

The primary mission of the CSUS Department of Physical Therapy, in harmony with the University, the College and the Profession, is to educate competent physical therapy generalist practitioners who demonstrate ethical, responsible, professional behavior, who are sensitive to cultural and psychosocial differences, who use evidence derived from research as a base for practice, who utilize critical thinking and problem-solving, who practice lifelong learning, and who provide services that contribute to the optimal health and function of the residents of the communities they serve.

In order to meet our mission and educational objective of preparing graduates who can use evidence derived from research as a base for practice and who practice lifelong learning, information competence is a critical thread within a large curriculum plan. Examples of expectations related to information competence are provided.

During the first weeks of courses in the master's curriculum, students participate in an orientation to the library and the electronic searches available to them through the library. Students establish a free connection through the university computing center that allows them access to the university's network and Internet access from any on-campus computer laboratory or from their own homes. References such as Griffin's *Directory of Internet Sources for Health Professionals* are available through the program. Students also complete an information competency exercise in PT 202 (Research Methods in PT I). This exercise, accessed on WebCT, requires the students to access websites that provide information concerning physical therapy clinical practice and related research. Learning early how to access information that they will be required to utilize throughout the curriculum and their careers assists students along the road to fluency with recent technology and with securing and evaluating information. Learning to critically evaluate that information for accuracy is an ongoing subject covered in Research Methods in PT I & II and other courses. Their gained familiarity with the APTA's Hooked-on-Evidence database, prepares them to critically assess the efficacy of physical therapy practice that they may see during their clinical affiliations and later practice.

Students first are taught how to critically evaluate research, both quantitative and qualitative, in PT202 and PT222, the Research Methods in PT I & II courses. They then are required to apply these newly learned skills to the physical therapy literature in their other courses through readings, written assignments, presentations, and discussions. In the PT202 and PT 222 courses students are given an article to read that exemplifies a study design pertinent to the type of research design being studied at that time in the course. The students are asked to identify and critique the study's justification, purpose, methods and conclusions. This exercise reinforces the students' ability to recognize the appropriate study designs utilized in a given situation. Students submit a critical review of an article from the literature to their portfolios to demonstrate their abilities to critically appraise the literature.

In PT222, students are trained in evaluating an article in the Hooked-on-Evidence format, and then are required to review an article and enter the article in the Hooked-on-Evidence database. Students are taught to use the database as a research tool identifying articles specifically addressing the efficacy of physical therapy practice. Students are also taught a format for performing a literature review on the effectiveness of a physical therapy treatment for a specific physical therapy intervention.

In PT226, the Clinical Agents course, students evaluate peer reviewed studies related to specific modality efficacy. In the musculoskeletal and neurological series courses, PT224 & PT 244, PT225 & PT245, students read and critique the physical

therapy literature related to the efficacy of specific evaluative or treatment procedures applied to orthopedic and neurological cases. They are required to find articles both pro and con related to different interventions and evaluate the relative validity and reliability of the published research. In the PT266, Special Topics in PT II course, students must write an evidence-based practice paper related to one of the topics covered in the course, such as wound healing, drawing on the current literature.

Students are required to develop evidence-based rationales for the treatment approach of a topic in neurological rehabilitation in PT224. Written and oral presentations of their findings are required. This is an assignment that students can choose to place in their portfolio as an example of their ability to critically evaluate the literature.

In two courses students are asked to go to specific websites to complete assignments. In PT208 Patient/Practitioner Interactions, taken in the first semester, students access the Managers' Electronic Resource Center (<http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm:file=3.0.htm&language=english&module=provider>) to take the Quality and Culture Quiz. Students follow links from the Quiz to access more information about questions missed on the Quiz. In the second semester, students complete a Protection of Human Subjects tutorial for PT 222 Research Methods in PT II. This tutorial is found on the University California, Davis Office of Research webpage (<http://research.ucdavis.edu/home.cfm?id=OVC,0>).

Information competency in the physical therapy curriculum is threaded through many courses. Initially students are introduced to the mechanics of finding information pertinent to physical therapy practice. With time students find the information independently, then interpret and organize the information in a manner that will enhance their clinical practice.