



# THE EFFECTS OF A HAND THERAPY PROGRAM TO ENHANCE LEARNING FOR FUTURE PRACTITIONERS

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## DCE SITE DESCRIPTION

- **Advanced Hand Therapy and Rehabilitation, Orange County** is an outpatient rehabilitation clinic that specializes in the delivery of myofascial techniques and hand therapy services for patients in the greater Orange County region
- **Mission Statement:** “Our goal is to provide excellent, individualized care in a patient-friendly, comfortable environment. Through empathy and evaluating each patient’s injuries and/or discomforts, we are able to provide superior treatment and education so that our patients are able to maximize functioning and return to their lives as quickly as possible” (Advanced Hand Therapy and Rehabilitation, Orange County, 2023)

## SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Establishment of a streamlined method to optimize learning experiences for future fieldwork students
2. Improving the standardization of patient care, given the high degree of student variability
3. Promoting and adding to the continued growth of the clinic

## KEY POINTS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Students lack confidence and are often unprepared** due to schools offering limited exposure to hand therapy, which is a major barrier for entry into the field (Fiori & Majeski, 2024; Short et al., 2020)
- Students **improve by using site-specific resources, experiential learning, and peer assisted learning**, within hand therapy (Aguilar et al., 2023; Baniqued & McAndrew, 2023; Berlet & Kaskutas, 2020)
- Hand therapy fellowships are professionally oriented, meaning there is an **apparent gap for students** transitioning into hand therapy fieldwork

## STUDENT’S LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Development of a hand therapy program to help future students
2. Creation of a patient resource library to help educate patients
3. Develop clinical practice skills of the capstone student’s clinical practice skills

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

**PURPOSE** The aim of the capstone project is to enhance the knowledge and learning opportunities for fieldwork students in the hand therapy setting by promoting evidence-based practice and exposure to entry-level hand therapy techniques

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Acquire detailed knowledge of hand therapy concepts
- Develop a thorough understanding of safety principles
- Identify appropriate assessments by recognizing clinical signs
- Appropriately select and apply evidence-based techniques
- Gain confidence during interventions with patients

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS** There were a total of 24 respondents for the pre-test survey and 19 respondents for the post-test survey. The solo participant who utilized the program for four weeks engaged in a 20-minute semi-structured interview

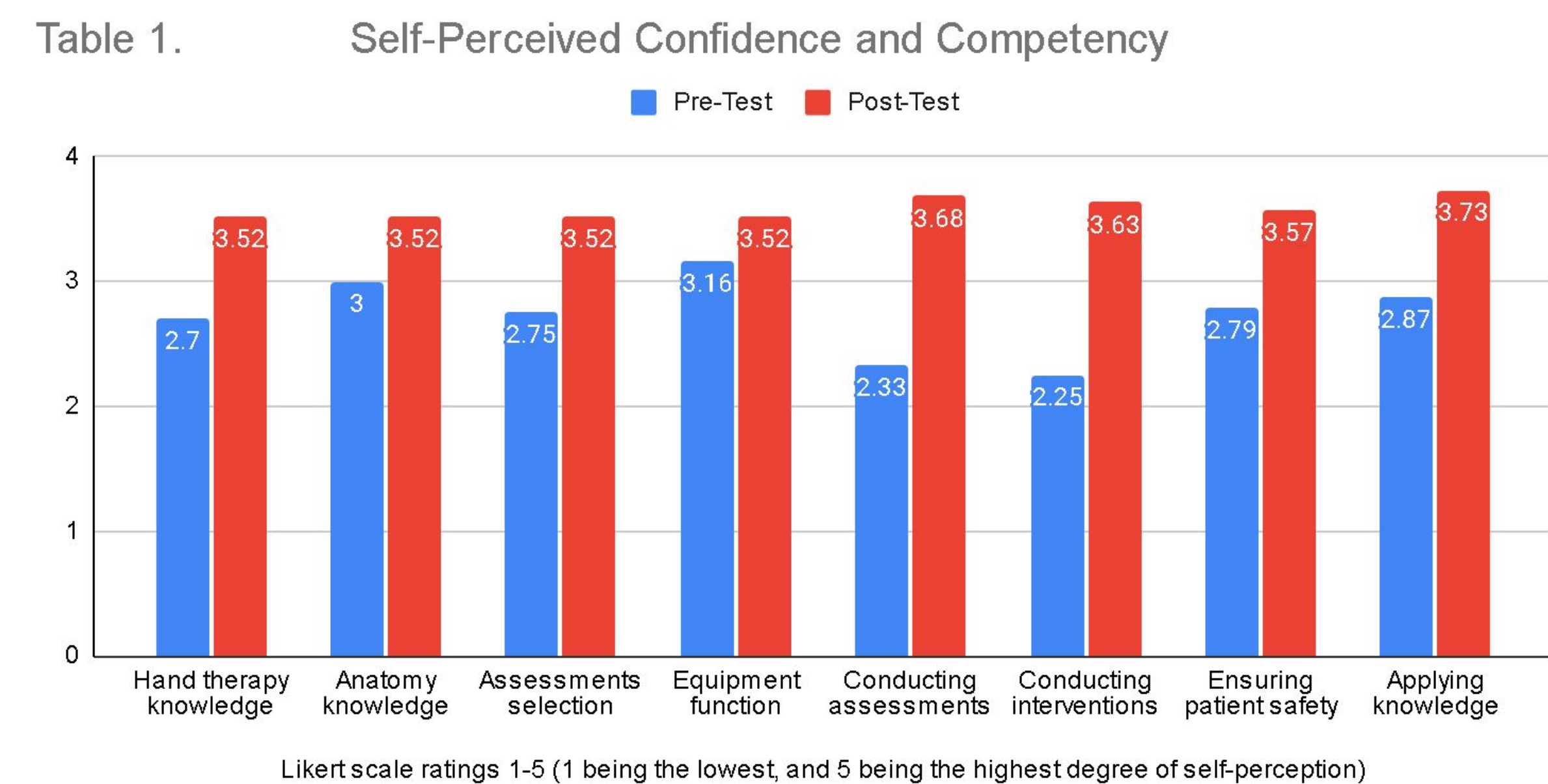
**PROGRAM LAYOUT** A total of 31 occupational therapy student participants engaged in a 30-minute virtual pilot of the hand therapy program through Zoom. One participant utilized the program for a total of four weeks during their fieldwork rotation at Advanced Hand Therapy and Rehabilitation, Orange County. Education module topics contained in the self-guided program include:

- Anatomy of the upper extremity
- Movement progression
- Evaluation and assessment
- Treatment basics for assorted diagnosis’
- Equipment function and use
- Current evidence-based practice



## EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

### QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS (SURVEY RESULTS)



- **STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT** improvement in all areas surveyed except the area of “Identifying equipment function and use” and “Knowledge of hand therapy anatomy”
- **POSITIVE CHANGES POST-INTERVENTION** in the level of perceived preparedness for a future fieldwork rotation in hand therapy suggest the program may be effective
- **HIGH DEGREE OF UTILITY AND EASE OF USE** noted for the program by participants

### QUALITATIVE FINDINGS (INTERVIEW THEMES)

#### Conductive To Adult Learning

“I really liked that (the program) included different ways to see the information... like how it shows the images of the exercise followed by a link to a short video demonstration. And what diagnosis’ may benefit. This was helpful because there are so, so many steps for some interventions. I would pull it up between patients to get ideas for treatment planning.”

#### Translating Theoretical Knowledge To Practical Skills

“The theory was already there but you’re just looking for the application and kind of translating theory into the clinic... We learned lot’s of this (hand therapy knowledge) in school but something was missing. I see that now. The program addressed this gap. Like I know what muscle is what, but not how to address that deficit for my patients.”

#### Continued Need For Developing Hand Therapy Resources

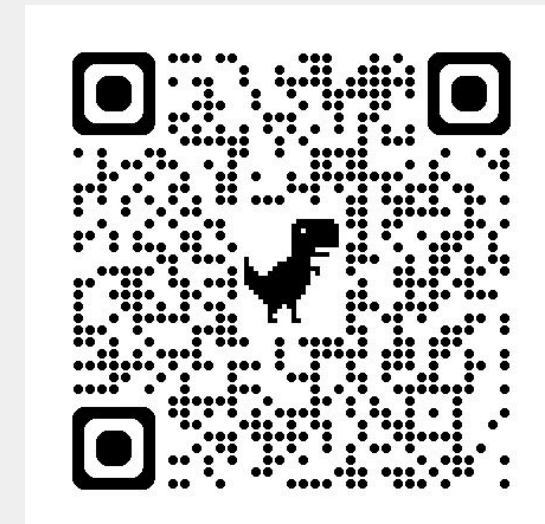
“I wish we had more time to add more things to the program. I was thinking how pretty much (all the information) in here is new to me, so what else am I missing?”

## SUMMARY OF DELIVERABLES

- **The hand therapy program** was comprised of two digital, self-help resources in viewable presentation format and portable document format (PDF), which are titled:
  - Hand Therapy Program (108 pages of content)
  - Hand Therapy Treatment Basics (78 pages of content)
- **The patient resource library and student-training videos** were organized and stored in the company’s Google drive and YouTube
- **Deliverable Implications** trends from the data analysis may suggest that student learners benefit from learning hand therapy specific content via site-specific resources

## DELIVERABLES AND REFERENCES

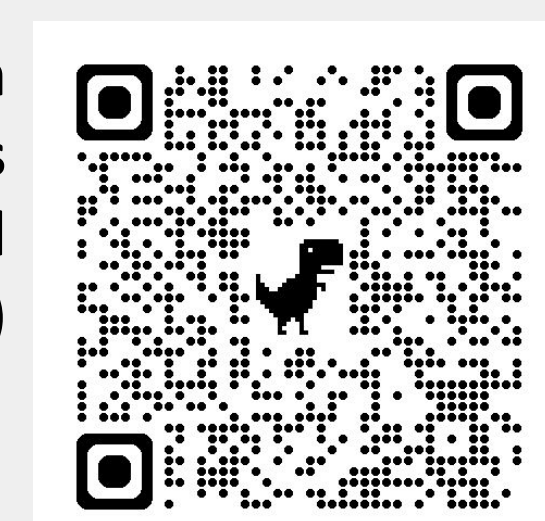
Hand  
Therapy  
Program



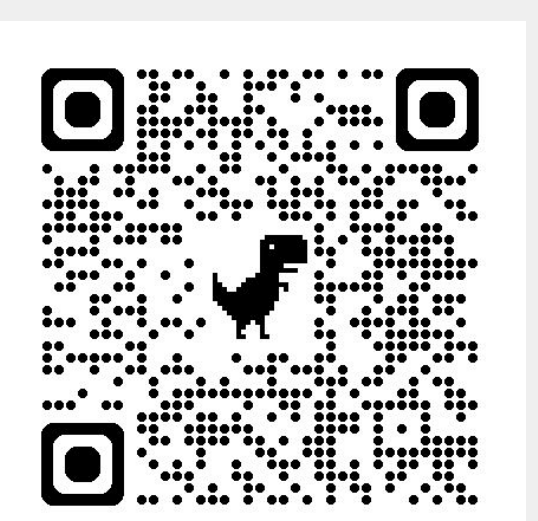
Hand  
Therapy  
Treatment  
Basics



Evaluation  
Materials  
(Survey and  
Interview)



References



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