

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

When Phil (Hossler) called and asked if I be willing to do the Pinky Newell address – the answer was – NO – it should be someone who has been around for awhile – someone who has something really important to say. Well – Phil proceeded to mention that I had been around for a “medium-ish” amount of time and that he never knew me not to have at least *something* to say. So here I am - Honored to have this opportunity to deliver a Pinky Newell Address.

So – then I had to come up with something somewhat intelligent to talk about – and that was after the panic subsided – since this is a pretty big deal! The concept of scholarship – which has been a guiding light for my involvement in the profession – surfaced pretty quickly. And that light was given to me by my mentor, Dwight Aultman, at the University of New Hampshire. He was a man who was far and away – ahead of his time. Myself and the other athletic training students from the University of New Hampshire – have talked about this endlessly. He taught us to (1) stick with the basics – (2) be active in our profession and (3) never stop asking questions. According to Dwight - if you knew your anatomy, physiology and kinesiology – you could pretty much figure just about anything out. This was long before there were entire books written on special tests, before there were MRI’s, before there were manufactured ankle braces (we used ankle wraps) or isokinetic testing or functional tests. We actually had to problem solve to figure out what may be going on with the injured athlete. Every Tuesday afternoon at 1 pm we had an “in-service”. We all met that one hour before the doors were open to service the athletes and Dwight introduced a new topic or reviewed material we weren’t quite sure about.

His words of wisdom, to serve the profession, were certainly heard.

His athletic training students have held many positions:

Jim Murdock – state – district and national

Tim Adams – state – district and national

Gordon Coole – one of the founding members of the New Hampshire Athletic Training Association – served on the state and district level

Jerry Larson – is presenting at the annual meeting this year....

Just to name a few.....

And the EATA Gavel was donated in his memory and in his honor by his athletic training students. When you have a chance, check out the names on the EATA gavel.

But, back to the concept of scholarship - If scholarship is narrowly defined – as I think it is these days - it could be considered to be the very thing actually dividing our profession. We have so many more members either heading back to school for a PhD or EdD or going “straight through” and getting their doctoral degrees. And of course, with a doctorate, the next step is to land a faculty position. The expectation and performance requirements for faculty members are different than those who are in the clinical environment. And so the focus, mission and purpose of each individual athletic trainer seems to be taking separate paths with a substantial separation occurring between the “academic” and the “clinical” sectors. Often times we are also geographically separated. I’ll take Plymouth State University as an example. The

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

Plymouth State campus is very hilly and most of the academic buildings are literally on a hill. The PE Center is actually across the bridge (over a river and a set of rail road tracks). I was chatting with Mark, our Head Athletic Trainer – I even forget what we were talking about....and he *kiddingly* talked about “those up on the hill” – and then I shot back with well – you guys are across the bridge AND on the other side of the tracks....and then it struck me....wow – just think of that language.....the academics were “up” on the hill and the clinicians “down” at the PE center. And of course at most college campuses, the Field House or PE Center is where the Athletic Training Clinic is housed and those large buildings are usually some place on the outskirts of campus. So not only are the job responsibilities separating the two segments, but even the geography influences our interaction.

So how can scholarship – that I think is so critically important to the profession, be the *unifying link* rather than the divider?

Well – I guess we first need to look at the definitions of scholarship.....

### **Definitions:**

**E.L. Boyer is best known for discussing scholarship in the academic setting. He has suggested 4 types of scholarship and encourages “engagement”.**

#### **1. Scholarship of Discovery**

- ✓ The traditional concept of scholarship - data collection and research work
- ✓ Being actively engaged in experimentation
- ✓ Development of theories – Does trunk stability play a role in non-contact ACL tears?
- ✓ Testing of the validity of theories.....

#### **2. Scholarship of Integration**

- ✓ Determining the meaning of the findings developed in the scholarship of Discovery.
- ✓ It requires the skills of critical analysis and critical interpretation
- ✓ Giving meaning to the data...then run it by a clinician.....some of the “kids” these days- coming out with their PhD’s - are absolutely brilliant – but have little to no clinical background.

#### **3. Scholarship of Application** – this the link that is sorely lacking in sports medicine

#### **What do these findings mean??**

- ✓ Clinical application
- ✓ Clinical implications
- ✓ Clinicians understanding that just ONE research project isn’t going to answer the question – it may take several over several years....look at the non-contact ACL work. ....it may be a core stability issue but core stability is a multifactorial issue within itself .....that’s a BIG study...

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

I have several responsibilities at Plymouth State University – Graduate Program Director; teaching in the graduate and undergraduate programs. –An ACL study that would consider the multifactorial components of trunk stability is far too large for a master’s level project. It would take collaborating with a much larger, research based institution with far greater resources both for equipment and person-power.

- ✓ Clinicians need to be knowledgeable about the research process – acknowledge its strength and acknowledge its limitations.
- ✓ Researchers need to interact with the clinicians and utilize their applied insights
- ✓ And we need to get the information out there – which is not necessarily in the format of a research journal – something that is palatable for those who need to use the information – the clinicians...
  - Presenting material in a current “best practice” profile, given the available research.

#### **4. Scholarship of Teaching**

They say – “those who can - do.....those who can’t teach” .....We need to have a far more collaborative approach.

- ✓ **Classroom faculty – presenting the didactic content** - when was the last time you stepped out of the classroom and into the clinic??
  - What is the status of reference Books/CD’s in the library – at Plymouth State University our librarians have been incredibly supportive of ordering books, Cd’s/DVD’s to support our student’s learning. And as old editions are placed with new editions, rather than tossing the old additions out, they are “decommissioned” and we are allowed to house them in the athletic training clinic for direct access by our students.
  - Insist on verification of information vs assumptions of correctness - just because that is the way that it has always been done....
  - Encourage student projects
    - ✓ Help that student learn
    - ✓ Leave behind learning resources for othersA recent project was a collaboration between a graduate and undergraduate student, producing a notebook of “correct” weight lifting techniques which is now permanently housed in a notebook that is on the counter at the entrance of the strength and conditioning room for all teams to utilized
  - ✓ **Clinical faculty** – when was the last time you actually quizzed the students while you were hanging out on the sidelines.
- Ask the students to integrate their classroom knowledge with what occurs in the clinic
- Have a question of the day or of the week
- Keep books in the clinic and encourage students to “look it up”
- Track qualitative data available through clinical assessment – give qualitative data some respect by being consistent in assessment and information recording.

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

One of our staffers has the students bring their books out to football practice on the golf cart.

A critical question we must ask ourselves.....Are we really making a commitment to shape our students into new professionals or are we just getting caught up in (accreditation) check off lists??

We need to:

- Encourage
- To guide
- Initiate problem solving
- Promote active learning
- Promote life long learning.

Both Classroom faculty and clinical faculty need to be well read – critical thinkers and creative thinkers....

***And.....Engagement – extend ourselves to the community –***

How is it possible to extend ourselves to our local communities? – we who already works so many hours in day??

- Curriculum schools: get out into the community or have the community come to you; consider the campus as a community
  - offer free screening clinics allowing our students to have the opportunity to put into place best practices.....
- This could be one of athletic training's BEST marketing and PR tools – particularly during Athletic Training month.
- Have a presence at amateur events
  - Road races
  - Boston Marathon
  - New Hampshire Marathon
  - Breast cancer walks, etc

These ideas are how E.L. Boyer's categories of scholarship and engagement could be incorporated into athletic training and education.

**However** – I'd like to add a few more categories.....

So Phil – I guess you were right – I do always have something else to say.

### **6. Scholarship of Professional Service – Volunteerism -**

-Support the structure of the organization – state – district – national

-Mentor a student

-Volunteer for a committee – find out how things work

I am currently the chair of the Women in Athletic Training Committee (WATC). We have been killing ourselves trying to collect the historical information on women in NATA.....it has been like pulling teeth. Anyone interested in helping in any way – please

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

see Carrie Graham (D1) or Cheri Drysdale (D2) - We'll take anyone who wants to help on any of our projects and you can help as little as or as much time that you have to offer.

### **7. Scholarship of Leadership**

Volunteer for a committee 1<sup>st</sup> so you can learn the workings of the organization – and then step up and be willing to serve in a leadership role. I have discussions every year with the EATA Executive Board members. Every year we ask the same question...Who are we going to find to lead? We're getting tired. Most of us have grey hair and we have to use reading glasses. (and these notes are in 14 point font!) Where are all the "young professionals"? It is YOUR profession – make it yours – make it be what you WANT it to be.

### **8. Clinical Scholarship**

- Be innovative
- Try new things
- Be well read and have rationale for the things you do
- Quiz the students you are working with
  - Origins and insertions
  - Special tests
  - Modality parameters
  - Movement assessment
  - Promote case studies

### **9. Scholarship of Professional Support – the cheerleaders**

If you don't have time to directly contribute – then support!

1. A cup of coffee or bottle of soda cost about \$1.00 (conservatively)
  - a. There are 21,791 certified members

Remove the certified students, certified retired and certified military – that leaves 21,370 certified individuals.

If each individual, contributed "one cup of coffee per week" we would have 21370 x 52 weeks and raise \$1,111,240.00 that could be donated by the membership to Research and Education Foundation... every year...

### **Scholarship of Professional Support - cont**

2. "Penalty box" – fines for not using the terms - athletic trainer or athletic training student vs just "trainer" with an end of the year donation to REF
3. Attend the poster presentations at the district and national meetings – walk by – ask questions – or just say thanks for spending over a year of your life to collect and compile that information and for extending the expense to come to the conference to present it
4. Open the journal – ask questions.....email the author. The author has worked for probably 2 solid years on pulling this project together – they'll be happy to talk about it!!

## **Scholarship and Engagement: The Responsibility of Every Athletic Trainer**

5. Each staff member pick one item of interest out of each issue of the journal – post it immediately when the journal comes out to reinforce others to open up their journal
6. Submit your speaker feedback forms to help guide the conference program committees
7. Vote in the state, district and national elections
8. Quiz the students on the NATA profession – create an NATA Trivial Pursuit – another WATC project
  - a. Who is currently serving on the Board of Directors?
  - b. How many Districts are there?
  - c. Etc
9. Offer constructive criticism – don't just whine about things but certainly point out deficiencies and take the initiative to suggest a reasonable solution. Focus on problem solving and not on just creating problem lists. And be sure to contact a state, district or national officer to be sure your thoughts get “heard”.
10. Support the Research and Education Foundation
  - a. They provide funding for research
  - b. They provided funding for scholarships

EATA – has both scholarship and research opportunities – very unusual on a District level. We are getting requests from other districts to get copies of the EATA Research Committee's Policy and Procedure manual so they can get their committees up to speed and better serve the membership within their districts.

### **OUTCOME:**

**So what will we gain as a profession if we ALL practice scholarship and engagement on a daily basis??**

### **– PROFESSIONAL STRENGTH**

We could collectively create a profession that could not be ignored in the field of sports medicine.

Athletic Training would have an undeniable presence.

-We wouldn't need a name change

-We wouldn't need to explain that we are NOT personal trainers or horse trainers

-We wouldn't need to lobby on Capitol Hill to simply introduce ourselves but rather to further our profession

-We wouldn't need to struggle with negotiations with insurance companies.

They would all *know* us.....because we would be present on all fronts.

We ALL could make NATA's work towards marketing- or governmental affairs/ licensing – reimbursement an awful lot easier!

### **WHEN SHOULD WE START?**

We'll that's up to you to buy into this conceptual framework.

I'd say first thing tomorrow morning – but that's up to each and every one of you.....

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**Here are some things on this year's EATA annual conference program that you could begin your active engagement in scholarship.....**

- ✓ Meetings
  - District Meetings
  - EATA meeting
- ✓ Poster presentations
- ✓ Visit the Exhibit Hall

-don't just walk around looking for FREE stuff

-see what's out there

-see what's new – be informed – whether or not you can actually purchase the product.

- ✓ Attend the Research to Reality presentation; this is specifically designed to bring a summary of research directly to the clinician for immediate application
- ✓ Attend the Grant Presentations – this project was funded through EATA; supports an EATA member; and generally give one of our members a chance to initiate an on-going research agenda.

So - I'm asking for professional commitment – ***active participation and contributions*** to the profession. Embrace the diversity of our members. With diversity – there is strength. And let's work together as a team. All of this is Scholarship and Engagement – which I sincerely believe is the key-stone to the success of this profession and I sincerely believe it is the responsibility of ALL athletic trainers.

I thank you for your time and attention and for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Phil - Hope I did okay for being around for only a medium-ish amount of time (: