

Assessment in the Physical Therapy Program: Sara F. Maher, PT, DScPT, OMPT

Wayne State University's Peer-to-Peer Program Assessment Forum Presentation

In the Winter 2016 semester, 31 faculty and staff were invited to share program assessment examples with their peers in open forums to demonstrate the use of data to improve student learning, program curricula, or support for student success and recognize the important work of our Wayne State colleagues. This document is a brief version of one of those examples.

Program Description: My assessment example comes from the 2014-2015 assessment plan for the Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree, a degree which prepares dynamic health care professionals to plan, organize, and direct programs for the care of individuals whose functions and movement are impaired or threatened by disease or disability.

Learning Outcome(s): One of the program learning outcomes my colleagues and I are interested in assessing is how well students in our program are able to effectively use verbal communication while speaking in a culturally competent manner with peers and other interdisciplinary team members.

Assessment Method(s): We collected evidence about this learning outcome using three different assignments. During the first year of the program, students present a 10 minute oral presentation as a group, which is graded by two instructors from two different classes using a standard rubric. During the third year of the program, student groups are graded on both a platform and a poster presentation at College Research Day, by a faculty research mentor. The class averages on all three presentations is expected to be at or above a 90% target.

Results: The results from our assessment indicated that the class averages exceeded our 90% target as follows:

- Class average of 94.5% for the 10 minute oral presentations
- Class average of 94.8% for the platform presentation
- Class average of 96.4% for the poster presentation

Action Plan: Based on these results, we decided to improve student learning by continuing to monitor class averages on the oral presentations since communication is vital in job performance as a physical therapist and our national licensing examination does not address communication. While the class averages were above the targets for both the platform and poster presentations as well, a standardized rubric had not been developed for the research mentors to utilize. The class instructor was assigned the task of developing a standardized rubric in this area. Class scores will continue to be monitored using this new rubric.

Advice to Colleagues about Program Assessment: To avoid creating new work for our program, we decided to utilize data that was already being collected for our program's accrediting agency. In addition, our outcome data helped us to recognize that the lack of a rubric created grading challenging for research mentors. This activity, therefore was useful to develop standardized grading which could benefit both the faculty and the students.