October 11, 2015

Raising the Bar: Improving the Research Skills of Undergraduate Strength & Conditioning Interns

Lara Sapp

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lara_sapp/1/
Raising the Bar: Improving the Research Skills of Undergraduate Strength & Conditioning Interns

Introduction

**Purpose:** Explore a new relationship between the libraries and athletics by connecting the Health Sciences Librarian and the Strength and Conditioning Program at James Madison University.

**Background:** Experience in a practical setting is an important component in preparing students to enter the sports performance profession. The James Madison University Strength & Conditioning Program offers comprehensive, semester-long internships for undergraduate students from the Department of Kinesiology, providing students with the opportunity to apply academic learning to a practical setting within intercollegiate athletics.

Toward the end of the experience, interns incorporate classroom learning to make informed, up-to-date decisions regarding training activities that reduce the likelihood of injuries and enhance athletic performance.

Project Description

A problem-based information literacy instruction session was created to introduce the interns to the concepts of evidence-based practice. The objectives of the class were to:

- Locate databases to search for evidence-based information
- Search the scholarly literature and evaluate sources
- Understand and apply the foundational concepts of evidence-based practice

To further support the learning and research needs of interns, a collection of core journals and books was identified and developed. Access to these resources is facilitated through a guide tailored to the interdisciplinary nature of this profession. The methods closely parallel those used for traditional outreach to new academic programs, but were adapted to the unique setting in University Athletics.

Results

The interaction between the Health Sciences Librarian and the Strength & Conditioning Program has been productive thus far. Outcomes include:

- Additional opportunities to connect with students outside of courses; such as, providing a library orientation to football players during Freshman Academic Day
- Integration of evidence-based research skills into the training of Strength & Conditioning interns

Images of Strength & Conditioning interns training athletes (courtesy of Travis Pelletier)

Conclusion and Future Directions

Extending library outreach and support to non-academic units is an opportunity for broader collaboration, increasing the library’s presence across campus. This blending of research and practice brings together the two halves of undergraduate life – academics and athletics – in a novel way for this university.

A future goal of this project is to develop and sustain an ongoing relationship with University Athletics through targeted outreach activities.

Acknowledgements

Travis Pelletier, Associate Director for Strength and Conditioning

Lara Sapp, MLIS, MPH

To see the Subject Guide, scan the QR code or visit http://guides.lib.jmu.edu/c.php?g=389928