

Professional Readiness Reflection Essay

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Introduction

Over the last two years of academic coursework and fieldwork experiences, I have undergone significant professional development as I get ready to take on a career in occupational therapy. This reflection explores how I can effectively demonstrate my ability to practice in an ethical, collaborative, and competent manner. By assessing my professional conduct, clinical reasoning, and areas that require further growth, I can clearly express my readiness for Level II fieldwork and my future practice. This reflection integrates crucial expectations from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Code of Ethics, the AOTA Core Values, and Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards to inform my professional identity development.

Demonstrating Competence and Preparedness to Become an Occupational Therapist

My emerging competence as an occupational therapist is evident in the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors I have demonstrated through coursework, simulations, and fieldwork placements. Experiences such as Level I fieldwork at Mozaic Senior Life, Monday Night Social, and the Driving Simulator program at Sacred Heart University have enhanced my capacity to assess occupational performance and execute evidence-based interventions. I have developed essential skills in therapeutic communication and observation. Each setting served different populations, yet my consistent ability to connect with clients, modify activities, and utilize clinical reasoning in line with occupational therapy practice remained consistent in every setting. These experiences enabled me to put classroom learning into practical application. Concepts like client factors, performance patterns, therapeutic use of self, and activity grading gained depth when I used them in real-world settings. I learned to identify when individuals required more structure, repetition, or time, which enabled me to think like a clinician instead of a student,

showing the competence and readiness expected by ACOTE standards (Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education, 2018).

Ethical Behavior as a Professional

Ethical reasoning has been a vital aspect of my development. The AOTA Code of Ethics has influenced my interactions with clients, colleagues, and fieldwork educators. During my Level I fieldwork, I practiced beneficence by aiming to enhance clients' well-being through meaningful, suitable, and safe activities (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). I adhered to nonmaleficence by being conscious of risks, observing clients' reactions, and making necessary adjustments to prevent harm or discomfort (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020), particularly crucial when working with older adults or individuals with neurodevelopmental challenges. I respected client autonomy by honoring preferences, offering choices, and facilitating participation at each individual's comfort level (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). Justice shaped my actions in group environments, ensuring that every participant had equal opportunities for engagement (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020), regardless of their abilities or communication styles. Veracity and fidelity (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020) were essential in my communications with fieldwork educators, collaboration with peers, contributions to group assignments, and in the future with supervisors. I learned the importance of being transparent about my limitations, seeking clarification when necessary, and maintaining trust within both therapeutic relationships and academic settings. These ethical principles, reinforced through my coursework, helped me incorporate what it means to act professionally and responsibly as a future occupational therapist.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Abilities

My capacity for critical thinking and problem-solving has expanded significantly throughout the occupational therapy curriculum. Each Level I placement required me to carefully observe, analyze, and respond to client needs. Whether it was adjusting the speed of a group activity, modifying instructions, or finding patterns in attention and sequencing during driving simulator sessions, I learned to think flexibly and make informed decisions on the spot. Classroom cases, labs, and simulations played a crucial role in strengthening my reasoning skills. Assignments involving activity grading, occupational analysis, and interpreting client scenarios enhanced my ability to examine tasks step-by-step, identify obstacles, and propose evidence-based solutions. Over time, I grew more confident at examining client factors, environmental influences, and performance patterns, which are skills vital for assessment and intervention planning. These experiences illustrate my ability to approach clinical situations with adaptability, creativity, and the professional judgment expected of an entry-level practitioner.

Use of Evidence to Support Clinical Reasoning

Throughout my studies, I have made significant progress in locating, comprehending, and applying evidence to inform my decision-making. Research on cognitive engagement, physical activity, attention, motor coordination, and mental health has influenced my understanding of occupational performance throughout life stages. In every activity, I connected my academic learning with practical observations. I recognized why certain activities foster engagement, how environmental supports enhance participation, and the evidence backing occupational therapy's role in various contexts. Utilizing evidence embodies both beneficence and veracity, ensuring that my decisions are grounded in accurate, ethical, and research-supported reasoning (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). This solid foundation gives me confidence as I prepare to start Level II fieldwork.

Communication and Collaboration with Individuals from Diverse Backgrounds

Communication has been a particularly significant area of growth for me. My fieldwork experiences introduced me to older adults, individuals with neurodevelopmental conditions, and adolescents, each with distinct needs, communication styles, and preferences. I learned to modify my tone, pacing, and approach based on who I was working with. This sometimes involved simplifying instructions, utilizing modeling, providing encouragement, or establishing rapport through shared interest and consistent presence. Collaboration has been equally crucial. Through projects, lab activities, and fieldwork supervision, I developed the skills to share responsibilities, give and receive feedback, and appreciate diverse perspectives. These experiences enhanced my interprofessional skills and aligned with the fidelity and justice principles outlined in the AOTA Code of Ethics (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). Working alongside professors and peers also showed the importance of communication with a clinical team.

Ability to Work Interprofessionally

My comprehension of interprofessional practice has evolved through both academic courses. This year, I took part in an interprofessional education (IPE) simulation with graduate students from physical therapy and speech-language pathology, which provided us with the opportunity to collaboratively evaluate a client scenario, discuss the specific roles of each discipline, and engage in joint decision-making. This experience enhanced my ability to communicate effectively, share insights, and value the distinct contributions of each profession. In my classes, we also explored how occupational therapists work alongside a diverse array of professionals in different environments, which helped me understand the significance of coordinated care. These experiences have strengthened my ability to listen attentively, align goals across different fields, and collaborate respectfully within a team, which are all skills that

reflect the ethical principles of fidelity and justice and are crucial for delivering high-quality care.

Peer Feedback

I interviewed two classmates to gather feedback on behaviors that could pose challenges for me in clinical or professional environments. Both peers shared that I tend to overanalyze situations and impose excessive pressure on myself, particularly when I strive for success. They acknowledged that while I am dependable and deliver high-quality work, I occasionally doubt my choices, which can lead to stress and sometimes hinder my time management. Receiving this feedback was enlightening and resonated with my own reflections. Although this tendency demonstrates commitment and loyalty, I understand that it can become overwhelming if not managed well. Going forward, I intend to focus on trusting my clinical judgment, setting more attainable goals for myself, and maintaining a healthier pace during academic and fieldwork obligations. Additionally, I plan to enhance my time-management skills and seek clarification sooner instead of overthinking issues independently. These actions will support thoughtful growth as I take on greater responsibilities in the field.

Conclusion

Looking back on the past two years, I acknowledge significant growth in my ethical reasoning, communication skills, clinical judgment, and professional conduct. Through Level I fieldwork, coursework, and collaboration, I have demonstrated alignment with the AOTA Code of Ethics, including beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, veracity, and fidelity (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020). I have acquired the ability to think critically, apply evidence, respect client engagement, and collaborate effectively with peers and supervisors. As I prepare for Level II fieldwork, I feel grounded, prepared, and dedicated to

becoming a reflective, ethical, and client-centered occupational therapist. I look forward to continuing my development as I transition into more advanced clinical responsibilities and pursue lifelong professional growth.

References

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. (2018). *ACOTE Accreditation Standards*. ACOTE. <https://acoteonline.org/accreditation-explained/standards/>

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). AOTA 2020 occupational therapy code of ethics. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74s3006>

AOTA Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics Core Values and Principles An aspirational foundation and goal for ethical decisions Core Values & Guiding Ethical Principles: Foundation of the AOTA Code of Ethics. (n.d.). https://www.aota.org/-/media/corporate/files/practice/ethics/aota_code-of-ethics_core-values_principles_graphic.pdf