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Title: **Chronicles of teen participants from the Leave Out Violence (LOVE) photojournalism project**

Chase, Stanley (2008) *Chronicles of teen participants from the Leave Out Violence (LOVE) photojournalism project*. PhD thesis, Concordia University.



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Abstract

The field of art education has long recognized the immense potential for both personal and social transformation that can be realized through the practice, teaching and learning of art. In this qualitative study, the personal lived experience of ten former Photojournalism Project participants is investigated using an interdisciplinary conceptual framework. This study is informed by my personal experience as co-founder and photography teacher of the Leave Out Violence (LOVE) Photojournalism Project started in 1995 at Dawson College in Montreal. This after-school project teaches photojournalism to adolescents, many of whom are labeled as being "at-risk," and

whose lives have been affected by violence. Engaging in photography and writing, the participants explore and document the issues surrounding violence in their lives and in their community. Drawing on the fields of art education, critical and social pedagogy, adolescent development and qualitative research, the lives of the teens are examined with the goal of understanding how involvement in a community-based arts project can play a significant role in shaping the fragile lives of teens as well shaping the photographs they produce while actively involved in such a project. In order to gather data the methodology combined case study and image-based research methods. A series of three audio-taped interviews were conducted. The first and third interviews focused on the personal lives of the teens. The themes pursued in these interviews centered on family life, community, peer world and school. Participants were asked to recall their lives up to and including their participation in the Photojournalism Project. As well, the issues surrounding whether or not links could be found between media violence and youth violence were also explored. The second interview relied on photo elicitation. The study participants were asked to review their photographs taken during their participation in the LOVE project and to comment on their participation in the project. The photo elicitation technique produced the visual component of the study. Findings to this study reveal that while there may be no quick solutions to the problem of being an "at-risk" youth affected by violence, a community-based project can offer a brief respite, in a safe and secure learning environment that helps to reduce the long-term negative consequences of experiencing violence allowing them to go on and have meaningful lives.

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