

Professional Readiness Reflection Essay

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Introduction

As I approach the completion of my didactic coursework in Sacred Heart University's Occupational Therapy program, I have been reflecting on how much I've grown and how much I continue to learn. These past two years have shown me areas where I have made meaningful progress, as well as areas that still require continued effort and development. This essay explores my evolving readiness to enter Level II fieldwork, the professional behaviors I am working to strengthen, and the ways that course materials, such as my Vision 2025 Plan, Mission & Vision Statement, and Professional Development Plan, have guided my growth. My goal is to honestly evaluate where I am as an emerging practitioner and how I can continue developing into a reflective, ethical, and competent occupational therapist.

Documenting My Competence and Readiness

Ethical practice has become increasingly important to me as I prepare for fieldwork. I strive to approach clients and peers with empathy, respect, and cultural humility, and I continually reflect on how to align my actions with the AOTA Code of Ethics. In my *Mission and Vision Statement*, I wrote about wanting to provide compassionate, client-centered care and support individuals with dignity. I feel that there is always more to learn, and I am actively working toward becoming a clinician who upholds these values consistently.

Throughout the program, I have made progress in developing my clinical reasoning skills, especially through PBL, lab simulations, and fieldwork experiences. I am learning to analyze client needs more holistically and to consider environmental, emotional, and contextual factors. In my *AOTA Vision 2025 Development Plan*, I acknowledged that evidence-based reasoning is an area where I still want to grow, and I set goals such as reviewing research and

revisiting foundational material to strengthen my understanding. While I still experience moments of uncertainty, I can see that I am slowly becoming more comfortable with clinical decision-making.

Incorporating research into my thinking is something I continue to work on. My *Professional Development Plan* includes goals such as shadowing therapists, reviewing protocols, practicing documentation, and seeking frequent feedback—all of which support my ability to integrate evidence into practice. I know that this will be an ongoing learning process, especially as I move into more complex clinical environments, but I feel more prepared than I did when I began the program.

Communication, Collaboration, and Interprofessional Skills

Building rapport and communicating with clients to gain a better understanding of who they are and their goals, is an area where I have gradually gained more confidence. I naturally try to approach others with patience and empathy. My Mission & Vision Statement emphasizes wanting clients to feel safe, understood, and supported, and this continues to guide how I interact with people. I know there is always more to learn when it comes to cultural humility and communication, but I am committed to improving in this area.

Collaborating with peers and other professionals has been a valuable part of my development. In my *Vision 2025 Development Plan*, I set a goal to become more assertive in group settings and to share my ideas more comfortably and confidently. I still find this challenging at times, but I have noticed small improvements, such as asking more questions during fieldwork and engaging more actively in group discussions. These experiences have

helped me build trust in my ability to contribute to a team, even while I continue working on my confidence.

Peer Feedback and Reflection

My peers offered thoughtful feedback that highlighted qualities I often overlook in myself. They described me as kind, hardworking, and committed to client-centered care, which I appreciated but had not always recognized. They also pointed out areas I need to work on, particularly my tendency to second-guess myself and to take longer with tasks due to personal health implications and always wanting to present the best work possible. One peer mentioned that my medical needs could be challenging in a workplace setting. Another shared that I sometimes underestimate my own ideas, even though they can be helpful and creative.

I agreed with their observations. I know that I can be hard on myself, and I often hesitate to trust my own judgment. At the same time, I appreciated hearing that others see value in the ideas and effort I bring. Regarding my health-related absences, I understand why this could be a concern for a supervisor, and I am committed to communicating openly and managing my responsibilities as professionally as possible. This feedback aligns with the goals in my *Professional Development Plan*, especially those related to self-advocacy and personal wellness.

To address these areas thoughtfully and realistically, I plan to seek regular feedback during fieldwork so that I can understand my strengths and recognize areas that still need improvement. I also plan to use mindfulness and stress-management strategies to help reduce anxiety and build trust in my own abilities. At the start of each of my fieldwork assignments, and future job opportunities, I will communicate my needs clearly and professionally with supervisors, especially regarding health concerns or workload expectations. I also plan on

continuing to update my development plans, using my Vision 2025 Plan and Professional Development Plan as guidance for staying accountable and reflective. These steps feel manageable and meaningful for the kind of therapist I hope to become.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my growth in the OT program has helped me better understand both my progress and the areas where I still need continued development. I have been learning how to think more critically, use evidence more intentionally, communicate with greater confidence, and approach others with empathy and cultural humility. My ability to use my TUOS skills and strong knowledge in mental health have supported me, while peer feedback has helped me recognize patterns like self-doubt and pacing that I want to work on. The goals outlined in my Vision 2025 Development Plan, Professional Development Plan, and Mission & Vision Statement provide a roadmap for the clinician I hope to become, one who is thoughtful, ethical, and client-centered. While I know I still have much to learn, I feel increasingly prepared to continue this growth during Level II fieldwork and through my professional career.