

## Spring 2014 First Term Mapping Project and Synthesis

Physical Therapist Assistant Program

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### Goals:

- Engage in faculty discussions on [core learning outcomes \(CLOs\)](#) in the PTA curriculum
- Increase CLO visibility to students; specifically “Apply Learning”
- Increase or improve visibility of an [integrated PTA curriculum](#) that includes technical and transferable skills

### Process

- Stage 1:
- PTA faculty who teach courses will meet and discuss (synchronously and asynchronously) course objectives in the context of transferable skills; seek agreement on discipline-definitions and context of CLOs
  - “What “Apply Learning” mean in my class (PTA 100, 101, 101L)?” and how does this connect to program outcomes Provide examples.
  - Use the [Apply Learning Worksheet](#) to PT 100, 101, 101L
  - Refer to [“Apply” rubric](#) developed by Brian and Christina last year for some sample language
- PTA faculty will be oriented to the [CLO web-based](#) mapping tool ([screencast](#) and guided demos)
- Stage 2:
- PTA review course assessments and grading criteria for first term course; discuss relative weights of course outcomes based on how student learning is assessed
  - “How do our assessments communicate to students what we value most when it comes to “Apply Learning”
  - Start with course activities: what is important for students
  - Faculty meet and discuss progress: sometime week of April 7
- PTA faculty map “Apply Learning” CLOs to PTA course outcomes
- PTA faculty track mapping process using a Google Document, using the “notes” feature and uploading supporting documents into the web mapping tool; explain challenges, solutions, and issues for further discussion/development

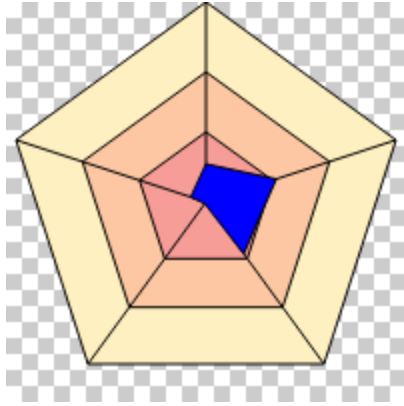
### Outcomes

- Faculty engaged in discussions as a group, within, small groups and with each other when aligning CLOs to first term courses. Discussions were synchronous and asynchronous using multiple forms of media (Google Docs, screencasts, email, phone, in-person meetings)
- CLO visibility was increased within faculty. Faculty plan on engaging in further discussions to increase visibility to students, namely in the course syllabus and in assignment instructions/grading
- PTA 101 and PTA 101L now have direct linkages between the CLO “Apply Learning”, program outcomes, course outcomes, and methods of assessment. PTA 100 has direct linkages between all five CLOs, course outcomes, and methods of assessment
- Additionally, faculty have discovered the integration of all five CLOs within the first term of the PTA program, in particular, the emphasis of Communicate Effectively. We may look to other assessment project opportunities to focus on mapping “Communicate Effectively” in our first term courses.
- Although awarded 22 hours for this project, faculty reported contributing 27+ hours to planning, mapping, and reporting project outcomes. We recommend 28-30 hours for faculty projects where mapping efforts are coordinated across multiple courses in a term or sequence and outcomes include connecting CLOs to program-level outcomes.
- We appreciate the opportunity to apply for funding and wish to acknowledge and thank the Assessment Team for the RFP opportunity.

## Synthesis Reports from Participants

### **PTA 101L: Gary (3.5 hrs) & Brian’s (6.5+ hrs)**

As expected, the “apply” CLO is the most predominant component of our course outcome. This is a laboratory course in which students are expected to learn and apply their skills in a practical manner. We were surprised that “communication” was so highly rated, but appreciate that effective communication is a significant component in a developing one’s abilities as a health care professional. There is some need to “engage” in PTA 101L to address and incorporate modesty, patient values and beliefs, and direct contact through manual interventions. There is very little expectations to “create” in a first term lab course, so that was expected with our outcome. Lastly, encouraging students to “think” was a rated as a middle level outcome due to the fact that we are introducing our students to fundamental critical thinking and decision making activities in our course.



Think: 19

Engage: 8

Create: 1

Communicate: 32

Apply: 37

The remainder of our time was spent on mapping “Apply” to program outcomes, course outcomes and assessment. The outcome of our process is documented in “ApplyLearningWorksheetPTA101L\_Final.pdf”

### **PTA 101 - Christina (8.5 hrs)**

I had two roles in this project: coordination/project management and CLO mapping to PTA 101. Refer to Marc Duyck’s summary submission on coordination efforts. Additional coordination included finalizing project synthesis, reviewing faculty worksheets and providing suggested edits to meet project outcomes.

My process was to map all course objectives to the CLO worksheet. It was difficult to map exclusively to “Apply”, as many of our objectives are integrated across multiple CLOs. Therefore, I shifted to a system of mapping objective to one or more five CLOs as a first draft PTA 101 Mapping Worksheet:

Think : 29

Engage: 9

Create: 1

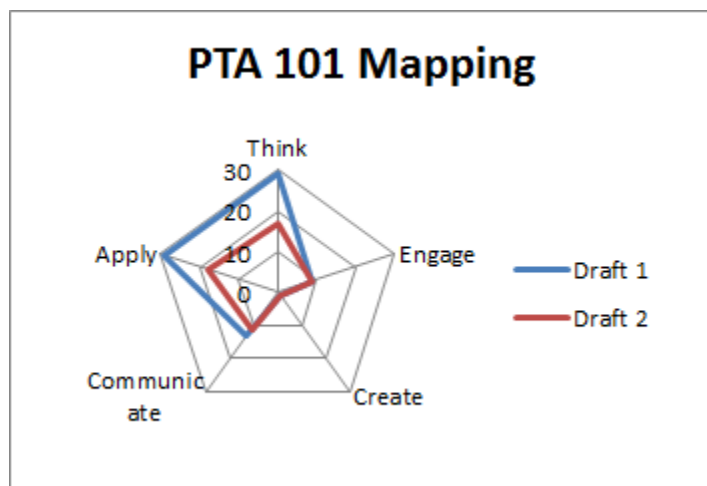
Communicate: 13

Apply: 29

I reviewed this first map and reassessed the alignment of course objectives to CLOs. In PTA 101, there are a fair amount of learning objectives based on “Describe”, where students are primarily assessed on examination and the questions focus on knowledge of soft tissue pathology and basic patient care skills. This level of learning is appropriate for a first term course in physical therapy knowledge and skills. Students enrolled in PTA 101 are also enrolled in PTA 101L, where application of knowledge is more visible to students in PTA 101L course objectives and in PTA 101L learning assessments.

In order to discriminate between knowledge-based assessments and higher level CLO assessments, looked a Bloom’s Taxonomy along side the course objectives and methods of assessment. I eliminated course objectives that aligned mostly with assessment of knowledge versus. higher level thinking and application of knowledge to clinical simulations. The result was a second draft of the PTA 101 Mapping Worksheet. Many of the objectives that were eliminated from the second draft are assessed on quizzes and written examination, while the remaining objectives are assessed through case simulation problems, facilitated discussions, and written essays. I feel that this affirms a balance for first term students in the program’s value for knowledge (facts) and the value of core learning outcomes as a deeper level of learning within the program. The distribution of CLOs changed to the following:

Think : 17  
Engage: 9  
Create: 1  
Communicate: 11



Apply: 18

Lastly, I followed the model submitted by Brian and Gary and added a “Program

Outcomes” column to the CLO “Apply Learning” worksheet to show the relationships between course outcomes and our published program learning outcomes in the catalog.

The outcome of the PTA 101 CLO mapping process is documented in “PTA 101 CLO Mapping\_FINAL.pdf”

I agree with my colleagues who mapped PTA 101L and found a high level of course objectives and assessments that develop and reinforce “Communicating Effectively”. One outcome of this mapping exercise is for me to go back and look more critically at course objectives and how the importance of communicating effectively is communicated to students. Currently, classroom discussions and participation (assessed by a rubric that includes communication), accounts for 30% of the course grade. Where I think I can improve is to explicitly communicate to students that the activities are designed to teach them how to “Communicate Effectively” in and outside the clinical environment. I would also like to help students differentiate between knowledge-based assessments and CLO assessments. Many of our students have been successful in courses that assess their knowledge ( e.g. anatomy, medical terminology) and can struggle with the shift to higher levels of learning (analysis, synthesis, etc.). If I can distinguish the levels of learning more visibly, then perhaps students will create new frameworks for how to develop into a successful PTA student.

The PTA faculty chose to focus our first-term mapping project on “Apply Learning” as we felt this would be an easier, first-step when considering CLOs. We affirmed our assumption that “Apply Learning” is emphasized in our first-term courses. We also discovered that many of our first-term course objectives overlap into multiple CLOs and the level of first-term teaching and learning in how to “Communicate Effectively” became more visible to us program faculty.

### **PTA 100- Marc (10 hrs)**

To be honest, I started the project just over 2 months ago, and I recently completed the process of going through the mapping process for the final time. What I can say is that I have met with Christina multiple times about mapping my PTA 100 course, an introduction to physical therapy. The success Christina has had mapping her courses inspired me to take a look at how I could align my course more closely with Lane’s core learning outcomes. It helps me answer the question why, versus “because the Commission of Accreditation in PT Education says so (CAPTE).” The project helped me dig deeper into finding the answer of why it matters, and why does PTA 100 matter for not only myself, but also my students.

Christina shared how herself and another instructor have “mapped” their courses. Thus had a model to refer to.

I had to take a leap and commit myself to this project. It was a learning curve for me to overcome as this was a new process for me. I think the timing of the project caught me a little off guard as I was also working 32 hours a week in the clinic as a PTA, and at the same time, teaching a course new to me, PTA 103 which made the learning curve a little steeper on what I needed to accomplish versus what I perceived I needed to accomplish in this mapping project. The following lists how I spend my hours in the project

- I met with Christina Howard 1:1 to discuss the project, as well as over the phone meetings for about 3 hours total.
- I met with Christina and 2 other faculty members Brian Wilkinson and Gary Ahearn for an hour via skype.
- I spent about 1.5 hours reviewing screen-casts and other mediums of communication including Google documents to better understand the mapping project
- I did a “rough draft” of actually mapping my course which consumed 3 hours. The project included aligning
- Lane's Core Learning Outcomes (CLO) as it relates to PTA 100 objectives and assessments
- Lane's Core Learning Outcomes as it relates to PTA program outcomes
- I completed a revised version based on feedback from Christina Howard on my rough draft for a completed mapping outline of my course which took 1.5 hours.
- Addition time was spent completing this assessment of the project itself.

After my first draft, on mapping PTA 100, Christina redirected me with explicit feedback informing me that I did not need to find elements or objectives in PTA 100 to match or map to each Lane CLO. This feedback was very helpful in narrowing the project for me in terms of connecting my existing course objectives to Lane CLO's. Before this feedback I was creating new objectives to map within the Lane CLO's versus using my existing course objectives, which was despite the time commitment, a learning opportunity for me in regards to what Lane CLO's assess.

The outcome of the PTA 100 CLO mapping process is documented in “PTA 100 CLO Mapping\_FINAL.pdf”

The Lane CLO's challenged me to think of my course in a new way particularly in regards to my PTA 100 course objectives. Specifically, I gained a greater appreciation on how broad my objectives are and how they overlap into more than one dimension. For example this objective from PTA 100:

Use technology appropriately, efficiently, and effectively for course assignments, creating instructional material using web-based technology. Using technology for self-assessments, and for peer and instructor communication.

This is a an objective that easily niches into several Lane CLO dimensions including

| Think Critically                                    | Communicate Effectively  | Communicate effectively   |
|---|--|---|
| Utilize technology to adapt to and create new media | Organize the message to adapt to cultural norms, audience, purpose, and medium | Attend to messages, check for shared meaning, identify sources of misunderstanding, and signal comprehension or non-comprehension |

I resigned myself to the fact that it was OK if my objective(s) fit into several Lane CLO dimensions and in fact, this was a strength of the objective when the objective synthesized with multiple CLO dimensions.

During my final summary of the project, I learned that my course weaved into several CLO dimensions in the following ordinal ranking.

Communicate effectively

Think critically and applying learning: course objectives were equally distributed in both dimensions

Engage

Creating ideas and solutions

Similar to my colleagues, this understanding will better help me better articulate to students how important effective communication is among patients, physical therapy peers and professionals as well as how heavily weighed effective communication is, in regards to successful completion of the course.

In summary, as an educator with a Masters degree in adult learning and education, I think it is crucial to be able to synthesize theory to practice and to be able to reflect on credible core learning outcomes as I prepare students to become not only the best therapists they can be, but also how to become better citizens in an ever changing world. I believe that graduates will need to be excellent communicators and problem solvers and graduates will need to be able to thrive in collaborative low context learning environments. The mapping process of my PTA 100 course also helped me identify how I am preparing students to think critically incorporating evidence based practice, but also how I can further explore opportunities to do in a more rich and meaningful way.

Why do I think this mapping project matters to students and why does making visible Lane CLO's to PTA 100 course objective matter? I think it matters because it helps students in view their PTA education with a different sets of lenses, and helps build their confidence as to why I am giving particular assignments. It helps me and students answer the succinct question of why am I taking this course and why being successful in the course can help students and myself in becoming a better informed individual learner and a more effective health care practitioner.