharing thoughts with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 3:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A for new students, guest speaker with notetaking and Q&A

Assignment: Submit notes, journal entry

**Week 4:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A for new students, group activity or media to watch/read, sharing thoughts with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 5:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A for new students, photowalk to a new place, sharing thoughts and images with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 6:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A for new students, group activity or media to watch/read, sharing thoughts with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 7:** Workshop on capturing moving subjects where students participate in staple Black girl hobbies such as jump rope, hand games, etc.

Assignment: Complete self portraits exercise for next session and journal entry.

**Week 8:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A on self portraits, group workshop with live demonstration on taking self portraits, sharing thoughts with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Submit vision board and journal entry next week

**Week 9:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Using student vision boards, feedback with protocol, review Q&A on self portraits and completing a photoshoot plan worksheet, sharing plans with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Submit photoshoot plan and journal entry for next week

**Week 10:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, time to complete self portraits or do a test run, sharing progress reports with accountability partners, community circle discussion  
Assignment: Submit self portrait challenge photos for next week.

**Week 11:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? using submitted student self portraits, feedback with protocol, sharing reflection with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry reflecting on experience with self portraits and complete studio photography exercise.

**Week 12:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A on studio photography, group workshop with live demonstration of a photoshoot, sharing thoughts with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Submit vision board and journal entry

**Week 13:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder?, review Q&A on studio photography, group activity to come up with a collective vision board based on individual ideas, completing a photoshoot plan worksheet together, sharing thoughts/feelings with accountability partners, community circle discussion

Assignment: Journal entry

**Week 14:** Field trip to photo studio (ex: REC Philly) to complete class photos

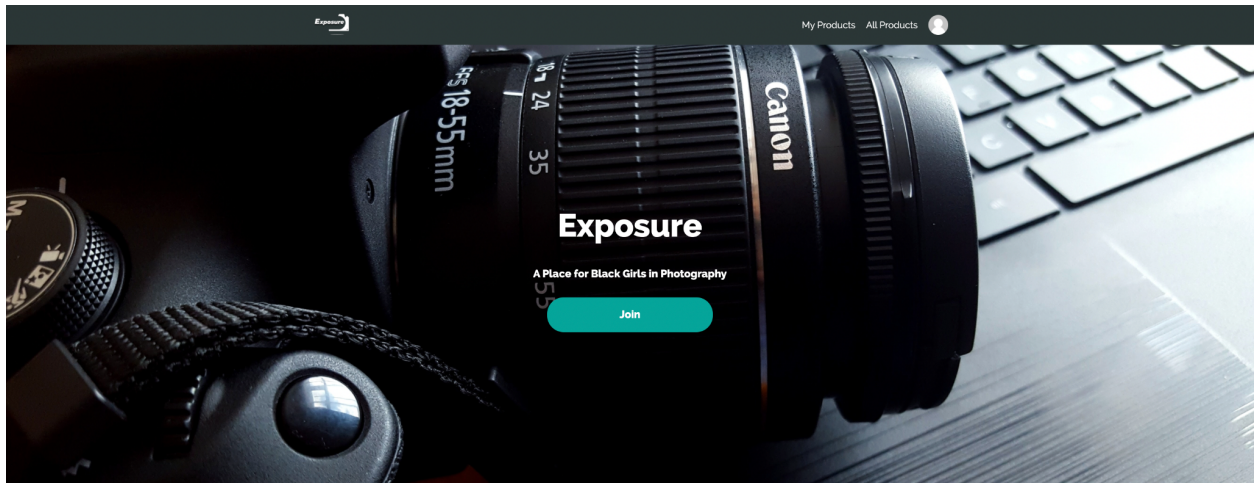
Assignment: Journal entry reflecting on experience

**Week 15:** Warm up: What do you see, think and wonder? Presenting raw student images from photoshoot that will be edited together in the spring, community circle discussion reflecting on the fall and plans for the holidays

## **Spring**

Weekly exploration of a new type of photography and peer teaching, class portraits part two for those new to the group, editing workshop for class photos, field trips to photograph school related events, outdoor photowalks in the city, guest speakers, and planning end of the year two week exhibit/ fundraiser that features student images from across all Exposure chapters throughout the city.

Here's a look at the current state of my minimum viable product (MVP) on Teachable that incorporates these changes:



## Description

This is a hybrid photo club designed to introduce Black girls in Philadelphia middle schools to photography as a medium to tell their stories, find their voices, and implement change. You'll learn from Black womxn photographers and meet other Black girls as you complete exercises, take your own photos, hear from guest speakers, and more!

You get to decide what you want to learn, when, and how you're able to engage in this club by creating an individual learning plan through one-on-one coaching sessions and tracking your progress through check-ins. There will be in-person and/or Zoom meetings every week, in-person field trips, and a group chat to share your thoughts, questions, and photos. Every step of the way, you'll have access to support from your instructors and peers.

### Take it One Semester at a Time

This photo club is broken up into three semesters, summer, fall, and spring. Hop in whenever you're available and make your way through the entire cycle of programming.



#### Summer: July-August

During summer break, we'll focus on storytelling. You'll use your smartphones to document a new place and you'll be able to tell a story of your choice between your school, home, neighborhood, and city.



#### Fall: September-December

This semester will dive into portraiture. Each student will take self-portraits using their smartphones and then move on to take class photos of their peers using professional camera equipment.



#### Spring: January-June

This semester will be all about exploring different types of photography of your choice by taking original images and planning our end of the year photo exhibit.



My Products All Products

### Photo Club Content

#### Exercise: The Basics of Photography

- Composition [START](#)
- VR Activity: Composition [START](#)
- Resource: More Compositions to Explore [START](#)
- Video: Composition In Context [START](#)

### Choose a Pricing Option

- FREE**  
Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY)

Join

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Exposure' photography lessons. On the left, there is a large black square with the word 'Exposure' in white, stylized font, and a white camera icon. To the right, a light gray box contains the text 'Exercise: The Basics of Photography: 1 / 5' and 'Composition' in bold, with a 'Start Lesson' button below it. Below this, a section titled 'Exercise: The Basics of Photography' shows '0 / 5 complete'. A list of five items follows, each with a 'Start' button: 'Composition', 'VR Activity: Composition', 'Resource: More Compositions to Explore', 'Video: Composition In Context', and 'Challenge & Journal Entry'. To the right of this list is a progress bar showing '100% COMPLETE' and a circular icon with the text 'Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY)'.

The screenshot shows a VR exercise interface. At the top, there is a dark header with a home icon, a settings icon, and a 'Complete and Continue >' button. Below the header, a sidebar on the left shows a progress bar for 'Exposure' at '100% COMPLETE' and a list of items under 'Exercise: The Basics of Photography', with 'Composition' selected. The main area features a large, stylized landscape with green and teal geometric shapes. The 'Exposure' logo is in the top left, and a speaker icon is in the top right. The text 'EXERCISE' and 'The Basics of Photography' is centered, and a 'START' button is in the bottom right.

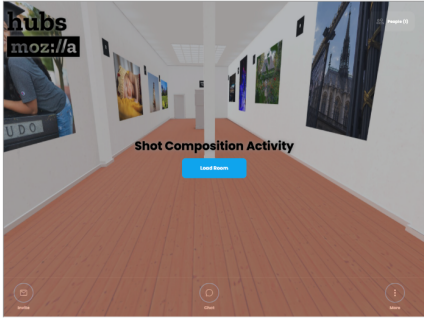


Exposure **100% COMPLETE**

Exercise: The Basics of Photography

- Composition
- VR Activity: Composition**
- Resource: More Compositions to Explore
- Video: Composition in Context
- Challenge & Journal Entry

VR Activity: Composition



Shot Composition Activity

Load Scene

1 / 8

What is the shot composition for image 1? Check all that apply.

- Frame Within A Frame
- Isolating the Subject
- Rule of Thirds
- God Angle

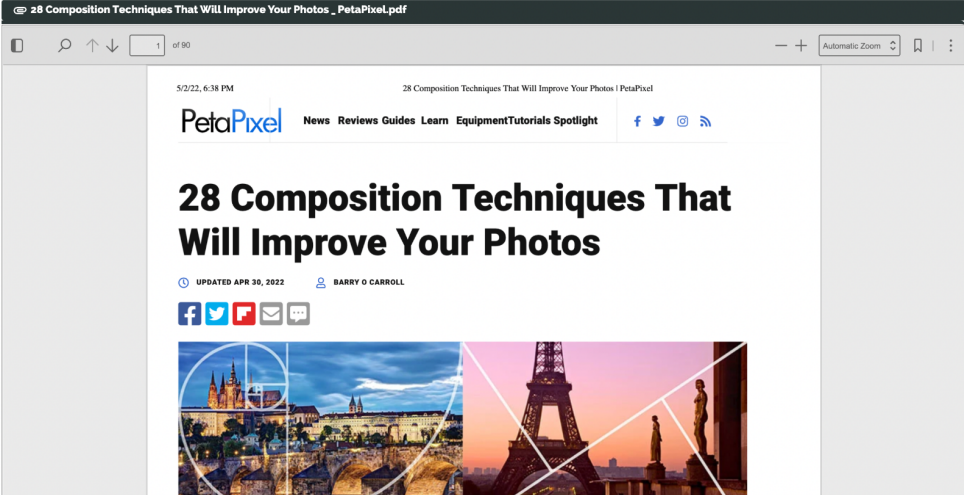
Exposure **100% COMPLETE**

Exercise: The Basics of Photography

- Composition
- VR Activity: Composition
- Resource: More Compositions to Explore**
- Video: Composition in Context
- Challenge & Journal Entry

Resource: More Compositions to Explore

28 Composition Techniques That Will Improve Your Photos\_PetaPixel.pdf




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28 Composition Techniques That Will Improve Your Photos | PetaPixel

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# 28 Composition Techniques That Will Improve Your Photos

UPDATED APR 30, 2022 BARRY O CARROLL



⌂
⚙️
< Previous Lecture
Complete and Continue >

**Exposure**

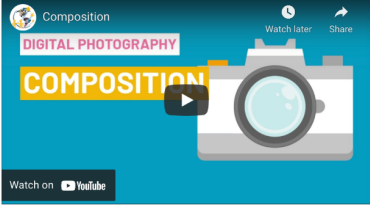
100% COMPLETE

---

**Exercise: The Basics of Photography**

- Composition
- VR Activity: Composition
- Resource: More Compositions to Explore
- Video: Composition In Context
- Challenge & Journal Entry

### Video: Composition In Context




Composition Watch later Share

Watch on YouTube

**Discussion**

Post a comment



Kyra Williams

Instructor

Leave a comment...

Post Comment

⌂
⚙️
< Previous Lecture
Complete and Continue >

**Exposure**

100% COMPLETE

---

**Exercise: The Basics of Photography**

- Composition
- VR Activity: Composition
- Resource: More Compositions to Explore
- Video: Composition In Context
- Challenge & Journal Entry


### Challenge & Journal Entry

Explore a new place and take photos to document your experience. Show us this place through your eyes. Use 5 different compositions in your images

- Submit these images by commenting under your coaching milestones along with a journal entry describing where you went to take your challenge photos and a reflection on your experience.

**Discussion**

Post a comment



Kyra Williams

Instructor

Leave a comment...

Exposure
My Products All Products

## Choose a Pricing Option

**FREE**

**Exposure One-On-One**

A Place for Black Girls in Photography

Less ^

In our coaching sessions, we will develop your individual learning plan that works for your schedule and set milestones that will keep you on track of meeting your goals in this photo club. We'll also schedule check-ins along the way.

Schedule Now

## **Conclusion: Takeaways and Next Steps**

This thesis project was a needed opportunity for me to dive deeper into my vision of impact and approach the programming of Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY) with more intention and preparation for a real shot at longevity. As someone who is just beginning their instructional design career, this experience has provided needed insight into how nuanced this work will be and how necessary it is to have a team to execute our programming. I now have the knowledge to serve as more of a program manager for the future duration of this design process that includes content development, implementation, and evaluation.

However, I first need to finish redesigning the newly established three semester structure in more detail. I also need to continue concept testing with more students and with girls who I have no connection with so I can finish developing personas and journey maps. I've come to the conclusion that I need to do this testing in phases to address other key assumptions implied in this design. These phases are challenges and journal entries, content efficiency, and social change/participatory photography. The best way to test moving forward would be in-person in schools where educators could be more responsive to my communications and my presence could create more of a sense of urgency than doing outreach through email. I also think that being able to put a face to my name would create more trust between me and school professionals, which could help me secure more participants by creating more established relationships. Another testing option would be to continue creating a minimum viable product (MVP) for the summer using Teachable that adheres to Mayer's Multimedia Principles (Mayer & Fiorella). This MVP would serve as a larger test to validate the core components of the first semester of this design. The most successful testing method thus far has been running the club like we did last year and reflecting on the experience. So, this may be the route we take to conduct testing moving forward unless we're assessing smaller aspects of functionality, which then usability testing is needed.

In terms of design, I need to determine the components of the individual learning plans that each student will create in coaching sessions upon beginning the club and a process for how instructors can manage this. The first step to doing this will be getting more familiar with the functionality of Teachable coaching feature and learning how to create milestones for students with deadlines. So far, the number of clubs students are in and their meeting dates and times will be amongst the first data collected to determine how they can engage in Exposure for the semester. Whether or not they've already completed exercises for the program and their past experience with photography will be accounted for as well. I'd also like to explore adolescence development theories, identity frameworks, and ways I can gamify components of the club to further motivate students to maintain participation.

In terms of how the program will run, I need to take time after the design is completed to assess which metrics can legally and ethically be collected from minors and determine a plan for measuring our success through learning analytics. Some variables that I already have in mind are the retention rate across semesters, photo challenge completion rate, a social network analysis to gauge connections formed, and qualitative feedback such as quotes and follow up interviews after students leave the club to hear students themselves express how this experience has impacted them.

Furthermore, in relation to the success of this design, I need to spend time assessing how I can ensure that there are no gaps left up for interpretation during the training process for instructors and sponsors of this club. That first starts with determining what the skills and qualifications are for those instructors and sponsors. Since I plan to step back from daily operations in the future, I have to determine what this process entails. And last but not least, I have to plan for content curation and development. We need to create a reading and watch list as well as original photo resources that prioritize the representation of Black womxn and girls. This requires the recruitment of subject matter experts to create content guides and serve as talent in our videos and audio. How-to guides and glossary PDF's with licenses to the work of Black womxn photographers will also need to be developed from scratch. Applying for future entrepreneurial experiences and resources will aid in this process of turning the vision of Exposure into a real product and business model for Stories In My Backyard (SIMBY).

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