

Partnering in Qualitative Research Through Photo Participation

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A change in accrediting body requirements resulted in the development of a unique qualitative research course. The 2006 Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education Standards included the need for students at the graduate level to experience the research process. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools required that student research experiences be guided only by PhD trained faculty. Shifting the research standards to a research class rather than individual research projects provided a means to have best utilization of scarce resources (PhD faculty), consistent research training across all students, enthusiasm instilled in students for the research process, and collection of data for faculty research. The course was developed to involve students in a research study that paralleled the learning experience. An overarching IRB was written and approved, with an overall theme of play/leisure explored including use of participant observation through photo narratives. A team teaching approach facilitated the guidance of the number of students involved in the classroom, in the field and online. Students experienced the research process from literature review, to IRB procedures, to data collection, to data analysis, to result write-up. Lectures were organized to instruct students in the qualitative approach and to assist them in each step of the process. Articles using the data collections techniques learned were part of the online discussion board. A final exam was application based, requiring analysis of articles based on the information learned about the qualitative research process. Student response to the experience was positive and the processing that occurred was captured in pictures. Faculty response was also positive with great appreciation for the increased interaction and involvement in processing that occurred throughout the course. Partnering in research through course based research was a successful means of teaching the qualitative research process as well as providing an experiential component. Using participant photo narrative as a means of data collection provided a unique and lasting presentation of the lived experience of the students. The poster presentation will include both photos of the process and the outcome. Course objectives, lecture topics and organization will be presented as well.