

Reviewer Response Report

Manuscript Title: *The Anatomy of Assessment: Competency-Based Educational Outcomes in a Doctor of Physical Therapy Anatomy Course*

We thank the editor and reviewers for their thoughtful and constructive feedback. Below we provide a point-by-point response describing how each comment was addressed in the revised manuscript. All changes are reflected in the revised submission.

Response to Reviewer 1

Reviewer Comment	Response
Clarify that the study was conducted within a Doctor of Physical Therapy course	The title and manuscript text were revised to explicitly reference a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) anatomy course.
Clarify study design in the abstract	The structured abstract was revised to explicitly describe the study as a retrospective, mixed-methods investigation.
Clarify whether learners received guidance or full autonomy for formative assessments	The Methods section now clearly describes how formative assessments were embedded within asynchronous modules and sequenced alongside synchronous instruction, while maintaining learner autonomy regarding timing and participation.
Add a figure to clarify the assessment structure	A conceptual figure illustrating the competency-based assessment structure, assessment formats, and remediation pathways was added (Figure 1). Additionally, a second figure was included to visually represent learner perceptions related to assessment design (Figure 2).
Situate findings within broader health professions education literature	The Discussion section was expanded to explicitly reference nursing and medical education literature related to open- and closed-book assessments and programmatic assessment models.
Acknowledge potential self-selection bias	The Limitations section now explicitly acknowledges potential self-selection effects associated with optional formative assessment engagement.

Reviewer Comment	Response
Provide practical recommendations for educators	The Conclusion now includes concrete, practice-oriented recommendations for educators implementing similar competency-based assessment strategies.

Response to Reviewer 2

Reviewer Comment	Response
Clarify the competency being assessed and alignment with a physical therapy framework	The Introduction was revised to explicitly identify the Northern Arizona University DPT clinical competency framework (e.g., Knowledge for Practice 1) and describe alignment between course learning objectives, competencies, and assessment items. Further alignment depicted in Figure 1 and tied to discussion.
Explain how competency was operationalized and remediated	The Methods section now defines competency using a criterion-referenced threshold ($\geq 80\%$), describes the three-attempt structure for summative assessments, and outlines feedback and remediation processes. Also depicted in Figure 1.
Address relationship to the APTA competency-based education framework	The manuscript now explicitly acknowledges that the NAU competency framework predated the APTA 2025 CBE framework and notes substantial conceptual overlap, particularly within the Knowledge for Practice domain.
Avoid over-emphasizing CBE without sufficient grounding	Language throughout the manuscript was refined to ensure interpretations are appropriately bounded by the study design, emphasizing assessment performance relationships and learner perceptions rather than causal claims of competency attainment.