

JUNE/JULY 2025

COX COLLEGE OTD PROGRAM

THE CAPSTONE CURRENT

Summertime Fun!

**BALANCING WORK
AND LEISURE
PARTICIPATION
THROUGH CAPSTONE**



Did you know...

In a twin study, the sibling that played a musical instrument was significantly associated with less likelihood of dementia and cognitive impairment.*

In Spring & Summer, the duration and number of leisure activities increase by 15-20% weekly!



Getting down to Business...

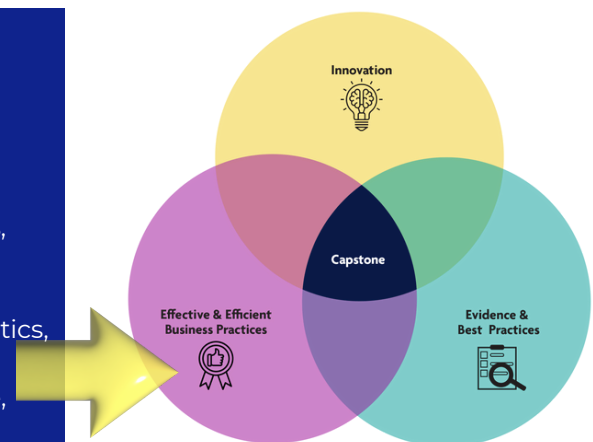
How does the Capstone reflect Effective Business Practices?

Capstone students complete a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis in OTD 901 to explore the needs of their population of interest. A population is defined by AOTA (2020) in the OTPF-4 as a large number of people that share common characteristics, health concerns or occupational challenges. To make sure their capstones align with the specific needs of their capstone experience, students receive mentorship from a content expert in their area of interest or their project type. These experts help the students conduct a site-specific needs assessment in OTD 905 Capstone Preparation course. Conducting a needs assessment is key to the success of any program and reflects the original theoretical design of capstone at Cox College to reflect effective and efficient business practices. Businesses incorporate logic, strategy, and decisions based on evidence. Students create a logic model to understand needs, and plan for action. Each capstone must incorporate data-driven decision-making to evaluate the impact of their capstone and embed measurement practices into their capstone evaluation plan. That is just a few ways that the capstone 'hits the target' in alignment with the OT Department mission.

Capstones may be fun, but they mean business!

How does the Capstone Project incorporate occupation - focus?

Every Cox College Capstone Project is grounded in occupation and aligned with relevant theoretical frameworks. Students design their projects to measure impact using data. This data may be from administering occupation-based assessment tools or questionnaires but align with the chosen theory or models. Throughout the proposal, they use the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework-4 to ensure the project remains within the OT scope of practice. Reflecting the Cox Health mission to serve communities, and the OT Department's focus on developing occupation-based practitioners, each capstone is designed to promote engagement in meaningful occupation and make a direct impact on the community.



What is happening with Capstone Currents?

- C2 is well into their 2B Fieldwork Experiences learning clinical practice skills to apply to their capstones in fall
- C1 is learning about needs assessments and logic models in OTD 775 Best Practice Analysis in Occupational Therapy in Community Settings this summer
- Faculty mentors will attend training in July for Capstone Project preparation planning
- C1 continues work with pitching and obtaining Content Experts/Site Supervisors in July/August
- Opportunity to showcase the capstone program to ACOTE review team in June

*American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process (4th ed.). American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74(Suppl. 2), 7412410010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

*Balbag, M.A., Pedersen, N.L., & Gatz (2014). Playing a musical instrument as a protective factor against dementia and cognitive impairment: A Population-based twin study. International Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2014/836748>

Written By: Jamie Bergner, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, COMT

Capstone Coordinator Corner

The Cox College OTD Capstone has many layers!

Capstone is self-directed

'Self-directed' means projects or experiences are not assigned. Students have the opportunity to align their passions, interests, values, backgrounds, strengths and professional or personal goals with capstone populations and topics of their choosing that are supported by literature and in the scope of occupational therapy. Students develop an in-depth knowledge on a new topic or with a new population *advancing* their skills.

Capstone promotes leadership skill development

OTD students at Cox College progressively develop leadership skills by actively guiding their Capstone teams. Each student is supported by a network of mentors—including the Capstone coordinator, faculty mentors and advisors, community advisors, and site supervisors/content experts—who help them achieve their individualized learning objectives. This mentorship model incorporates evidence-based educational practices that foster metacognition (reflective thinking), and promote social-emotional learning for essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, self-reflection, and self-regulation. The capstone curriculum is grounded in strengths-based frameworks and a growth mindset, providing the foundation for leadership development. These skills are intentionally cultivated as students implement their capstone projects and work toward their academic and professional goals.

Map of the Capstone River

Capstone Terminology

- M.O.U.: A 2018 standards term for memorandum of understanding that establishes criteria for mentorship between the content expert/site supervisor, the student and the college. MOUs outline a supervision plan, evaluation plan, and student specific learning objectives. This term is used in the 2018 standards.
- Written Agreement: The new term used in the 2023 standards. A formal, signed, agreement between the organization and OT Program that is in place prior to the capstone experience. Minimally, this agreement includes specific objectives, plans for evaluation, supervision, and mentoring and outlines the responsibilities of all parties. This is a contract that is signed before placement of capstone experience.

Rafting Reflections

Lead Rower Reflections: Leisure exploration in nature promotes achieving developmental milestones

Written By:
Ashley Goodlett, OTS



Exposure and contact with natural environments, like the outdoors, have shown to have a significant positive effect on children's cognitive and moral development (Kellert, 2002; Summers et al., 2020). 'Nature therapy' is a broad term that can fall under the scope of many other professions, but the role of occupational therapists in these settings have yet to be fully defined. **Research is needed to understand the occupation of play** in the developing child and how the environmental context may be used to stage intrinsically motivating OT interventions.

Through Capstone Seminar, my project has evolved to explore and report the outcomes of an outdoor-based occupational therapy program for preschool-aged children with autism in my community. I completed an inspiring service learning assignment at **Roots Therapy Solutions**. I have witnessed how occupational therapists can support play opportunities for children with autism through **creative engagement in nature**. This project aims to highlight the meaningful outcomes of nature-based occupational therapy interventions and address current gaps in the OT literature. In doing so, it will contribute to evidence-based practice, support local OT community partners, and advance the profession through reporting outcomes of innovative service delivery models.




Capstone Current, Volume 5

Guest Editor:

Ashley Goodlett, OTS

Faculty Editor:

Jamie Bergner,
OTD, OTR/L, CHT, COMT

 COX COLLEGE

References available upon request