Portfolio Self-Reflection

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Throughout my last two years, I have learned a tremendous amount about myself and my goals for my career as an occupational therapist. I have grown through my experiences in various classes, fieldwork opportunities, communication with peers and professors, and my involvement with professional organizations and advocacy. I know that I will continue to grow as I gain more opportunities and experiences. My behaviors will eventually become a norm and influence my professionalism and continued involvement (Archer et al., 2008). One of my goals is to document my progress and achievement of goals throughout my career.

Creating an online portfolio is my mechanism for documenting my achievement of the departmental PRIDE goals. The PRIDE goals reflect the learning outcomes, including Principled, Responsive, Interprofessional, Dynamic and Excellent (Sacred Heart University, 2020). An online portfolio is an outlet for me to continuously update my goals and document my achievements. Documentation is important to me because I strive to keep track of my achievements and goals as I start my journey as an occupational therapist.

The PRIDE goals allow me to reflect on what I have accomplished thus far in my education. In my fieldwork experiences, I have practiced in safe and ethical manners to ensure the wellbeing of my patients. As exhibited in my portfolio, I have responded to the needs of my community by engaging in advocacy and service. I strive to continue my endeavors with advocacy and OT abroad, while also expanding my skills and creating more opportunities to respond to the needs of others. As I improve my leadership skills and enhance my involvement, I hope to make a positive impact on OT and my workplace culture (Koehle, Bird & Bonney, 2008). I have documented my collaboration and interaction with my peers and occupational therapists in my portfolio to document my communication and interaction with others. I will document my demonstrated readiness, habits and skills through various outlets in my portfolio, including a professional skills and development section. Lastly, I will continue to document my engagement in professional activities, such as attending conferences and engaging in advocacy.

I know that I will be competent and ready for an entry-level occupational therapy job after completing my academic studies and fieldwork experiences. This competence has been documented through my graduate study transcripts, various research projects I have completed, and clinical work examples. I am confident in my competence due to the numerous experiences I have had in my time as an occupational therapy student. I will continue to document my competence through upcoming fieldwork evaluations and clinical work examples in my future experiences.

One of the ways I demonstrate professional behaviors as an occupational therapist is through practicing safety protocols. I demonstrate this behavior by periodically checking vital signs throughout treatment, maintain close contact or standby assistance with all patients, and asking for another therapist’s assistance when needed. I also demonstrate professional behaviors through effective communication with colleagues, peers, and other disciplines. This is critical when a patient’s vital signs are unstable or when a patient is reporting any increase or change in symptoms. Communication often correlates with safe practices in the healthcare field because the interprofessional teamwork results in better patient outcomes. My reflection of professionalism allows me to continue to improve my skills as I progress through my career (Sullivan & Thiessen, 2015).

Honest documentation is an additional professional behavior that I demonstrate through documentation of patients refusing treatment, reporting pain levels, or having a conflicting appointment. Honesty is also crucial because it allows for more client-centered care and ethical treatment from all disciplines. This aligns with veracity, which is a principle that is highlighted in the Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics (2015). Having respect for my coworkers, patients and their families gives me reason to communicate with colleagues and develop a trust between them to increase the quality of patient care and outcomes.

While it is difficult to always provide evidence for ethical treatment and professional behaviors, I try to document evidence in my portfolio as a reminder of who I am and who I want to be. Through fieldwork evaluations from my supervisors and gratitude from patients, I am proud of the therapist I am becoming and I want to continue to improve my competence and professional behavior as I embark on my journey of becoming a licensed and registered occupational therapist. Other evidence can include my clinical work examples, which demonstrate my ability to think critically in various types of cases. Each patient is different, which is why I keep track of my treatment ideas and my ability to solve problems to improve the outcomes of my patients.

Other evidence includes articles I have accumulated to increase my clinical reasoning skills. Due to ongoing research, I strive to maintain my education and continuously learn about the most effective interventions for the conditions of my patients. Throughout my fieldwork experiences, I have done this through research on databases and through communication with my supervisors and other therapy staff. I have learned so much from physical therapists and speech therapists to promote my learning and increase my clinical reasoning skills.

While I attempt to continue improving my OT and professional skills, there is always room for more improvement. Upon asking my peers what behaviors I demonstrate that will give me difficulty, I was humbled and thankful for their honesty. One peer responded that I can work on my assertive communication skills with other professionals and bosses. I feel that this is one area I am lacking in and can improve on, as I tend to err on the side of caution to maintain professional boundaries. However, I can work on maintaining those boundaries while also being assertive and advocating for patients in a respectful, yet efficient manner. Another peer responded that I can work on managing my schedule through asking for a break or saying “no” when asked to do something that may put too much on my plate. As a young professional, I am eager to learn as much as possible and seize every opportunity. However, I know that I need to also maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle to be productive and gain from my educational experiences.

Receiving feedback from my peers made me feel grateful for their honesty. I am grateful for the opportunity to reflect on how I am perceived by others and how I can improve in my future as an occupational therapist. The feedback of my peers prompted me to reflect on my own thoughts of fieldwork and experiences of my academic career. Through self-reflection, I have learned that I can improve my knowledge of various cultures. Having patients from various backgrounds and cultures has opened my eyes to the many priorities that patients can have for treatment goals. My goal is continue learning about various cultures to become more culturally competent and practice more client-centered care. With such a variety of cultural preferences, it can be difficult to be prepared for every patient. However, my goal is to work toward learning more and increasing my readiness to be a culturally competent OT.

While I have already learned so much about myself, I continue to learn every day and strive to maintain my ongoing education. I aim to continue documenting my goals and successes through my online portfolio. Reflecting on my experiences has helped me to grow as an individual and as a practitioner. I am grateful for every opportunity I have had that has shaped me into the person I am today, and I will continue to seize future opportunities to expand my knowledge and skillset as a future occupational therapist.

References

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