Phillips Named 2013 Student of the Year

Sue Reeves

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Curt Phillips works with a young client.

Curt Phillips was recently named the 2013 Student of the Year at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities. Phillips has been a physical therapist with the CPD’s Up to 3 Early Intervention program for 13 years and completed a Ph.D. in Disability Disciplines in May 2013. He has also been a trainee in the Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (URLEND) program.

Phillips was born in California, attended Allan Hancock Community College, earned a B.S. in Exercise Science from Brigham Young University in 1995 and a Master of Physical Therapy degree from the University of California San Francisco/San Francisco State University in 1997.

Physical therapists are generally trained in the medical model of practice which includes fixing things and people, Phillips said. With the knowledge he has gained through the URLEND program and pursuing his doctoral degree, his focus has shifted, he said.

“I have come to realize that my patients and clients don’t need to be fixed, just accepted and assisted in maximizing their potential,” he said.

He tells his pre-physical therapy students that if they go into physical therapy with the idea that they are going to fix people, they will be sorely disappointed.

“I have come to understand that while there is a place for the medical model in my practice, a focus on educating people with injury or disability is much more effective,” he said. “I have realized that the overall goal is to maximize potential in everyone and not limit their progress based on a certain diagnosis or set of circumstances. This has helped me not only in my professional life, but also in my life as a father, husband and friend. Truly, while this process has taken far longer than it should have, it has allowed me to change the way I look at the world and the people I interact with daily. It has definitely been worth the work.”

Congratulations to Curt Phillips, the 2013 CPD Student of the Year!