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Internship 4B

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October Conference Reflection

This month is the second month of internship! This was a very exciting few weeks as I continued shadowing at Hanger Clinic. As a reminder, my overall goal is to complete over sixty hours and gain a deeper understanding of what the prosthetics field entails. However, this month, in particular, my smaller SMART goal was to better understand some uncommon types of prosthetics through various research. Overall, I worked on my research and to improve my employability skills.

My first accomplishment this month was doing my annotated bibliography. Because my SMART goal was to learn about uncommon amputations and prosthetics used, I did my annotated bibliography on ear prosthetics. This allowed me to learn about the process of getting fit for an ear prosthetic and the different types. Without this research, I would have never been exposed to this knowledge. Additionally, to learn more about other prosthetics, I did additional research. I found many articles on the future of prosthetics, as it is such an advancing field, and found more information. I learned about a variety of prosthetics, including ocular and nasal ones. Lastly, to accomplish my SMART goal, I wanted to ask some of the clinicians what the strangest or most uncommon prosthetic they've done was. Becca mainly works with cranial helmets, so she hadn't seen any unusual prosthetics. Jon told me that usually, a clinician will have to get another license/accreditation to do more uncommon prosthetics, so the most unusual ones he actually fits and works with are fingers, but he has seen ear prosthetics come into Hanger before.

During October, I also advanced my employability skills. I am continuing to work on citation skills, verbal communication skills, creativity skills, initiative skills, and goal-making skills. Firstly, my citation skills have greatly improved. As I take English 101 at the college, we focus a lot on MLA format. This means that in class, we have gone into detail on how to do works cited pages with all different types of sources, like articles and books. Also, my annotated bibliography this month was on a YouTube video, so I had to brush up on that, and now I know how to cite videos and articles. Overall, I am confident in my citation skills now, which I definitely did not have before this year.

My verbal communication skills are still one I struggle with. It's hard to talk to patients when I can't add much knowledge to the conversation. I do have small talk with patients, though, which is going well. My verbal communication with the clinicians has grown too. I am much more comfortable asking questions and adding comments because I know they want to help me learn. Asking questions has helped me understand some new terms in the field, like BK, which means below the knee.

The next skill is creativity. Strangely, my annotated bibliography this month has helped me with my skills. I did some research into uncommon prosthetics and learned about a variety I would have never thought of before. This helped me grow my creativity and think about all the new inventions one could make to help advance the industry. Also, while doing additional research for my smart goal, I read an article about not just having prosthetics replace a missing limb but making it have even more functions than what the old limb could do. These articles and thought processes helped me grow my creativity skills and think about all the innovations possible in this field.

My initiative skills are another aspect I wanted to focus on growing throughout my internship. I think this skill has grown due to the fact that I am now a month into my internship. I come on a regular schedule, so the clinicians are expecting, and I have also learned where materials are located. Due to this, I have taken the initiative to try and offer help to the clinicians when they need it. For example, a patient needed a bandaid, so I offered to go down and grab them instead of having the clinician do it. This happened another time, but Jon needed a white marker, so I knew where it was and grabbed it. I have also been tasked with putting the measurements into the computer because I asked if I could. Taking this initiative has made me get to do more hands-on things and helped out the clinicians who are often doing a lot at once.

Lastly, my goal-making skills are also doing well. I made my goal around the end of September because my September conference was delayed due to the hurricane. Despite this setback, I still adequately achieved my goal for the month. I researched an uncommon prosthetic in depth and learned so much I never knew about ear prosthetics. For my overall goal, I will say I didn't do as well this month. Part of my overall goal was to achieve over 60 hours. This month, I didn't get as many hours due to some days not being busy or my schedule conflicting. I still went to my internship and got hours, but not as many as I would have hoped for. However, I know this won't set me off track, and if anything, it encourages me to work harder and get back on schedule in November and the rest of the months. Overall, many of my skills are growing at a steady pace. I think I have excelled the most at citation skills and need to adjust to continue furthering my goal-making skills. I will create my November schedule with my goal of 60 hours in mind to motivate myself.

This month, I really observed the clinician's side of things. I was able to shadow until five on one day, and I noticed that there was a lot of variety in the day. Some clinicians get to go

home early if they don't have any more patients and don't have extra work to do, but on the other hand, Jon had to stay late and work on adjusting devices for patients coming the next day. It's not like an office job where work ends right at 5. There is a lot of commitment to the patients here, and that means staying late to get things done for them. Also, I don't know if this would vary from clinic to clinic, but I noticed there is a lot of direct hands-on work with adjusting devices. I'm not the best at working with tools, so I don't know if a specialization like Hanger would be the best fit for my future.

Next month, My SMART goal is to focus more on the education side of things. It's important to know how one exactly becomes a certified prosthetist as I enter college. I want to make sure I take the right prerequisites for graduate school if I decide this is my career. This goal piqued my interest because one clinician, Becca, majored in bioengineering, which seems very advanced, while my mentor, Emily, majored in Health Sciences. I want to know if your major plays a big deciding factor in your career. I can work towards this goal of understanding education requirements by asking the person I interviewed for my November bibliography about their schooling and also doing additional research on my own time.

My conference has helped me see my progress as I enter my third month of interning. It has also made me realize that I have learned a lot of information about the field of prosthetics that I didn't know before interning. My conference has also made me focus on what I want to get out of the month of November so I can enter my internship focused on being more knowledgeable about education for the prosthetics career.