

8-4-2024

Enhancing Occupational Therapy Doctoral Capstone Planning: Integrating 2023 Standards into Curriculum

Samantha Edwards

Nova Southeastern University, se610@mynsu.nova.edu

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NSUWorks Citation

Samantha Edwards. 2024. *Enhancing Occupational Therapy Doctoral Capstone Planning: Integrating 2023 Standards into Curriculum*. Capstone. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (163)
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hpd_ot_capstone/163.

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Enhancing Occupational Therapy Doctoral Capstone Planning: Integrating 2023 Standards into Curriculum

Samantha Edwards OTD-S

Nova Southeastern University; Christina Kane, Ed.D., MS., OTR/L

Introduction

- The purpose of this capstone project was focused on education, administration, and service with the faculty at NSU OTD program. This capstone encompassed acquiring in-depth knowledge of the ACOTE standards change from 2018 to 2023 which were achieved in updating and designing graduate-level assignments and outlines in the capstone course. Education and teaching experience included assisting in teaching 2026 capstone seminar course and preparation for Fall 2024 CE course. Actively participated in on-site and online learning.
- Completed the following service in conjunction with Seniors in Service and Rebuilding Together:
 - Free Home Assessments to Disadvantaged Seniors
 - Assisted in Fall Prevention Symposium to First Responders of Tampa Bay

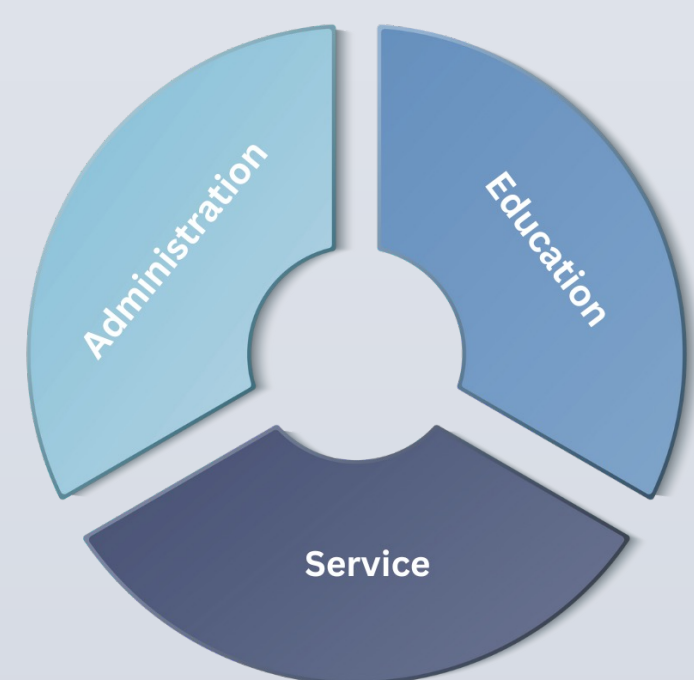


Figure 1. Graph Demonstrating Three Areas of the Capstone Project

Site Description

- Doctoral Capstone Experience was implemented at Nova Southeastern University's Tampa Bay Regional Campus within the Doctoral of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program.
- Mentor: Christina Kane, Ed.D., MS., OTR/L
- Population: Students (NSU OTD Cohort Class of 2026), Seniors (Adults 55+ residing in Tampa Bay area)

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Section D of the ACOTE Standards, which focuses on capstone experience, has been updated to emphasize the significance of documenting the doctoral capstone in the program's curriculum design, reflecting its goal and philosophy, and contributing to the development of in-depth knowledge in the selected area of interest.
- Students often face significant challenges in developing a capstone project idea due to a lack of practical OT experience. This gap can make it difficult for them to identify relevant, real-world issues to address in their projects, necessitating additional support and guidance from faculty and fieldwork educators.



Literature Review Summary

- The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards is crucial in curriculum development for occupational therapy education (DeAngelis, 2023).
- Capstone experiences better prepare students for the complexities of clinical practice, essential skills, and a deeper understanding of the OT process (Coppard et al., 2019).
- The Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process (OTPF) and the Occupational Therapy Manager Development Model (OTMDM) provide a thorough theoretical foundation for OT administration, addressing broad areas and specific administrative competencies necessary (Cohn et al., 2019; OTPF, 2020).
- The capstone experience bridges academic knowledge with real-world practice that is essential for future occupational therapy practitioners (NSU, 2022; ACOTE, 2018).

Capstone Project Description & Outcomes

A 16-week project focused on education and administration for acquiring in-depth knowledge of the updated ACOTE standards and assisting in developing and designing graduate-level assignments and outlines, as well as assisting in the teaching of the class of 2026 Capstone Seminar.



Figure 2. Updated PowerPoint of NBCOT information

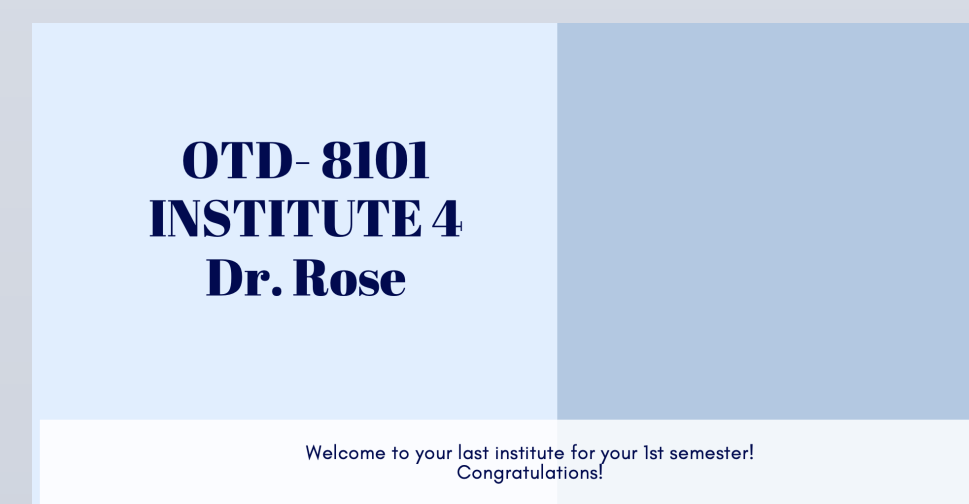


Figure 3. Updated PowerPoint for OTD 8101



Figure 4. Dr. Kane and I presenting at Fall Prevention Symposium

Project Outcomes:

- Educational resources to improve ELOTD student's understanding of focus areas with strategies and tools they need to aid in curriculum completion.
- Educational opportunity to educate first responders of Pinellas County about fall prevention.
- Gain experience in the teaching role at the doctorate level.



Figure 5. Fall Prevention resource for First Responders of Pinellas County

Project Title	Setting	Site	Mentor(s)
Expanding the Occupational Therapy Oncology Rehabilitation Program at James A. Haley Veterans Hospital	Outpatient Clinic	James A. Haley Veterans Hospital Tampa, FL	Wanda Van Harlingen, OTR/L ABDA, CLT
Clinical Practice Skills and Educational Resources for Managing Lymphedema	Outpatient Clinic	HCA South Pasadena Hospital St. Petersburg, FL	Lester Kaye Rubio, PhD, OTD-L, CLT-LANA
A Guide for the Treatment of Tendinitis	Outpatient Clinic	Select Physical Therapy Zephyr Hills, FL	Victoria Trucha, OTR-L, CHT, COMF-UE
Fall Prevention & Vision Therapy Program for Inpatient Rehab	Inpatient Rehab	HCA Largo West Largo, FL	Stephen Pearce OTR/L
Lymphedema Management for those Living with Spinal Cord Disorders to Address Caregiver Burden	Level 1a Trauma Unit	James A. Haley Veterans Hospital Tampa, FL	Emily Bertocini OTD, CLT, OTR/L

Figure 6. Created Student Resource

Learning Objectives Achieved

- Assisted in the development and implementation of the capstone curriculum that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical experience and updated ACOTE standards.
- Demonstrate active participation in teaching responsibilities, including grading assignments, updating PowerPoint presentations, and contributing to the overall educational experience.
- Led 2 capstone seminars to provide guidance and support to second year students in exploring and refining capstone project ideas.
- Gained understanding and experience in the role of a full-time administrative faculty member.



(https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/opportunity-ahead-road-sign)

Implications of OT Practice

As ACOTE introduces new standards, it presents an opportunity for occupational therapy programs to critically evaluate and update their curricula to align with these revised guidelines.

- The OT field needed for enhanced integration of experiential learning opportunities, such as the doctoral capstone experience, to bridge the gap between theory and practice effectively (DeAngelis et al., 2023).
- Stronger leadership development within curricula to equip future practitioners with the skills to champion the profession, drive innovation, and navigate emerging areas of practice.
- Increasing the rigor and duration of capstone projects could enhance their educational value and better prepare students for the demands of their future careers.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Kane Ed. D., MS., OTR/L for her guidance throughout each step of my capstone experience. I would like to also thank all faculty of the NSU OTD Entry Level program for allowing me to experience the administration side of the program.