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Independent Study Mentorship

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Assessment 13- Fall Semester Self Reflection

Starting out the year of ISM, I was hesitant and nervous about what to expect for the year to come. However, I quickly found out that ISM was a place where one can explore their own interests, passions, and is truly a safe space for self-reflection. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to be in a class like this; not only have I experienced growth in knowledge, but also have grown personally and developed poise and confidence through my experiences in ISM. Starting out the semester, there was definitely a pressure on me to do things perfectly in ISM. This limited my growth significantly; I would avoid making calls and requesting interviews due to lack of confidence and procrastination. Nevertheless, ISM taught me more than anything to persevere and grasp any opportunity no matter how small or unexpected it may be. Beginning the year, my original topic was pediatric nursing, however, through further research and interviews, I realized that I had a huge passion for helping children overcome mental disorders. After considering this option, I changed my topic to pediatric psychology and felt a huge weight lifted off my shoulders because I was finally pursuing a topic I was truly passionate for.

Reflecting upon experiences throughout the semester thus far, the biggest obstacle was finding a mentor. Despite all of the calls and emails sent, it seemed as if nobody was willing to give me interviewing opportunities, therefore, causing me a great deal of stress. This time period

was extremely frustrating and giving up started to seem like the best option. Nevertheless, I was brought back to the purpose of why I chose to take this class and my passions; I realized giving up would not only reflect poor character but also hinder my success in the grand scheme of things. It was not until Dr. Falla reached out and accepted an interview opportunity. Meeting Dr. Falla was the highlight of this semester. She was very knowledgeable about her field and had great insights during the interview, but more importantly, was more than willing to become my ISM mentor which shows her deep passion for the field of psychology. After establishing my mentorship with Dr. Falla, everything changed because my goal was finally achieved.

Reflecting upon the original work, the first idea in mind was to study the effects of modern age technology and how it has had mental developmental impacts on children. However, I knew this was too common of a topic and much research had already been done about it, therefore I had to dig deeper. While researching, I came across the topic of play therapy, which is a way for children to receive therapy and coping mechanisms in the form of play. This struck me as a very interesting topic, therefore, I did further research on it and even interviewed a play therapist as well for guidance. Finally, compiling many ideas together, I decided to build a play therapy friendly dollhouse. It is original in the sense that it is unlike an ordinary dollhouse; it contains various pieces of wood and items that can be arranged in several ways depending on the child, this is a technique often used in play therapy to encourage creativity and innovation in children. The purpose behind this dollhouse was to allow the child to play out their family dynamics in the house, allowing the therapist to assess any issues going on in the household and attempt to treat them through therapy. In children, most mental struggles begin in the family or can be genetic, therefore, allowing the child to interactively symbolize their life, relationships,

and struggles in the form of play, is a healthy form of self-expression and can have lasting benefits on their brain development. Therefore, I knew that this original work product would be a unique project that could have major impacts on the field of pediatric psychology.

The SMART goals I set at the beginning of the semester have been achieved for the most part as I found a mentor and created a unique original work. The final goal was to manage time more efficiently on projects and assignments. From the beginning of the year to now, I have noticed a substantial change in work ethic. Assessments used to seem long and strenuous, but I have learned how to not let perfectionism and procrastination take over. I have improved on chunking time better for projects and developing my thoughts into cohesive words. For the rest of the year, it will be important to keep my mission statement in mind for developing the final product. My goal is to help people, specifically children, achieve their own goals. Hopefully with the help of Dr. Falla, and my passion for pediatric psychology, I can make this happen.