

EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1. Healthcare equity is the cornerstone of a healthy society.
2. Health and wellness promotion for the population/community is essential in conjunction with individual patient care.
3. Every individual is a leader who must be prepared for a dynamic healthcare environment.
4. Clinical decision-making shall always be based on the principles of evidence-informed practice.
5. Physical therapy graduates and clinicians must be proficient in clinical competencies based on the contemporary standards of physical therapy practice.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Carlow University is designed to encompass the Mercy mission to serve the community by promoting the dignity of every person, advocating for equity and inclusion to address matters of social justice throughout its' entire curriculum. The curriculum is based on three major educational theories: Social Reconstruction, Constructivism, and Cognitive Load Theory.

In a Social Reconstruction philosophy-inspired curriculum, there is a strong emphasis that the role of education is to bring a positive change in society. The curriculum would train the students on assessing societal needs and taking responsibility for social reforms within their scope of practice. We created courses that take a deeper dive into pain, grief, and suffering through art, cinema, and literature. The students will learn techniques to grow in their empathy and compassion. Dedicated courses are designed with experiential learning to teach students about interprofessional collaboration, entrepreneurship, leadership, health informatics for decision making, and understanding of healthcare policies and economics. These courses will place our students in a unique position to advance their career path to address the social determinants of health and the societal need for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

According to the theory of Constructivism, the focus of teaching needs to be on how students learn over how much they learn. The new knowledge shall be built on the learner's prior knowledge and experiences. The classroom environment must emphasize active learning instead of passively receiving information. We developed each learning objective for each course in a semester based on the information students learned in their last semester. The first semester learning objectives are built on the learner's knowledge gained during undergraduate

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education. The content related to knowledge level will be delivered asynchronously using an online hybrid format. The class time will be used for the application, evaluation, and synthesis of the pre-class material.

According to the Cognitive Load Theory, the learners have limitations on how much information they can process at a given time. Traditionally, in an Entry Level PT education, a student takes 7-8 courses (the equivalent of 18-22 credits) in a semester. We have divided each of the Fall and Spring semesters into two, eight-week sessions in which the students will take 4-5 courses (the equivalent of 9-10 credits) to reduce their cognitive load and provide them more time to digest and reflect on the information they will receive inside and outside the classroom.