

The Telling of the Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Nursing Preceptorship through Digital Stories

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Between February and May 2016, seven baccalaureate nursing students and five registered nurses in Alberta took part in a unique, ongoing participant action study, using digital media to explore the challenges and opportunities of senior (4th year) nursing preceptorships in rural settings. The goals of this project were to gain a firsthand perspective on rural preceptorship from those most directly involved, and to investigate how digital photography and digital storytelling mediate the experiences of research participants. Over ten weeks, the students and preceptors documented the daily realities of rural preceptorship by taking digital photographs, which they discussed with researchers during midpoint and endpoint interviews—a process known as photovoice. In turn, the researchers authored four digital stories based on participants' images and narratives. It was found that rural preceptorships teach nursing students to accept and manage limitations (such as isolation and lack of resources) while recognizing and capitalizing on opportunities (such as interprofessional teamwork, generalization and holistic care). Digital storytelling gave the researchers an innovative and compelling means of disseminating the research findings, from the firsthand perspective of the participants, as this presentation will demonstrate.