

THREADING PT-PTA RELATIONSHIP CONTENT THROUGHOUT A DPT CURRICULUM

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Abstract (Limited to 300 Words)

PURPOSE: To describe how one DPT program infuses curricular content on the PT-PTA relationship throughout the curriculum.

DESCRIPTION: Faculty and a PTA faculty assistant with teaching responsibilities reviewed existing course objectives on the PTA role, supervision, teaming, etc. The curricular content and timing of the content throughout the curriculum were also reviewed. New opportunities to systematically infuse curricular experiences related to the PT-PTA relationship were identified. Examples include: .Task analysis and division of responsibility in physical therapy (Watts) is used as a framework and referenced by students at several points in the curriculum. .Structured debates on topics such as delegating to a PTA versus an athletic trainer. .Discussion topics: How much decision making do PTAs have related to interventions outlined in the plan of care? .Discussion and debate on current issues within the APTA affecting the PTA (e.g. full vote at the component level).

SUMMARY OF USE: Qualitative data indicate students value the learning sessions and gain better understanding of a PTA's unique perspective, knowledge, and skill set. Program surveys sent one-year post-graduation ask graduates if they feel the educational experiences with and about PTA students better prepared them to work in the clinic. As intentional PT-PTA learning experiences were integrated in the curriculum, results showed a steady increase in percentage of respondents reporting the educational experiences better prepared them for working with PTAs - from 29% of respondents (2006) to 50% (2007) to 57% (2008).

IMPORTANCE TO MEMBERS: A systematic infusion of curricular experiences related to the PT-PTA relationship may be of interest to those who wish to enhance development of DPT students' understanding of the PT-PTA relationship in order to better prepare students for clinical practice and to promote the vision that PTs and PTAs are the only providers of physical therapy.