

Introduction

Background:

- Non-cognitive skills have been found to support academic and professional success in physical therapy and other health professions.^{2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16}
- There is little to no data on how physical therapy education programs teach and enhance non-cognitive skills of their students.

Purpose: This study aimed to explore student's self-perception of non-cognitive skills and the impact on students when non-cognitive training is purposefully embedded into a DPT program curriculum.

Hypothesis: Students place high value on non-cognitive skills and experience a positive impact from non-cognitive training.^{14,21} It is anticipated these skills translate to both the academic and clinical environments.^{11,12,14}

Methods

Participants: there were 101 total participants from Concordia Saint Paul's DPT program. Students from each cohort were represented and actively participated in the Charlie Life and Leadership Academy (CLAA) training modules during multiple semesters of the program.

Tests and Measures:

- Focus group interviews
- Online Google Forms survey
- Quantitative data obtained from learning management software

Data Analysis: data was analyzed using mixed methods.

- Qualitative - Quirkos software utilized for theme analysis and sorting
- Quantitative - Microsoft Excel utilized for data analysis and descriptive statistics

Results

Quantitative Results:

- Roughly 84%, reported that they learned from and found personal and professional value in completing the Charlie Leadership Academy modules. Students found three modules beneficial: Failing Faster and Better, Optimize your Energy and Maximizing Time. A display of the modules most mentioned in the focus group sessions can be found below.

Qualitative Results:

- Many student groups reported their overall experience was positively influenced by the intentional timing of module delivery as well as the provision of student discussion groups following module completion



Conclusion

- This is one of the first studies to research the student perception on the value of non-cognitive traits and how non-cognitive training throughout a DPT graduate-level educational program impacted them as a student.
- Non-cognitive traits were found to be indicative of success following a professional education program.⁴
- From the results of this study, it is evident that CSP DPT students find life, clinical, and school-related value and relevance in their program's intentional implication of non-cognitive training.
- Including non-cognitive training within the curriculum on topics such as resilience, failure, and effective communication, when done correctly, can benefit students personally and professionally.

Clinical Relevance

Non-Cognitive training can result in:

- More effective communication
- Improved resilience to burn out
- More productive responses to failure

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References



Major Themes

Theme Quotes

Future Utilization	"We were learning conflict in class, and it was nice to have that tied in with the module. It was nice to have a perspective outside our faculty's opinions and to have a chance to see student perspective too." - 2024 cohort
Student Experience	"It was something I needed to hear - I was struggling more in academics than I had in the past. This was the best for me early on because it's what I needed to hear at the time." - 2025 cohort
Relevance / Applicability	"It helped with the transition to a tougher program from undergrad." - 2023 cohort
Outcomes	"These soft skills are very important to us as PT's. These are the ideals that exist beyond our academic knowledge, and that is what is required in the field when trying to connect with patients." - 2024 cohort