Lesson to teach the professional core value of accountability

**Course objectives** that this lesson contributes to:

Participate in APTA/TPTA. Explore the APTA core values document and hypothesize barriers to incorporation of those values on a personal level.

Participate in self-assessment and peer assessments and deliver effective feedback in a variety of situations.

Review legal documents, practice guidelines, regulatory principles, societal expectations, personal values/ethics, and professional ethics and examine their influence on the practice of physical therapy.

Apply strategies for becoming a successful graduate student including study habits, stress relief, test-taking, and professionalism.

Demonstrate professional behaviors in all interactions with peers, patients/clients, family members, caregivers, and other health professionals.

Lesson timeframe: 2 semesters.

**Lesson Outline:**

**Note:** This lesson is explicitly stated to be a lesson on documentation to the students but it also has strong cross over to blatantly teaching professionalism within the affective domain.

**Day 1 (early in semester 1):** Students review the APTA core values self-assessment prior to class. In class, we discuss each core value and examples of a breach of each one. Students are also advised to treat faculty members as they would treat their future clinical instructors and bosses and to act in school how they would act in clinic as a practicing physical therapist.

**Day 2 (midway through semester 1):** Students are asked to observe a mock evaluation performed by a faculty member in class and to document the evaluation using a standardized PT evaluation form. The mock evaluation is performed for the students such that it ends when class ends and students do not have enough time to finish documenting within class time. Student are told to finish the document out of class and bring it to the next class period. They are told that their document will be used during next class by exchanging them with peers to undergo a peer review using a rubric that I created to check for completeness of a document. The students are also emailed a reminder 2 days prior to class about completing their evaluation and bringing it to class.

**Day 3 (midway through semester 1):** I explain how to use the documentation peer-review rubricform to the whole class. Then I ask everyone who brought their completed evaluation form to raise it up high in the air. I then ask everyone who either didn’t finish the evaluation form or didn’t bring it at all to raise their hand. I remind the students that they are expected to treat faculty as they would treat their future clinical instructors and bosses. I also remind them of the core values document that we reviewed, specifically the section on accountability. I tell the students that if they didn’t bring their completed form in, then they are showing lack of accountability and would likely get into trouble with their clinical instructor if this happened in the clinic. I also discuss with them that it takes time to develop professionalism and that they should expect that their own moral professional standards will increase over time. The students experience emotions ranging from anger to self-pity to embarrassment. I help the student to recognize their emotions and to remember what lack of accountability feels like. I then get a sheet of paper and write “I was not prepared for class” on the top and ask all the students who didn’t bring or finish their evaluation form to sign the form and then leave class. I then continued with the documentation lesson with the remaining students. Typically, about half the class leaves as a result. I do, however, provide a safety net for the students by sending an email in which I state that if any of them would like to finish their documentation and bring it to me during office hours I’d be happy to review it.

**Day 4: (Beginning of semester 2) and outcome of the lesson:** The entire process is repeated at the beginning of the next semester when the class is learning how to write follow-up notes. Typically, all students bring in their document this time and I applaud their new professional accountability.