

ORTHOTIC & PROSTHETIC PROGRAMS

SPOKANE FALLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Summer 2019

Volume 5, Issue 3

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IN-HOUSE TRAINING MADE EASIER

When we were kids crossing the road, we were taught to stop, look, and listen. These were wise words for personal safety reasons. Well, we're all grown up now and, guess what? It's still sound advice. In fact, these words take on even greater meaning in a business environment, as we all try to be the best we can be—for ourselves, our customers, and our place of work.

Here's a key example: Of Course Management and Design (OCMD) was recently approached by a relatively small organization to help solve some internal communication woes. An initial audit with the three-person task force revealed very little interaction between management and employees. One very dedicated, higher-up employee from an off-site facility lamented, "No one on the leadership team even knows my name." How could this happen when the business was, by all accounts, a well-run, well-respected, growth company?

The simple but sad truth is: Sometimes we just get busy and forget what is really important—that is, truly communicating with the people around us. This lack is sometimes especially true for those who make the business hum day-in and day-out. Do you find yourself talking more "at" your co-workers and employees rather than talking "with" them? Or do you tend to "passively" listen while multi-tasking (a big negative) to others when they approach with an issue or concern? If so, perhaps it is time to once again stop, look around, and really listen.

Our initial advice to the aforementioned solution seekers? Soft-skills training—more specifically, communication, leadership, conflict-resolution, and team-building training. Even for the smallest of businesses, the importance of providing soft-skills training cannot be overstated. The long-term benefits of communication training, for example? Employees who are "in the loop," feel appreciated, and are treated as valued colleagues tend to work harder and stay longer. Keep in mind that reduced employee turnover has virtually no downside—it's a win for employees, customers, and your bottom line.

Now, the really good news? Implementing an in-house, soft-skills training program has never been easier. But first, you'll need to acknowledge a hard truth: Maximum support from management is required; otherwise, you'll never achieve maximum buy-in from others. Next, determine the types of soft-skills your employees and co-workers want and need. Finally, commit to a plan.

If you're not sure where to start, here are two things you need to know: Variety is good and free is even better.

Free, you ask? Yes. Start by researching open educational resources (OERs). They are publicly accessible instructional and training materials—from lecture notes, videos, PowerPoint presentations, simulations, games, and other activities—that you can download and use almost any way you want. Licensing is typically not an issue. All you need is time—first, for conducting the online searches and, second, for compiling the material into a cohesive presentation. Common OER websites and repositories, to name just a few, include OER Commons at www.oercommons.org, SkillsCommons at www.skillscommons.org, MERLOT at www.merlot.org, and MIT Open Courseware at www.ocw.mit.edu. And to supplement those OERs, check out the videos available from YouTube and TED Talks.

Another tip? When doing a Google search for a training topic, such as "soft skills," "communication skills," "leadership training," or other key words, add the words "lesson plan" after your topic in the search field. Surprise! Lots of schools and instructors post their lesson plans. If the audience level is a fit, your research for training ideas just got a lot easier!

See **TRAINING, 2**

O&P CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR TECHNICIANS

This program is approved for 15 CE credits by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics (ABC) and for 16.5 CE credits by the Board of Certification (BOC), and for 12 MCE by Orthotics Prosthetics Canada (OPC).

All presentations will include a fabrication demonstration.

The link for on-line registration is: <https://www.campusce.net/spokane/course/course.aspx?catId=61>

No Technician CE course will be offered in 2020. The next Technician CE course will be conducted in October 2021.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11	SPEAKER	COURSE TITLE
7:00 am	Registration/Refreshments	
7:30 – 9:00 am	Dwight Putnam	Creative Fab Techniques & Problem Solving
9:00 – 10:30 am	Jason Kimmel & Alex Stein	Plaster Modifications
10:30 – 10:45 am	BREAK	
10:45 – 12:15 pm	Francois van der Watt	Fabrication of Direct -mounted Prosthetic Foot
12:15 – 12:45 pm	LUNCH	
12:45 – 2:15 pm	Mike Dodd & Owen Dodd	Hamstring Repair Orthoses
2:15 – 2:30 pm	BREAK	Refreshments
2:30 – 4:00 pm	Desh Anderson	Pectus Carantum Fabrication
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Vendor Panel *	Fabrication Round Table
* Cascade/Becker/Coyote Design/Fillauer/Cypress Adaptive/OWW/Townsend Design		
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12		
7:00 am	Refreshments	
7:30 – 9:00 am	Glenn Wilson	The Evolution of the Technician
9:00 – 10:30 am	Dan Kiesecker	Finding Creative Solutions to Technical Difficulties
10:30 – 10:45 am	BREAK	
10:45 – 12:15 pm	Pat Maroney	Willowwood One System Fabrication
12:15 – 1:45 pm	Chad Eberhart & Rich Thomas	Incorporating BOA System Design into LL Socket
1:45 – 2:00 pm	Evaluation	Comments from Attendees
2:00 pm	Adjourn	

Vendor Panel: BECKER CASCADE YPRESS ADAPTIVE COYOTE P & O FILLAUER TOWNSEND DESIG WILLOWWOOD

TRAINING (Continued from page 1)

Finally, for a small investment (and a free one-month trial), check out LinkedIn Learning at www.linkedin.com/learning. You will find full courses and video tutorials on numerous soft-skills topics.

With all these resources at your fingertips, you can explore freely and think creatively. Remember that you are training adult learners, and they typically need multiple ways to absorb information, enjoy multiple ways to express themselves, and seek multiple ways to engage with others. A full-fledged workshop should deliver meaningful information but also include relatable role plays, thought-provoking games, and/or creative activities. A short presentation could be supplemented with optional videos and activities. Or, create your own podcasts for those times when structured training isn't possible. Facilitate group discussions but, if needed, set up one-on-one activities as well. Job shadowing, role reversals, and "day-in-the-life" activities are always enlightening. And, don't shy away from taking the training off site. One organization, seeking a creative team-building activity, ignored the traditional ropes course and opted for a group cooking class instead—and it was a huge success!

Committing to soft-skills training is, in fact, a serious commitment—but well worth the time and effort. Stop, look around, ask, explore, and listen. Decide what is needed. Then, deliver. You, your employees, your customers, and your business will all benefit.

Leslie Melvin, Co-owner

Catherine Kovacs, Co-owner

Leslie Melvin and Catherine Kovacs are co-owners of the instructional design firm Of Course Management and Design, LLC, (www.ofcoursemd.com). OCMD delivers educational, editorial, and project/grant management services to companies and educational institutions nationwide. We develop online and face-to-face curricula using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and specialize in creating instructional materials that comply with the Health and Human Services (HHS) 508 requirements for accessibility.

WHO DISCOVERED WHOM?



Not everyone knows exactly what s/he wants to do for a career when graduating from high school, and I was no exception. I was not quite sure of what direction I wanted to take in my life. I knew I enjoyed working with my hands and I loved science. I thought about pursuing mechanical engineering, but like many other students, I ended up changing course several times including nursing, art, and eventually back to engineering again. O&P was nowhere on my radar. In fact, I had no idea what it was!

While both the idea of engineering and working in the medical field were greatly appealing, it frustrated me to not be able to physically *make* things. But then, while visiting in Spokane, I stumbled across orthotics and prosthetics. I found the program at SFCC entirely by coincidence. After a short conversation with the program director, Clayton Wright, and a tour of the program, I was hooked and signed-up immediately. This was it! Everything I was looking for.....fabricating and engineering things with my hands while working in the medical field. I was so excited that I packed-up and moved from Washington DC to begin the program at SFCC.

Two years later, I successfully completed the program and graduated in 2017. Currently I am working as a Certified Technician at Independent Tech Services, a central fabrication facility in Puyallup, WA. While I primarily specialize in metal bending, I handle most of the orthotics that comes into the shop. My duties include fabricating everything from UCBs to carbon fiber KAFOs.

During my two technical practicum rotations, I found that working in a central fabrication facility is a world away from what I originally expected and experienced in an O&P clinic. While in my prosthetics technical practicum at Hanger in Riverside, California, projects would sometimes take weeks to complete. We would see a patient, start the project a few days later, and make the device. If we did not make the device, it was sent to a central fabricator that would return the device a few weeks later. However, now being on the fabrication side of things, projects are coming in every day and rarely take longer than a few days to be created and finished.

Working at a quick pace really keeps me on my toes and never makes for a dull moment. It also pushes me to be creative in order to be as efficient as possible making certain that the patients are receiving a quality device in a timely fashion. Coming-up with creative solutions is an essential requirement in this industry. Recently I was tasked with helping make a transtibial socket knee joint hybrid. The patient was amputated about an inch below his knee and would not be able to receive a normal prosthetic knee. We ended up creating a floating cup underneath the socket that utilized locking the orthotic knee joints to substitute a prosthetic knee. This work-around was challenging to execute. However, being able to create out-of-the box solutions to solve problems for patients is why I love working in this industry. No two projects are alike. There is always a new problem to resolve.

At times, I may have five or six projects being made simultaneously, all needing to be shipped out on the same day, yet I am rarely stressed about it. The core concepts and skills I learned at SFCC built a foundation that has allowed me to truly flourish as a technician and made passing my Certification exam a breeze. I do not think that I have ever been more prepared for a test taken in my life. There is a confidence you gain from knowing and seeing every day that the education you received has such a direct application to your job, as well as knowing that what you do truly has a direct and personal impact on the lives of other people.

I guess I am lucky. I found a career in O&P that allows me to exercise my gifts and interests while making a positive difference in people's lives. I get to be creative, think critically, be an engineer, and use my hands to make things that improve the lives of others. Now I often wonder.....did I discover O&P? Or did O&P discover me?

Ryan Nebblett, CTO
Independent Tech Services, LLC
Puyallup, Washington

COMMENTS ABOUT THE BEST PRACTICES—PROVEN FUNDAMENTALS CE COURSE

- ◆ Overall a great course...hands-on was very helpful!
- ◆ Well put-together slides.
- ◆ Very well presented course.
- ◆ Hi Ruthie, Thank you again coordinating this weekend course (Best Practices – Proven Fundamentals). As an up and coming pedorthic practitioner, it really opened a window into some of the diagnosis and treatments one might use in the field.
Thank you for your time,
Nicholas Krueger



Pacific

Certified Orthotic Fitter

Long Beach, California

VA Long Beach Healthcare System

The Long Beach VA Medical Center is looking to hire an orthotic fitter. The job will entail working alongside two other certified fitters in a progressive orthotic clinic which provides off the shelf orthopedic braces and therapeutic shoes. Individuals should be self-motivated, good with customer service and possess good management skills of daily work load. Excellent Federal employee health benefits and retirement package is included. Work with supportive co-workers in a hospital setting in sunny southern California. Certification is a plus but may be obtained on the job. The job will be posted on usajobs.gov, search "orthotic fitter" in Long Beach, CA.



VA HEALTH CARE
Defining EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Visit:

Website: <https://www.usajobs.gov> search

"Orthotic Fitter" in Long Beach, CA

Email: Christopher.dang@va.gov

INTRODUCTION TO FABRICATING

PROSTHETISTS: Introduction to Fabricating With High Consistency Silicone Rubber SFCC Campus

Friday, November 8 2019.

Registration Fee: (includes refreshments, lunch, parking pass)

Early \$295 August 8 to October 20, 2019;

Late \$350 October 21 to November 5, 2019

HCR silicone rubber is a versatile material that is inert, very flexible, and suitable for prosthetic use. High Consistency Silicone Rubber is clay-like. This means **one can form it directly into the finished product without having to build molds**. You will save time, materials, effort and make substantially more money on all your projects where custom rubber products are called for. HCR silicone is very strong, flexible, and suitable for prosthetic use. Available as a two-part system, this compound is mixed with the help of a two-roll mill and baked at a low temperature to achieve cured, durable rubber. It is available in several compatible formulations that produce different finished firmness. Add new power to your problem-solving capabilities with these adaptable, elastic, ultra-strong materials making liners, partial feet, and hand and finger appliances. The lecture portion will cover specialized equipment and handling techniques needed for proficiency in fabricating this material. During the hands-on lab, all attendees will make a silicone liner.

This CE course is approved for 8 CEU credits by ABC; 9.25 CEU credits by BOC; 6 MCE by OPC.

The link for on-line registration is: <https://www.campusce.net/spokane/course/course.aspx?catId=61>

