



Ashlin Young

Honors Portfolio

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Welcome to my portfolio!

My name is Ashlin Young, and I am currently a third year Honors student at Minnesota State University studying communication sciences and disorders and Spanish. I plan on graduating in the Spring of 2023 and attending graduate school to specialize in speech-language pathology. Thank you for visiting my portfolio!

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About Me



My Home

I grew up in Algona, Iowa and graduated from Algona High School. When I go home, I love spending time with my family and friends, going thrift shopping, and spending time outdoors.



My Second Home

I am proud to call Mankato my second home. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I have been involved in several student organizations and activities including cross country, track and field, Student Ambassadors, NSSLHA, Language Partner Program, Spanish Club, and a campus ministry called InterVarsity. I have met so many wonderful people here and am excited to finish my education as a Maverick!



My Passions

This fall, I will attend graduate school for speech pathology here at MSU Mankato. In my future career as a speech-language pathologist, I hope to work with clients of all different backgrounds to help them overcome communication disorders. I have always loved learning about different cultures and have especially enjoyed studying Spanish. My hope is that studying a second language will allow me to help more clients in my profession.

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MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
HONORS

MSU Honors Program

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.

My Mission Statement

My mission as I progress through the honors program is to grow in the three competencies in order to expand my knowledge, gain a better understanding for other cultures, and become a better leader.

Why Honors?

My participation in the Honors program has greatly enhanced my college experience. The Honors program has challenged me to step out of my comfort zone by engaging in various activities that I might not have otherwise participated in. These experiences have helped me discover my leadership strengths, learn more about different cultures, and expand my knowledge.

One of my greatest areas of growth has been in leadership. Since coming to college, I have taken on several leadership positions including the club for my major (NSSLHA), leading a Bible study, and being a student-athlete. Each of these positions has taught me something about myself and about leadership. I have discovered that my top five leadership strengths are inclusion, belief, harmony, futuristic, and connectedness. After becoming aware of these strengths, I noticed how evident they are as I lead. In each position, it was one of my top priorities to make sure everyone involved felt included and valued. In NSSLHA, I ensured everyone had a voice by creating surveys to get constructive feedback from others. Through leading the Bible study, I created a positive environment where each person could share openly and honestly and feel supported. As a student-athlete, I cultivated meaningful relationships with my teammates and checked in with them often. Reflecting on my leadership experiences also taught me about my weaknesses that I will continue to actively work on.

My awareness and appreciation for other languages and cultures have also grown immensely through the Honors program. Without the Honors program, I would not have known about many of the intercultural activities that I have participated in. I came into college with a declared Spanish minor, but as my love for learning about this culture increased, I switched it to a double major. The first program that I joined, the Language Partner Program, taught me that it wasn't only the Hispanic culture that I enjoyed learning about. I got to interact with students from China in this program. Learning about their culture was very interesting to me because it was different from the two main cultures I was familiar with- Hispanic and my own. This opened my eyes to a bigger picture, thinking about all of the cultures of the world. I knew that I had barely scratched the surface, only learning about two different cultures. I also learned about another culture, or group of people, being grouped together based on disability. I participated in Garden EngAGEment, where I interacted with individuals with Alzheimer's and their care partners. This activity opened my eyes to what it is like to live with or have a family member with a disability. I grew in compassion for these individuals and a desire to speak up when I see individuals with disabilities being discriminated against or treated unfairly. I learned how to support these individuals and have meaningful conversations with them.

The biggest area of growth for me has been my participation in research. Without the encouragement from the Honors program, I don't know that I would have joined a research team. I always found it interesting but worried about not having enough time in my busy schedule. I soon realized, though, that I could make the time for it, and it was worth it. I am still in the process of completing my first research project and will present my findings in the Spring of 2023, but I have already learned more about being part of a research team, the research process, and how it specifically applies to my field. Joining the team also taught me that I should do things out of my comfort zone because I will often grow as a result of it.

The Honors program has shaped my college experience into a very meaningful one, full of learning experiences, meaningful reflection, and a lot of growth. I am grateful that I decided to join the Honors program and for how it has impacted my life as a student and future professional. The knowledge and experiences I have gained will stick with me for the rest of my life and lead me toward success in my future career.

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Leadership

Leadership Synthesis Essay

Coming into college, I knew I wanted to become involved in the campus community and student organizations. However, I did not expect to step into a leadership position during my freshman year. My two first leadership positions started my second semester at college, and I have stuck with them both throughout my entire undergraduate career. Leading for almost three years in these roles has allowed me to see transformation in my leadership skills. My skills have developed through engaging in additional leadership positions and my involvement in the Honors program.

Being an Honors student has pushed me to take on leadership roles and taught me more about myself as a leader. In Honors 201, I learned about leadership styles and individual strengths that I have as a leader. I took the Clifton Strengths Finder test which told me my top five leadership strengths. Learning these strengths not only boosted my confidence but also motivated me to capitalize on my strengths when leading.

I learned that I can still be a leader even when I do not feel equipped or qualified. In each of my leadership positions, there were times when I doubted my ability to lead. I started [leading a Bible study](#) on campus during my freshman year. I initially felt that I didn't know enough about the Bible and worried I wouldn't have answers to questions that people would ask. This almost held me back from leading the study. In that same semester, I became a [Student Ambassador](#), giving campus tours to prospective students. Again, I was only a freshman, so I was still getting adjusted to campus and learning my way around. I doubted if I knew enough about campus to lead a group on a tour. During my third and final year, I became [president of NSSLHA](#), the student organization for my major. I had just decided to graduate a year early and hadn't completed as many classes as most seniors. Although I was technically a senior, I still felt like a junior. I felt out of place at first and thought that someone who had been in the program for the full four years should be president.

In each of these scenarios, I overcame obstacles to pursue leadership. At times when I felt unqualified to lead, I looked back on my leadership strengths and drew my confidence from there. I tried to prepare the best I could for each experience and not compare myself to others. I learned that there will always be someone to whom I can compare myself and consequently feel inadequate. There will always be someone else who can do the job just as well or even better. However, this does not hold me back from leading. Instead, I learn from my weaknesses to better myself. I seek honest feedback from peers and other leaders. I will always have areas of improvement, and rather than dwelling on them, I use them to motivate me to become a better leader.

Through my variety of leadership experiences, I practiced different types of leadership. In my role as president of NSSLHA, I practiced delegative leadership, meaning I divided tasks among our executive board. As a Bible study leader, I practiced participative leadership, encouraging all members of the group to contribute and promoting open communication. These leadership experiences led me to form my own leadership philosophy. A leader is someone who can confidently guide others toward a common goal. Confidence in leadership is not dependent solely on the qualifications of the leader. Rather, confidence is drawn from becoming aware of one's own leadership strengths and capitalizing on those. A confident leader can speak up when needed and listen to other team members.

In my future profession as a speech pathologist, I will often work on interprofessional teams. I anticipate that I will encounter all different types of leadership in my profession. Whether I am the one leading or receiving guidance, having experience with these leadership styles will help me adapt to whatever task we are trying to accomplish. Taking on leadership roles such as a Student Ambassador and leading a Bible study before I felt ready for them taught me that I can lead even when I do not feel equipped. This will help me on my journey through graduate school and becoming a speech therapist.



Research Experience

Research Synthesis Essay

As a future speech therapist, I will work with clients to help them manage or overcome communication disorders. The field of speech pathology heavily relies on evidence-based practices, so it is important that I understand how research is conducted, how to analyze the findings, and how to implement the findings into my practice. In order to provide the best care to my clients, I need to stay up to date on the most recent research.

Coming into college, I had some base knowledge about research from my high school science classes. Throughout my undergraduate studies though, I have learned a lot more about the research process. My second year, I took a class called [Interprofessional Practice and Research](#). In this class, I expanded my knowledge about different parts of research such as forming a research question, finding and analyzing credible sources, composing a literature review, designing a study, organizing data, and interpreting the findings. This class helped me build on the knowledge I already had and begin to apply it to the field of speech therapy. As I transitioned into my first application of these research skills, I applied this knowledge even further. The first research team I joined was focused on a program called [Garden EngAGEMENT](#). This program provides individuals with dementia and their care partners an opportunity to engage in sensory activities and meaningful conversations while enjoying nature. It also provides students or members of the community with an opportunity to volunteer and gain experience working with individuals with dementia. Joining this research team allowed me to put what I had learned about research into practice by developing a research proposal.

Throughout my research experiences, I have learned about interprofessional practice. In each of my experiences, we either collaborated with people in other fields or explored previous research within a different discipline. In the research class, our research proposals were to focus on an issue within our field and some type of mental health disorder. This led me to explore scholarly articles about depression, which does not fall under my scope of practice. However, throughout this process, I learned about the importance of being informed about other professions as I will likely have clients with needs that overlap with other professions. As I participated in the garden, I volunteered with students from other majors such as nursing, social work, and dental hygiene. Again, it is very likely that I could have the same clients as other professionals such as these and we may collaborate. Working with students from other departments gave me a glimpse of what this may look like in the future. We can each bring our own strengths and specializations together to support the individual where they need it.

One of the most prevalent lessons I learned, and the one that will be most applicable in my profession, is analyzing research and interpreting the results. As a future clinician, I will explore different assessments and therapy tools prior to using them in sessions. These tools include a section about the research behind their development and credibility. The findings can be difficult to interpret without knowledge about research or certain terms commonly used in research. Both the research class as well as my participation in the dementia research project have prepared me to understand the research behind these tools. I will be confident in understanding how they were developed and selecting the best materials for my clients based on the most recent research.

As of now, I hope to go straight into speech therapy after graduate school rather than going into research. However, it will be very important that I understand the research process and know how to interpret the most recent findings. As a future clinician, I want to provide the best care to my clients as I can. This means staying up to date on all assessment and therapy methods. The experience I have gained in research will help me analyze recent findings and select the most appropriate tools for my clients as a future clinician.



Intercultural Engagement

Intercultural Engagement Synthesis Essay

Throughout my undergraduate studies at MSU, my understanding and appreciation of cultures different than my own has grown immensely. Both of my programs, Spanish and communication disorders, as well as the Honors program have pushed me out of my comfort zone into experiencing cultures in ways I never had before. There is always more to learn in a world with so much diversity. I look forward to continuing my journey to become more culturally competent as I move on to graduate school and my future career.

Coming into college, I had limited knowledge about cultures other than my own. I grew up in a small town in Iowa that was predominately white, and almost everyone I knew had similar upbringings and traditions. Through history classes, I learned about different religions and cultures, but we just scratched the surface of all that they entail. I began studying Spanish in high school, and it soon became my favorite class to attend. I enjoyed learning the language and about the culture, so I decided to continue studying it in college.

Throughout my journey of learning about other cultures, I have become aware of my own biases and actively work to dismantle them. My freshman year, I joined the [Language Partner Program](#), where I met once per week over zoom with a student from China. The purpose of this program is to match students with international students who are looking to improve their English skills. Going into this experience, I had preconceived misconceptions about the students without consciously being aware of it. These misconceptions were based on generalizations I had made about individuals of Chinese culture. Even though these were unintentional, I came to recognize these as biases and as a result have worked to eliminate them. My [Spanish major](#) along with [a trip I took to the Texas-Mexico border](#) have also revealed to me some of the misconceptions that I had toward this group. Similarly, I have worked to transform my way of thinking and reshape how I view people from other cultures. This will be very applicable in my future as a speech therapist as I hope to work with both English and Spanish speaking clients.

A concept I have learned throughout my studies is the importance of being aware of others' culture when speaking with them. Culture shapes how we speak and interact with others, and each cultures' social norms may be different. When speaking with someone from a different culture, something I say or do may come off as weird or even offensive even though it is accepted in my culture. This cultural barrier can be difficult to overcome at first, especially if the two people are not familiar with each other's cultures. As a future clinician, I will research my clients' ethnicity and culture prior to working with them. A significant part of making clients feel included and comfortable is knowing they are accepted for who they are. Beyond that, my goal as a clinician is to treat all clients with equity. This doesn't mean that I treat each client equally. Rather, I treat each client with what they need. Clients of minority groups may need more support in certain areas than other clients. I will recognize this and tailor my plan of action to meet each clients' needs.

Throughout each of these experiences, I have realized we are prone to making preconceived assumptions about people based on their culture, race, or ethnicity. These assumptions may be due to our life experiences (or lack thereof), what we have heard other people say, or what we read on the internet. To a certain extent, we cannot avoid making these assumptions. We naturally do it, often without intentionally thinking about it. However, this is not an excuse to feed into the misconceptions or biases that we have. It is our duty to recognize these biases in ourselves, point out others' in a loving way, and actively work to dismantle them.

Engaging with other cultures has greatly enriched my college experience, and it has further prepared me to work with clients of different cultures. I enjoy interacting with people who are different from me because it is a great way to learn while showing support for others. Learning about other cultures will be a lifelong journey for me, and I hope to always grow in my knowledge about other cultures.

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