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Book Review: The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project

Abstract

This paper is a book review of *The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project* (Deluliis & Bednarski, 2019). This review includes a description of the book, content summary, and critical analysis of its educational value. Overall, this book is recommended as a resource for doctoral capstone coordinators.

Keywords

Book review, clinical education, doctoral capstone

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Book Review: The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a book review of *The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project* (Deluliis & Bednarski, 2019). This review includes a description of the book, content summary, and critical analysis of its educational value. Overall, this book is recommended as a resource for doctoral capstone coordinators.

The first entry level occupational therapy doctorate (OTD) accreditation standards went into effect in 2008 (<https://www.aota.org/Education-Careers/Accreditation/Overview/History.aspx>). While the discussion is still ongoing about whether the entry level OTD should be mandated or not, the number of OTD programs is rapidly increasing. According to the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) website, as of June 2020 there were 37 accredited programs, 56 developing programs, and 80 applicant programs (<https://acoteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/May2020ACOTEActions.pdf>). This increase, along with the 2018 ACOTE standards adding a section D specific to the Doctoral Capstone Experience (DCE) and Doctoral Capstone Project, resulted in the need for resources for faculty capstone coordinators and OTD students. This review seeks to describe and critically analyze the book, *The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project* (Deluliis & Bednarski, 2019). This book aims to guide the student, the capstone coordinator, and the faculty and site mentors in the process of the entry level OTD capstone and project.

Description

The Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctorate Capstone: A Framework for the Experience and Project (Deluliis & Bednarski, 2019) is 276 pages and includes four parts: 1) Development, 2) Planning, 3) Implementation, and 4) Dissemination. Each section has two to four chapters for a total of 11 chapters. The authors frame the textbook in a human-centered design framework (IDEO, 2015) and offer teaching tips embedded in text boxes and appendices with templates and examples of forms and documents to assist the new capstone coordinator.

Content Summary

Part I: Development

The development content of this book reflects the preparation phase of capstone development. Chapter one provides clarity to distinguish the doctoral capstone from fieldwork, outlines roles and responsibilities for the student, site mentor, and capstone coordinator, and offers examples of these roles within varied practice settings. In chapter two, the authors align the development of the capstone with the ACOTE (2018) areas of focus and scholarship, and provide a step-by-step process for application of the evidence to the capstone planning process. This includes the learning activities that are required prior to the experience (ACOTE, 2018, D.1. 3). Two of these are the literature review and the needs assessment. Chapter three describes in more detail the process for synthesizing the evidence as needed for the literature review. Chapter four describes the process of setting up the site experience part of the doctoral capstone.

Part II: Planning

Part II of the book addresses the planning stage of the capstone, moving from gathering the evidence to development of capstone goals and objectives, finalizing plans for supervision and mentorship, and ensuring that the proper documentation is secured to meet legal and standard requirements. Chapter five spends time on the development of “practice ready” skills for the capstone. This chapter was significant in distinguishing the need for self-directed learning skills critical to the successful completion of capstone in more nontraditional and emerging areas of practice.

Part III: Implementation

Part III, the implementation section of the text, reviews activities to be completed while implementing the capstone experience and project. Needs assessment is included within this section. Chapter eight addresses the elements of sustainability and program evaluation; both of which are critical within academic and clinical collaborations. Although there is mutual benefit to the sites and educational institutions, there is also a burden to the organizations and educating students in program evaluation helps to mitigate this burden and adds value in hosting an OTD capstone student. Chapter nine discusses methods of evaluation that may be used for the DCE.

Part IV: Dissemination

Part IV, dissemination of the capstone deliverables, as required in ACOTE standard D.1.8 (ACOTE, 2018) is quite varied across academic institutions. The chapters provide basic support for scholarly writing, organization of the final capstone report, and steps for developing a dissemination plan that meets standards, and frames the deliverables of the capstone in terms of the impact on clients, communities, and the profession. This is hopefully an area that can be expanded in future editions as more doctoral education outcome research becomes prevalent.

Critical Analysis of Educational Value

One major strength of this textbook is the thread of Human-centered design mindset (IDEO, 2015) throughout the book. Human-centered design is most often used in technology, business or design fields and is distinguished from other approaches by the focus on the person's perspective including the person experiencing the problem in all aspects of solution process. This process is very compatible with occupational therapy's focus on client-centeredness in designing solutions to meet individual, organization, and population needs. This mindset also encourages students to embrace ambiguity as part of the process. Additional evidence supporting the use of this framework within the healthcare context could be included to add rigor to the quality of this book. Reflection questions at the beginning of each chapter add to the strength of this book as a resource and guide for the entry level doctoral student. The importance of reflection questions as a key element in the process of capstone development is evidence based as discussed by Bonnel and Smith (2018) for doctoral nursing projects. Learning activities at the end of each chapter provide suggestions for the capstone coordinator to include in capstone preparatory courses.

The aim to reach a wide variety of audience results in some confusion for students using this textbook. For example, on page 34 the authors described the capstone focus area of education as that of exploring the role of the occupational therapist as an educator mostly focusing on academics. However, the examples listed include many program development activities related to client, caregiver, or staff education. In addition, several of the appendices were not relevant to students and some were outdated (based on the previous ACOTE standards). The book is very inclusive as it aims to reach a broad audience, yet it is much more detailed than most sites and faculty mentors have time to spend reading. Providing more focus to specifically address content to meet the needs of students, capstone coordinators, and mentors should be considered.

The book does include an excellent synthesis of the literature review process that is required to meet an ACOTE standard. However, this book is weak in describing the needs assessment (also a requirement prior to the DCE) and does not touch on this until chapter seven in the section on project implementation. The needs assessment would be more appropriate during the planning rather than the implementation phase. The book is limited in scope in describing how the experience and project are similar, related, and yet different. This especially is apparent in the area of evaluation which the

book limits to the capstone experience and does not address evaluation of the capstone project. In addition, this chapter (nine) offered options that may confuse the student if methods discussed are not implemented by their university.

This book does not clearly distinguish between activities that address the two components (experience and project) of the capstone as separate yet related parts of the capstone. Throughout the book there is a lack of clarity that reflects the impact of the 2018 ACOTE standards that went into effect in July 2020. Both the experience and project could still be addressed within the organization of the current text with clarifications and distinctions between the components.

One last suggestion for future editions would be to include more examples of the capstone process from a variety of different entry level OTD programs. Exploring the usefulness, strengths, and weaknesses of this as a textbook for students would be a good capstone project. With revisions, this has potential to be a useful textbook for entry level OTD students. Overall, we highly recommend this as a resource for capstone coordinators.

Book Information

Title: The entry level occupational therapy doctorate capstone: A framework for the experience and project.

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