**Module 4: Professional and Program Goals Essay**

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In my academic endeavors as an OTD student, I hope to refine my clinical reasoning skills, expand my abilities with interpreting research, and become more proficient with being an evidence-based practitioner. I aspire to learn more about leadership and develop skills that will have a positive impact on my community.

Higgs, J., Jones, M., et al (1995, 2000, 2008) states that clinical reasoning is the “sum of thinking and decision-making processes associated with clinical practice”. It is an essential skill in the health care profession. Occupational therapists are tasked with making critical, yet life altering decisions for consumers. OT’s must use clinical reasoning to make informed, evidenced based decisions for clients. I am excited to embark on this journey at Shawnee State University’s esteemed PP OTD program and enhance my clinical reasoning skills while conducting research, completing assignments, and participating in thought provoking discussions. Expanding my abilities with interpreting research and completing literature reviews will enable me to become a more proficient, evidence-based practitioner and improve the quality of care that I provide to my clients. I look forward to expounding my knowledge of various topics such as best treatment approaches for children with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), examining the effectiveness of sensory integrative strategies, and best practices for working with children with high functioning autism. Participating in various assignments such as completing the Self-Assessment Worksheets, refreshing my knowledge of APA-7 citations and reference formatting, reviewing occupational therapy frames of reference, are all helping to build and sharpen my skills as an evidence-based practitioner. The Self-Assessment worksheets challenged me to review my OT career and consider how I have grown as a therapist and reflect on ways that I can improve.

I aspire to establish leadership skills that will make a worthwhile impact on my community. According to (Whitney & McCormack, 2020), participating in a doctorate program can be a segue to leadership roles in the community. Capstone projects enhance an entry level practitioner’s understanding of research and can generate ideas for prospective research in the field. My programmatic goal of the OTD program would be to become a proficient, independent researcher. Becoming an independent researcher would strengthen my repertoire of skills as a leader. After completion of my PP OTD, I am interested in pursuing academia and possibly becoming an adjunct pediatric professor, considering non-traditional roles, or developing OT programs for the community. My interest in helping children with NAS could influence me to develop community programs for parents and children. All in all, I feel that the diverse curriculum and online format of the PP OTD program at SSU will empower me to achieve my goals.

References

Higgs, J., Jones, M., Loftus, S., & Christensen, N. (1995, 2000, 2008). *Clinical reasoning in the health professions*, (3rd ed). Elsevier, Butterworth, & Heinemann.

Whitney, R. V., & McCormack, G. (2020). They Said: Perspectives on Capstone Experience and Projects in Occupational Therapy. The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, 8(3), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1778>