**Reflection Essay Assignment**

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OT 525-G: Personal Transformation I

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**Reflection Paper**

Throughout the first semester of the Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy program at Sacred Heart University, a huge amount of growth was felt personally through the completion of various self-assessments, assignments, and interaction with new people. Through the Personal Transformation course, reflection on the growth as a person and future occupational therapist was a main focus for me. It has allowed the encouragement of collaboration with my peers, faculty, and provided many resources.

At the start of the semester, a list of various self-assessments was given to complete evaluating preferences of personal learning styles, soft skills, and professional behaviors. I found the VARK Questionnaire to be something that I continued to come back to in all my courses while learning in class as well as adapting new study methods (Vark questionnaire, 2024). As someone who scores as multimodal with scores between 11-13 in visual and kinesthetic I felt that this aligned very well with my learning preferences of being hands on. In Activity Analysis, I found this evident when working to teach other peers and client’s activities it was easy for me to adapt to visual and kinesthetic teaching and learning methods, but I had to work a bit harder to find reading and auditory methods. I was able to collaborate with other peers and professors who strived in these areas to help gain insight for these areas. The examining of important soft skills was something I had never really considered before yet was helpful in finding areas I strive in versus areas that need some work. According to “Top soft skills employers value with examples” it allowed me to see a breakdown of categories accompanied with many subcategories (Doyle, 2024). This helped me focus on improving my overall communication and critical skills with examples of how to so, which I was able to do by role play simulations and group projects. Finally, the professional behaviors checklist completed was something that made me look ahead to the future, specifically to our field work we will soon start (Napier, 2011). Making goals for myself is very helpful as I can put areas that I feel I need growth in with areas I strive in into relevant and successful situations. I look forward to going back and completing this as time in the program continues, and even when officially working as a certified practitioner. With only being 15 weeks into a program, I was so shocked with the amount I was able to learn about myself and apply into my coursework and grew a desire to continue this.

Both individual and group advisement meetings I feel have contributed to my growth throughout this semester. In our group advisement meetings, the collaboration and debriefs with other peers contributed to a sense of relief in that we were all growing through this and finding our strengths and weaknesses together. It also allowed me to observe a variety of other traits and attributes that others have and provided a way that I can improve in areas that I may not be as strong in. My first individual advising meeting I remember going in feeling scared and intimidated by having to meet one-on-one with a professor. However, after the first meeting and throughout the rest of my meetings I learned it is not scary at all. I reframed my thinking on this that this is an extremely beneficial resource for me and is going to be something I encounter as a practitioner as well. It allowed me to reflect on the effects of my world outside of school and its impact on myself in school. I learned that I need to focus on having a school, work, and life balance by putting my well-being at the main focus of this all. I was even able to gain resources such as seeking a life coach who I was able to meet with. These meetings have helped me emphasize the important of collaborating with peers and other higher ranked professionals and to use this to my advantage as a future practitioner.

The Personal Transformation course has encouraged me to acknowledge the change I have gone through from my undergraduate program to this graduate program. In undergrad, I was someone who was not one to collaborate and make relationships with other peers and faculty in the program. I held myself back from taking on any positions in a club or activity and was not setting goals with the just right challenge for myself. Fast forward to December 2024 and I now hold an e-board position for the Student Occupational Therapy Association, attended my first ConnOTA conference, have had multiple volunteer opportunities relevant to OT practice, and applied to attend a Guatemala service-learning trip. With the help of the Vision 2025 assignment, I was able to establish these goals for myself and will continue working for achievements in these areas. Stepping out of your comfort zone sounds so difficult yet once done opens so many doors and I look forward to seeing what continues to come with the transformation of myself into an occupational therapist practitioner.

Through the Personal Transformation course, I have been able to acknowledge, work on, and reflect areas of strengths, limitations, and growth. This has helped me in my coursework so far and is something I look forward continuing doing in my time as an occupational therapy student and practitioner using provided resources.

References

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Napier, B. (2011). Professional Behaviors and Expectations. In *Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Survival Guide: A Student Planner* (2nd ed., pp. 100–112). essay, AOTA Press.