

NATA Education Think Tank Highlights

Donald Fuller, PhD, ATC

Baylor University, Waco, TX

The following is a brief review of selected topics discussed on the NATA Think Tank Educator Forum. Only NATA members can access the archived messages and discussions. To view this forum, go to <http://forum.nata.org/thinktanks> (login required).

Sim Man (February 6, 2009 – 4 postings)

SimMan is a portable, advanced patient simulator for team training (<http://www.laerdal.com/document.asp?docid=1022609>). It provides simulation-based education to challenge and test students' clinical and decision making skills during patient care scenarios. Many nursing and medical programs have started using these. The following YouTube link contains videos demonstrating the use of SimMan:

http://video.google.com/videosearch?hl=en&q=simman+nursing&um=1&ie=UTF-8&ei=1UY3SvyIASGDtgeb8djhDA&sa=X&oi=video_result_group&resnum=5&ct=title#q=simman+&hl=en&emb=0

There is a lot of potential for using such technology in athletic training programs including, but not limited to, emergency care and monitoring vital signs. Perhaps its greatest impact would be in a general medical conditions class because it lacks applications related to orthopedic care. Other disadvantages include the availability of the system, cost, and the low number of students who can use it at one time. Whether you're able to use it with the nursing students at your institution, or get a grant to purchase one, this is a great teaching tool.

Quality Athletic Training Students' Associations (April 12, 2009 – 3 postings)

Although AT students are busy with classes, clinical education responsibilities, studying, and other personal activities, many still find time to engage with their Athletic Training Students' Association or Club. Most meetings are either held early in the morning before class or after practices. Either way, it is challenging



Donald Fuller is the Undergraduate Athletic Training Program Director at Baylor University. He is also the moderator of the Educator Think Tank.

Donald_Fuller@baylor.edu

to get students to attend the meetings and stay alert. Student associations meet once a month or semester, depending on the number of agenda items and activities in which the group participates.

Some associations host guest speakers ranging from unique athletic trainers to specialized medical professionals. Some of these speakers may provide advanced knowledge for continuing education to ATCs or other health care providers who may attend. Other topics discussed may include fund-raising, social events, Quiz Bowl participation, promotional events, and Athletic Trainer month. Some activities these student associations participate in or develop include: a) student district meetings, b) road/bike races or triathlons, c) conferences, seminars, d) Capitol Hill day, e) ATS Olympics, f) social events, g) health fairs, h) massage clinics, etc.

For multiple reasons, it is sometimes a challenge to get students to participate and join. Students are more likely to get involved if they are invited to these meetings rather than making them mandatory, especially if there is food and a fun agenda. One concern for these associations is that some students work harder and put more time into certain tasks, yet everyone in the association may get the same reward (i.e., travel, conference fees, graduation gift). Perhaps it is possible to create a point system to reward active and passive participants fairly. The student associations that are very successful take pride in what they do for themselves, the association, the profession, and their future.

ACIs in High School Settings (May 5, 2009 – 3 postings)

Within an entry-level athletic training program, students spend most of their clinical education experiences in collegiate level athletics. When possible, programs should take advantage of their local high schools who use a BOC certified athletic trainer. Most of these ATs have a wealth of experience and equipment, as well as a patient population that would make them quality approved clinical instructors. In most high school settings, the AT students are older, knowledgeable, and skillful in athletic training so that the high school athletes are more likely to come to them for their care. For some AT students, the high school setting is unique and may offer experiences they might not get in the college or other athletic training/medical setting.

High schools can also provide some distinctive situations. For those high schools that have minimal medical equipment or athletic training supplies, the ACI and AT students have to be more creative and resourceful. For good reasons, students are initially apprehensive in these situations, but in the long run, it makes them

a better professional and improves their self-confidence. Most high schools only have one or two ATCs and the same number, or less, of AT students. Yet, they may have the same number of sports, athletes, and length of seasons as compared to the college setting. As a result, these ACIs can teach students better time management skills, triage, and multitasking as they work with multiple sports/athletes at one time. Students can also have more or closer exposure to parents, coaches, EMTs, and administrators. The high school experience has a lot to offer, even if AT students don't think that will be their future work setting and primary patient population.