

Mentor Visit Assessment #3

Mentor: Dr. Kayla Covert

Profession: Vestibular Physical Therapist

Location: At Home (Virtual)

Date: February 10, 2022

Time: 12:00 P.M.

Assessment:

Going into my mentor visit with Dr. Covert, I hoped to discuss my research on recent genetic advances in autism, and this is exactly what we did. Together we analyzed the article I had read prior to our visit, and broke-down what purpose it would serve in my final product project.

Through the article, I learned that autism is one of the most heritable disorders and can be both genetically and environmentally related. When discussing this point with Dr. Covert, she emphasized the importance of using this information to take the guilt off of parents. As parents of autistic children usually feel guilty for their child's state, explaining that autism has a multifactorial origin may be able to lessen the guilt parents are bearing. Moreover the article explained how parents may want to perform genetic testing to figure out the root cause of their child's autism, but that this may not always be a reassuring thing. Oftentimes if a rare genetic variant is found while doing genetic testing, this can lead to things like shame, anxiety, and even have detrimental effects on health related issues like life insurance. This was very interesting to me because I had never really imagined that genetic testing could have negative effects, but rather only give closure to parents. Also, Dr. Covert and I found a commonality between this article and a previous article we had discussed which was that autism is usually combined with other

neurodevelopmental disorders, so this may be important to consider in the building of my project itself.

Furthermore, after analyzing the article together, Dr. Covert proceeded to give me some tips to better the quality of my research. She explained to me that every doctoral profession has associations and encouraged me to start researching on websites such as the National Autism Association. She also explained to me that a good way to better my research search engine is to capitalize my non-important words which will tell the computer algorithm that it is not a keyword. This is something that I had never heard off and was so thankful she told me about, as I can now make my searches more specific, and therefore more tailored to what I am hoping to find out about. Moreover Dr. Covert and I decided that a good way to narrow in on what format of literature I want to convert my research into will be to go into my mom's office and see what types of things are hanging in her office. Dr. Covert explained that she thinks an infographic will be the best way to display my research into an easy-to-understand piece of information for parents.

Through our visit, Dr. Covert helped me continue to make great strides in my final product project. As usual, she broke down all the information I was finding into easy to digest terms, and really helped aid my understanding on the neurological factors of autism. Now I need to focus my research on things like the specific functioning and speech development of autistic children.