

DEPARTMENT REPORT OF PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Department: Physical Therapist Assistant

Program (Degree): Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

Type of Degree: X AAS AA AS ATS AIS

Chairperson: Colleen Whittington Date: 05/09/2000

Person(s) Interviewed: Colleen Whittington

- I. **Program Curriculum:** A description of the basis for the program curriculum (i.e., how it is derived and validated). Include accreditation organizations, advisory committees or external groups that influence curriculum. Describe curriculum review activities including the review of course master syllabi.*

The revised curriculum has been taught for three-quarters. A focus group is planned for August 2000 to review outcomes to-date and plan for additional changes.

Input from students, clinical instructors and employers has included positive reinforcement for changes already made, including but not limited to the following:

- Addition of manual techniques
- Quarterly visits by the Academic Coordinator or Clinical Education with each student and clinical instructor
- Addition of neuro-developmental and re-education techniques
- Compacting of all clinical experiences to full-time. The student works with the instructor schedule since they do not return to SCC for other classes.
- Increased frequency and timeliness of interaction between faculty and clinical instructors.

- II. **Program Learning Outcomes:** A description of what you intend for students to know (cognitive), think/feel (affective), or do (psychomotor), when they have completed your degree program. A suggested manageable number of outcomes should be in the range of five to ten. Describe Program Learning Outcomes review activities.*

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program learning outcomes were revised during the curriculum review and revision 1998-1999.

The PTA program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The last accreditation visit was in 1999, notice of accreditation is due by the end of October 2000 following a requested progress report on the new curriculum. CAPTE provides guidelines for the department on learning outcomes and curriculum for two-year PTA programs. In addition, learning objectives and program outcomes reflect

a national standard produced by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) known as the Normative Model for PTA Education.

Learning Outcomes are under revision due to changing expectations in the profession and as required by the accrediting institution.

An entry-level graduate with an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant from Sinclair Community College will be able to:

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate appropriate, effective written, oral and non-verbal communication, which reflects sensitivity and awareness to individual and cultural differences in all aspects of physical therapy services. (AFFECTIVE)
2. Provide safe, competent interventions and patient education, based on the plan of care established by the PT to minimize risk to the patient, self and others and insure appropriate patient outcomes. (PSYCHOMOTOR/ COGNITIVE)
3. Demonstrate clinical problem-solving skills in order to adjust the plan of care established by the PT, provide supervision of the physical therapy aide and work effectively on an interdisciplinary team.(COGNITIVE)
4. Provide quality, efficient and cost effective physical therapy services utilizing human and material resources, computer technology and current knowledge of reimbursement and regulatory requirements and state practice acts. (PSYCHOMOTOR AND AFFECTIVE)
5. Perform data collection techniques as outlined in the plan of care, reported through accurate, timely and legible documentation. (PSYCHOMOTOR)
6. Participate in professional development based on self- assessment, performance appraisals and demonstration of behaviors reflecting conduct expectations outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Guide for Professional Conduct* of the American Physical Therapy Association. (AFFECTIVE)

Related Courses

PTA106,110,124,130,221,226,233,225,211,212, 213; PSY119, 208; SOC 111; ENG 111,112; COM 206
PTA 116, 118, 124, 221, 130, 226, 134, 225, 230, 233, 255, 211, 212, 213; PHY 100 OR 141; BIO 141, 142; ALH 220

PTA106, 110, 116, 118, 134, 124, 130, 221, 226, 225, 230, 233, 211, 212, 213, 255; COM 206

PTA 106, 110, 255, 120, 221, 226, 233, 211, 212, 213, 235; ALH 103, 104

PTA 110, 124, 130, 221, 226, 134, 225, 211, 212, 213, 235, 230, 233.

PTA 106, 110, 116, 118, 124, 130, 221, 226, 211, 212, 213, 235, 255

III. **Assessment Method(s):** A measurable indicator of success in attaining the stated learning outcome(s). The methodology should be both reliable and valid. Please describe in detail.

- a. **Formative Assessment Method(s) and Description:** a measurable indicator of student in-progress success in attaining the stated learning outcome(s).

Counseling and student progress reports occur on a continuous and course-by-course basis. PTA faculty meet mid-quarter with each PTA major on an individual basis to discuss academic status. Checklists are used to assist in tracking student progress. Faculty also gather input from clinical instructors when students are enrolled in clinical practicums (three-quarters required). A faculty advisor is assigned to each student meeting formally and informally throughout the quarter. Degree audits are used to ensure students have advanced as expected in their degree program. One formal site visit is made quarterly to all students while in their clinical program by the Academic Clinical Coordinator for Education (ACCE), a required position by the accrediting body. Students work with clinical instructors while in the field. Oversight of and responsibility for student progress is done by the ACCE working with the clinical instructors. Grade assignment remains the responsibility of the ACCE with input from the clinical instructors.

Students are assessed throughout the program by testing/exams, visual presentations, case studies, laboratory examinations (role-playing) and clinical evaluations. The Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) was developed by the APTA and is used to ensure assessment feedback based on the clinical experience. Future assessment emphasis will be on self-assessment of professional behaviors and the development and review of portfolios.

- b. **Summative Assessment Method(s) and Description:** a measurable indicator of end-of-program success in attaining the stated program learning outcome(s).

PTA students are required to enroll in PTA 255, PTA Seminar, a two-credit-hour course. Students must present a completed case study to their class based on material developed through their clinical experience. A study guide and computer instruction is provided in preparation for the national examination. Students are able to complete a mock exam in preparation for the national licensure examination. Students take the national exam to receive licensure.

Case study projects and oral presentations are required of all PTA majors. The case studies focus on student's patients within their clinical practicum which is taken concurrently with the seminar. The case study assignment requires the application of research skills to describe the comprehensive medical treatment used on a particular patient. Students must interview various health team professionals and family members to gather appropriate information used in the case study.

The Clinical Performance Instrument is used for all three of the clinical practicum experiences. The CPI is closely aligned to the professional behaviors generic abilities with emphasis on commitment to learning, interpersonal skills, communication skills, problem solving and professionalism. Students must pass all

three clinical experiences with the third clinical passing at the 75% or greater level on all listed skills from the CPI tool.

The National Professional Examination Service provides quarterly reports of passage of the licensing examination for Sinclair Community College and all state and national PTA programs.

First and second year students participate in an assessment of the curriculum at the end of Spring Quarter. Issues are reviewed by a faculty meeting with actions documented and returned to the students.

IV. Results: A description of the actual results of overall student performance gathered from the summative assessment(s). (see III.b.)

Results of the PTA national licensing examination indicate an excellent pass level since the inception of the PTA program in 1981. Changes in the national examination toward assessment of problem solving, in addition to the test being taken on computer, has seen a decline in first time passage rate which currently meet or exceed state and national averages for first time test takers.

Departmental members review all employer and graduate survey data. A departmentally developed survey is mailed six and eighteen months post graduation. Results of survey data are used to review curriculum as well as track changes in expectations of professionals.

An employer survey is being developed to target professional and technical skills at entry levels. Employer input is currently acquired via advisory committee members and during site visits with students.

All 1998 and 1999 licensed PTA graduates are currently employed either full or part-time if desired. The 1998 graduates were employed in 3-6 months. The 1999 class' employment took between 6 and 9 months due to changes in the job market. The current job market is primarily focused on part-time positions.

Overall PTA student performance, as measured by G.P.A., is 3.2 for the entering class and closer to 3.0 for the graduating class.

Student attrition rates in PTA are approximately 40% from the first to second year. A three-year track has been developed for those students who are unsuccessful in their first two quarters and who have identified obstacles to success (academic or personal).

V. Analysis/Actions: From analysis of your summative assessment results, do you plan to or have you made any adjustments to your program learning outcomes, methodologies, curriculum, etc.? If yes, describe. If no, explain.

Changes to curriculum will be made following a full two-year cycle of class offerings. A three-year track has been developed to enable students who have complex personal lives or G.P.A.'s between 2.3 and 2.5 the opportunity to progress at a slower pace.

Attrition and retention issues are being addressed by communicating with all students who have submitted program cards to encourage a meeting with faculty. The introduction course (PTA 106) has been offered outside of program admission to improve student awareness of the PTA career choice expectations prior to program admission. A web page has been operational since May 1999 with program information. It is scheduled for revision on a regular and on-going basis.

A rolling admission process has replaced a waiting list for entry into the program. Students can be admitted on a space available basis to the program. If class size is reached, additional admission will occur through the three-year track. This allows a leveling of class size and meets the needs of individual students.

Additional information regarding graduate outcomes needs to be acquired. Personal contact by faculty as follow-up is planned to supplement data provided by IP & R.

- VI. General Education:** Are you using any tool(s) to assess any of the three primary general education outcomes* (communication, thinking, values/citizenship)? If so, describe.

The CPI tool, newly adopted as the assessment tool for clinical practicums, includes areas relevant to general education.

- a. Where within the major do you assess written communication? Describe the assessment method(s) used. Describe assessment results if available.

Written skills are emphasized in the all PTA courses through writing assignments. Development of documentation skills is essential to success of a clinician. Written case studies and research papers are also used across the curriculum. Information literacy is also included in the PTA curriculum as introduced in ALH 104 Allied Health Informatics.

- b. Where within the major do you assess oral communication? Describe the assessment method(s) used. Describe assessment results if available.

Oral skills are assessed in all PTA courses. In addition, critical thinking skills are stressed in all courses through oral presentations, simulation experiences, and role playing exercises.

- c. Where within the major do you assess thinking? Thinking might include inventing new problems, seeing relationships and/or implications, respecting other approaches, demonstrating clarity and/or integrity, or recognizing assumptions. Describe the assessment method(s) used. Describe assessment results if available.

All classes beginning the first quarter include oral examination to ensure critical thinking, problem-solving and technical skills application capabilities.

- d. Where within the major do you assess values/citizenship/community? These activities might include behaviors, perspective, awareness, responsibility, teamwork, ethical/professional standards, service learning or community participation. Describe the assessment method(s) used. Describe assessment results if available.

Values and citizenship are stressed throughout the curriculum through discussions of ethics/morals and other issues. Professional behaviors are stressed in every PTA class and based on the generic abilities as described in the handbook. There are discretionary points for professional behavior included in all courses beginning in the second quarter.

Students are directed to become members of professional organizations to receive peer reviewed journals and PT magazine keeping students aware of what is happening in their chosen profession.

- * Note: The oral communication checklist and the written communication checklist developed by the General Education Committee were adopted for college-wide use during the 1997-98 academic year by Academic Council. Thinking Guidelines developed by the General Education Committee are being piloted by faculty during the 1998-99 academic year.