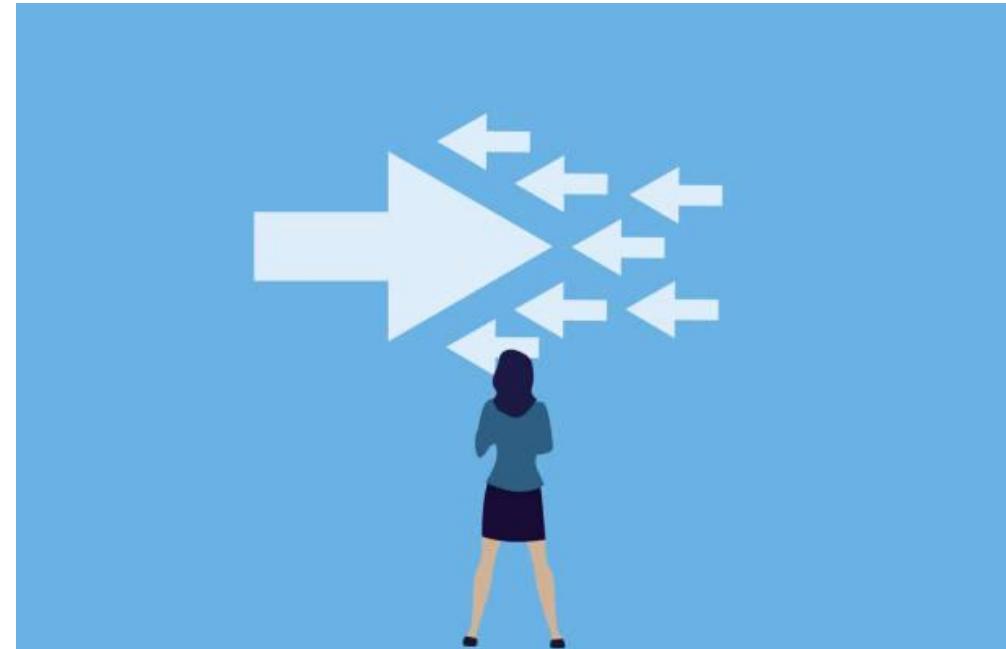


Mitigating Social Determinants and Leveraging Cultural Wealth to Advance Equity in Athletic Training and Therapy Education

Nikki Harris, EdS, DAT, LAT, ATC, CSCS
Associate Professor and Director of Student Recruitment
Department of Athletic Training
A.T. Still University - Mesa, AZ

Disclosures

- This presentation is based on the doctoral dissertation research.
- Also, supported in part by an internal grant from A.T. Still University.
- No additional financial or non-financial conflicts of interest to disclose.



Session Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the **6 domains of the Social Determinants of Learning (SDoL)** framework and their influence on student success in AT education.
2. Explain the **6 forms of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)** and how they reflect the strengths and assets of students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
3. Analyze how SDoL and CCW frameworks intersect to shape equitable educational experiences.
4. Apply SDoL and CCW informed strategies to address systemic barriers and enhance belonging, persistence, and performance among learners.
5. Develop actionable approaches for integrating equity-focused, strength-based practices into advising, curriculum design, and clinical education.

Understanding External Influences on Student Success

- Academic outcomes are shaped by more than coursework or effort.
- Students' environments, experiences, and access to resources impact learning.
- Marginalized students often face more systemic barriers; However, they also bring unique strengths.
- Shifting from a deficit-based lens to a strengths-based lens helps us design more equitable programs



External Factors That Influence Learning and Achievement⁺

Chamberlain's Social Determinants of Learning (SDOL) framework (2021) identifies six key determinants that impact student outcomes:

1. Physical Health
2. Psychosocial Health
3. Physical Environment and Community
4. Social Environment and Community
5. Economic Stability
6. Self-motivation



How SDoL Appear in Our Classrooms and Clinical Settings

- **Physical Health:**
 - Students balancing injuries, disabilities, or chronic conditions.
- **Psychosocial Health:**
 - Burnout, imposter syndrome, or limited social support.
- **Physical Environment:**
 - Lack of private study spaces or stable internet for remote learners.
- **Social Environment:**
 - Microaggressions or feelings of isolation in clinical settings.
- **Economic Stability:**
 - Unpaid clinicals or limited transportation options.
- **Self-Motivation:**
 - Reduced confidence due to lack of role models or representation.



Recognizing the Strengths Students Bring

Yosso's (2005) framework identifies six forms of cultural capital that students from marginalized backgrounds use to succeed.

- Aspirational - Hope and resilience
- Familial - Support from family and community
- Social - Networks and mentorship
- Navigational - Ability to move through systems
- Linguistic - Multilingual and expressive skills
- Resistant - Ability to challenge inequity

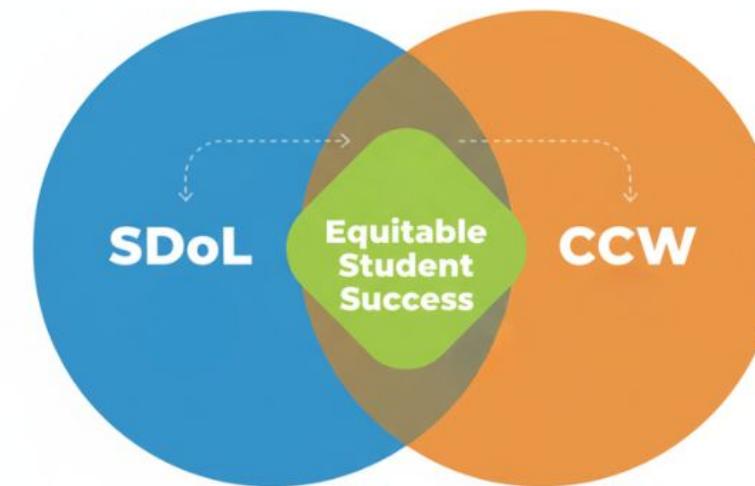


Building on Cultural Strengths in AT Education

- Aspirational: Highlight alumni success, goal-setting workshops, celebrate milestones.
- Familial: Involve families, offer flexibility for caretakers, link learning to community.
- Resistant: Safe spaces for dialogue, DEI advocacy modules, bias reporting systems.
- Social: Structured mentorship, affinity groups, professional networking.
- Navigational: Faculty “navigators,” clear progression maps, licensure guidance.
- Linguistic: Validate diverse communication styles, bilingual clinical opportunities.

Integrating Barriers and Strengths for Holistic Support

- SDOL identifies where barriers exist.
- CCW highlights how students overcome them.
- When used together, these frameworks:
 - Inform targeted interventions
 - Promote belonging and persistence
 - Strengthen pathways to professional success



Case Example: Supporting a Student with Economic Instability

- Scenario summary:
 - Student struggles with unpaid immersive clinical rotation.
 - Faculty apply SDOL by recognizing economic and logistical barriers.
- Program strategy:
 - ATP applies CCW by leveraging navigational and social capital
 - Connects the student with a mentor
 - Identifies a nearby clinical site or immersive position that allows the student to maintain employment while gaining quality experience.
 - Celebrates student resilience.
- Outcome:
 - Student completes the rotation successfully, preserves financial stability, and strengthens professional confidence through institutional support and personal resilience.

Practical Steps Toward Equity and Inclusion

- Adopt an asset-based lens by learning the SDoL and CCW frameworks
- Uncover students' SDoL through advising, reflection, and open dialogue
- Recognize and respect cultural differences
- Differentiate rigor from rigidity by maintaining high expectations while removing unnecessary procedural barriers.
- Avoid policy for policy's sake; ensure all requirements have a clear educational purpose and equity in implementation.
- Integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to promote flexibility and accessibility for diverse learners.
- Leverage institutional resources by connecting students to support services.
- Challenge broader norms within education and the profession



Awareness to Action

- Equity work is *systemic*, sustained, and strengths-based.
- Every student brings value and cultural wealth.
- ATPs can cultivate belonging by aligning support with student realities.
- **Challenge:** Choose one new strategy to implement this semester.



We shouldn't aim to fix students; rather, to fix the systems that fail to support them."

References

1. Harris NA, Eberman LE. Board of Certification Exam Achievement Gaps as a Barrier to Diversifying the Athletic Training Profession. *Journal of Athletic Training*. Published online April 5, 2022. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0483.21>
2. Social Determinants of Learning. Chamberlain University. <https://www.chamberlain.edu/about/social-determinants-of-learning>
3. Felter CE, Ciccone J, Mathis L, Smith DL. Identifying and Addressing Social Determinants of Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Physical Therapy*. Published online September 6, 2021. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/ptj/pzab210>
4. Sanderson CD, Hollinger-Smith LM, Cox K. Developing a social determinants of learningTM framework. *Nursing Education Perspectives*. 2021;42(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.nep.0000000000000810>
5. Yosso TJ. Whose culture has capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*. 2005;8(1):69-91. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>