

Photovoice: Visualizing Student Experiences During an International Level I Fieldwork in Tanzania

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There is a dearth of qualitative research purporting benefits of international experiences for healthcare students. The research question and purpose of this study was to use photovoice to examine meaningful experiences and learning for OT students on a short-term international fieldwork experience in Tanzania. Photovoice, a qualitative participatory-action research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), was used to provide visual and thematic representation of student learning. Participants included seven female OT students who were completing a two-week Level I Fieldwork in Tanzania. The study used photovoice, journaling, and debriefing to illuminate students' experiences and perceptions of learning. Participants were introduced to photovoice by faculty prior to the fieldwork. Participants were asked to take a minimum of one photo daily that best captured the meaningfulness of their day. Next, participants were asked to reflect on each photo, write a photo caption and journal entry, and use the photo as a muse during debriefing. Participants uploaded the completed photo journal to a password-protected online platform. A thematic approach to guide data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Wang and Burris, 1997) was used, including participant selection of photos, contextualizing, codifying data into meaningful themes, reviewing and defining themes, and writing results. Five major themes were revealed in students' perceptions of learning during an international fieldwork related to 1) health and wellbeing, 2) disease, 3) differences and similarities between countries, 4) culture, 5) belonging and lasting influence. This study suggests that short-term international fieldwork can help students improve cultural awareness and that photovoice can be a useful pedagogy and evaluation method. This research stands to influence the profession by demonstrating through photovoice how international fieldwork experiences can help develop students who are prepared to practice globally.

References

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