



## Hi There!

### Welcome to my Honors Portfolio

I am a student athlete as well as an honors student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I will be graduating in the spring of 2022 with a major in Bio-medical Sciences and a minor in Psychology. After graduating I plan to attend graduate school to become a Physical Therapist

Visit the tabs below to see why I chose the honors program and to see a brief overview of my leadership, research, and intercultural engagement experiences

[Why Honors Essay](#)

[Competency Experience Log](#)

## MNSU Honors Program Mission Statement

The Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is committed to supporting motivated undergraduate students by providing them with exceptional learning opportunities, mentoring relationships, and a supportive community that fosters their personal, academic, and professional development.

The program is grounded in three competencies: leadership; research, scholarly, and creative activity; and intercultural engagement.

## Personal Mission Statement

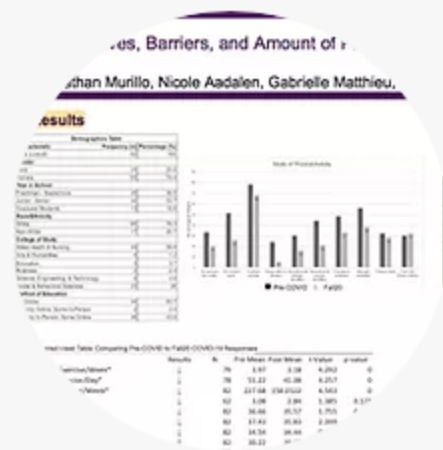
During my time as MNSU I have been able to grow personally and professionally through many experiences that have helped me develop my leadership, research, and intercultural engagement abilities. I was challenged to seek out new opportunities and push myself. Moving forward I plan to apply what I've learned to my future profession as well as to my personal development as a respectful, culturally competent, and informed leader.

## Honors Competencies



Leadership Experiences

[Visit Page](#)



Research Experiences

[Visit Page](#)



Intercultural Engagement Experiences

[Visit Page](#)

# Leadership Synthesis Essay

Taking the **Strengths Finder Assessment** helped me reflect on some of my leadership qualities. Coming into college I felt that I had strong leadership abilities. In high school I was recommended for several leadership positions and felt confident leading others. As I began to learn, a lot of that confidence came from the hierarchy of high school in which the older students were nearly automatically given leadership rights. When I started college, I was the youngest all over again and felt that because I was new, I didn't have the right to my own opinions. As I discussed my results with other people, I realized that everyone has different strengths and that everyone has something to contribute to a team. Sometimes in society the more extraverted and outgoing qualities are praised, however there are many other strengths that are necessary to create a functional team. I was able to see this happen in real time throughout my years on the **MSU swim team**.

Team members bring different strengths that help the team succeed. Some of my teammates were more vocally encouraging, some who inspired by being a good role model, and others who used their futuristic qualities to organize team bonding events. During my time on the team, I got used to the 'daily grind' of the long busy days which (while required) taught me the importance of dedication and hard work, which is reflective of my 'Deliberative' strength. I was able to use this deliberative strength as a **Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) representative** for my team when planning team events and communicating information. Without captains, my position as a SAAC representative gave me more of a leadership position on my team as I was responsible for more communication and planning.

A challenge I faced on my team was the delegation of leadership. Unlike SAAC we didn't have an 'executive board' or team captains, which made for many uncertainties as to who was responsible for what and led to an overall lack of action. Additionally, we had a large senior class and struggled to be unified which made it difficult to implement changes. In SAAC the executive board met separately in addition to our meetings and were all on the 'same page' when it came to expectations and communication. This helped me realize that in addition to having a strong leader, a unified front is necessary to create a unified team. I had a hard time bringing in new ideas because I lacked the support of other seniors.

On my team, I felt successful as a leader when I didn't give up in the face of adversity. There were many times I felt challenged and defeated, but I told myself that if things didn't go the way I wanted it wasn't going to be because I didn't try. This made me think of my second top strength as a learner because I attempted to analyze what worked and didn't work and how I could change my approach in my future to achieve success – which is also reflective of my first strength as an achiever.

My experiences have helped me grow as a leader and create a personal leadership philosophy that revolves around encouraging others with the power to effect change, cultivate confidence and inspire personal growth. I can apply this philosophy to future endeavors as I continue to grow as a leader personally and professionally. I can use these values to lift up the people around me and push them to reach their goals. Eventually as a physical therapist I will use this philosophy to motivate my patients to put in the hard work to recover from injury and get back to their daily lives.

## Leadership

### My Experiences

Fall 2020-Spring 2022

**Student Athletic Advisory Committee**

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Fall 2018-Spring 2022

**Womens Swim Team at MNSU**

[Visit Reflection](#)

Fall 2019

**Strengths Finder**

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# Research Synthesizing Essay

Throughout my research experiences I have become much more comfortable and competent in conducting research. I have learned how to work on my own, as well as with research team members to conduct research. I have also learned how to ask mentors and professors for help in guiding my research.

In my **Research Methods course** I was able to take an in depth look at the research process and conduct my first solo research project. While it was survey based it was the first time that I went through the research process start to finish on my own. I was guided by my professor and given feedback along the way to compile my findings into a research paper. I was able to practice my technical writing and apply my knowledge of statistics from prior classes to analyze my own data. This helped me gain a more tangible sense of statistics and how they are used in research.

The following year I was able to apply my new understanding of the research process while working with a **research team**. We worked to understand how the pandemic impacted physical activity in college students. This was a much different experience than when I wrote my own research paper. I found that I appreciated having team members to discuss with and to help divide the work. I enjoyed having other peoples' input, ideas, and another set of eyes to catch mistakes. One thing we could have done better was deciding on a mode of communication. Initially our mentor used Microsoft teams which I hadn't used before. It has a chat function but few of us checked it regularly which made it difficult to progress. My research team was able to present at the virtual Undergraduate Research Symposium (URC), which was the first time I presented research to non-classmates. While intimidating at first, the virtual setting made the experience much less daunting because we stayed in a 'break out room' on zoom while people would pass through and ask questions.

The experience of doing research virtually was very difficult. I met with my research team over zoom which allowed us to communicate but it wasn't the same as meeting in person. We met roughly once a month with our mentor professor and would be assigned different tasks, which usually could be completed individually. We worked well as a team when we got together but we couldn't establish better communication. We communicated mainly by email or over Microsoft teams which often doesn't get checked as often as a separate group message. This caused some delays in moving forward because people didn't respond very fast. Communicating with my research team was something that I didn't have to do when conducting my research for my Research Methods Course. and not being able to do research or meet with my research team in person. Our research was mentored by a Human Performance professor, whose research typically involves human subjects. This was very challenging because we couldn't pursue in person research due to COVID-19 restrictions.

I felt successful when everything came together, and my team presented our findings. I felt knowledgeable about our research when we were asked questions and I was able to answer. The experience gave me more confidence in my research abilities and helped me see research as more fulfilling, important, and exciting than I had before.

I can apply my understanding of research papers to help me interpret scholarly articles and discern their efficacy. I can also apply my technical writing skills to other future research projects. Additionally, I can use my experience presenting to improve my speaking skills and predict questions that I may be asked about my research. In the future as a Physical Therapist, I can apply my experience working with others in my field of study to collaborate with therapists and create the best outcome for patients.

## Research Experiences

Spring 2020  
**Research Methods Course**

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Spring 2021  
**Research Project**

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# Intercultural Engagement Synthesis Essay

I grew up in a relatively sheltered suburb of the twin cities. Many of my classmates were born and raised in Minnesota. When I started college, I hadn't developed any meaningful relationships with people who came from a different background than me, nor had I thought about the vastness of other cultures that exist outside of the United States. My experience as a language partner and shadowing physical therapy have helped me become more culturally aware, accepting, and curious about culture as a whole.

My experience as a **language partner** helped me develop more cultural awareness, curiosity, and respect. It was the first time I spoke in depth about culture with someone of a different ethnic background. I have lived in Minnesota my whole life and never gave much thought to life in other parts of the world. In high school I learned more about bigger events and traditions in other countries like 'Dia Des Los Muertos' and 'La Tomatina'. We didn't talk as much about everyday life, which I think shows more about a country's culture because it helps cultural values that drive some traditions or customs. Talking to my language partner helped me gain a better understanding of what life is like in another country and it made me more curious and excited to learn about culture. It also made me more aware and accepting of other cultures when I shadowed physical therapists.

My experience **shadowing** helped me gain a foundational understanding of the setting in which I will eventually be working. It took my experience interacting with another culture in more of a casual way with my language partner to be able to shift to a professional setting which was at first uncomfortable. I had already been introduced to the environment before as a patient but my experience shadowing and seeing the variety of people that therapists work with was new to me. Initially I was nervous that the patients wouldn't want me observing their session or would see me as incompetent because I was young. This was the opposite of how I felt with my language partner because we were the same age, and I didn't want to come off like a 'know it all' because I was helping her practice her English.

A challenging time with my language partner was when I felt like I was running out of things to ask her and we still had some time left because we would speak for an hour at a time. This was the opposite of how I felt during my shadowing experiences, I was never sure how much I was supposed to talk or ask questions and I kept quiet most of the time because I didn't want to get in the way. The communication barrier in the shadowing setting was usually patients not being able to hear me because a lot of them had hearing loss, while the barrier with my language partner were the words themselves. I felt successful in both settings when I got to know my language partner or a patient and was able to help them do something even though what I was helping with was wildly different.

My shadowing experience also introduced me to the culture of healthcare professionals and how they work together. The majority of my shadowing occurred in a primarily geriatric inpatient transitional care facility where teams of occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers, physical therapists, and nurses worked together to provide care for patients. I realized the importance of communication and the value of healthcare providers working together to help benefit the patient. This is an example of cross-cultural communication as therapists from different specialties collaborating to create the best outcome for their patients. The interpersonal skills that I developed as a language partner also helped me be more comfortable around patients of different backgrounds. It made me more comfortable with the idea of working and communicating with a team of healthcare providers in the future that may come from different backgrounds. These experiences made me much more curious about culture and helped realize how big the world really is. My intercultural framework is to be aware of biased thoughts, to seek out culturally different experiences, and to be respectfully curious and welcoming towards someone of another culture.

## Intercultural Engagement Experiences

Fall 2020

Language Partner Program

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Summer 2021

Physical Therapy Shadowing

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