

## **Student experiences of digital storytelling in professional identity formation: a Danish-South African project**

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**Introduction:** Occupational therapy students' professional identity is shaped through their experiences of practice learning environments, which demands reflection on who they are in relation to the type of practice they experience, the environment in which they practice and the influence of these environments on their daily work. This collaborative project was undertaken to gain insight into student's professional identity formation in two countries with substantially different contexts.

### **Objectives:**

1. To share student experiences and learning in relation to professional identity formation.
2. To highlight the similarities and differences across the two countries.

**Method:** A descriptive qualitative study was undertaken at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and the University College of South Denmark. Six students were purposively selected from each country to represent diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender and type of practice learning environment. Students created a digital story about their professional identity formation during practice learning and documented their thinking in reflective journals. Digital stories were analyzed using a narrative approach and a document analysis of the reflective journals was conducted. Student perspectives emerging from the data in each context were compared to identify similarities and differences.

**Findings:** The themes that emerged from the data generated in each context will be presented and the similarities and differences in student experiences will be discussed.

**Conclusion:** The findings support digital storytelling as a novel way of creating awareness of the process of professional identity formation in occupational therapy. It also demonstrates how professional identity is uniquely shaped by culture and context.