Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

Department of Psychology, BA/BS
College of Liberal Arts

Spring 2018-Summer 2020

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1. Assessment information collected

Learning outcome data was collected from a total of 1541 student cases enrolled in 55 courses between Fall 2018 and Summer 2020. All psychology faculty participated in the outcomes assessment and assessed student learning outcomes. Not every course was included in the outcomes assessment, but a majority of courses were. The courses for which outcomes were assessed are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: *Psychology Courses Assessing Learning Outcomes*

Course	# of courses assessing outcomes
PSY 101 Introduction to Psychology	10
PSY 240 Psychology of Development	3
PSY 250 Introductory Statistics for Social Sciences	5
PSY 275 Introduction to Social Science Research Methods	6
PSY 301 Culture and Psychology	4
PSY 304 Personality	1
PSY 330 Social Psychology	2
PSY 333 Human Sexualities Across Cultures	2
PSY 337 Sport Psychology	2
PSY 345 Abnormal Psychology	1
PSY 370 Drugs and Behavior	1
PSY 390 Psychology of Work	1
PSY 393 Forensic Psychology	1
PSY 395 Psychology of Stress	2
PSY 440 Learning and Cognition	1
PSY 445 Community Psychology	1
PSY 455 Clinical Psychology	1
PSY 469 Health Psychology	2
PSY 480 Qualitative Social Science Research	2
PSY 485 Senior Seminar	4
PSY 495 Special Topics	3
Total	55

Each outcome was assessed by multiple courses, and included data from between 51 (applying science to service) to 1016 (critical evaluation of research) student cases.

Outcomes were assessed through a variety of assignments integrated into the courses, including a combination of papers (e.g. application papers, reflection papers, response papers, research proposals, literature reviews, research article summaries and critiques), portfolios, presentations, posters, quizzes, exams, in-class and online discussions, small-group activities, student-created video projects, role plays, interviews, demonstrations, info-graphics and other visual aids, worksheets, practice problems, cultural exploration assignments, research and statistics assignments, critical research evaluations, analyses of ethical considerations, collaborative documents, peer evaluations, and revision opportunities to make use of feedback. These diverse assignments included a focus on writing and communication for different audiences, and integration of peer-reviewed research.

Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

Learning Outcomes Assessed in Psychology Courses

Table 2 below provides the mean proficiency ratings (on a 1 to 5 scale) for each of the learning outcomes assessed by the psychology department, as well as the number and percentage of students attaining each proficiency score.

As shown in Table 2, average proficiency ratings ranged from 3.39 (between *adequate* and *good*) to 4.24 (slightly above *good*). The highest ratings were found for learning outcomes involving application of theoretical psychology concepts to science, service, and support (outcome 2), as well understanding of diverse perspectives (outcome 4) and research ethics (outcome 1b), with average ratings near the "*good*" range. Somewhat lower ratings, closer to the "*adequate*" range, were obtained for research design (outcome 1c) and APA style (outcome 3c). Critical evaluation of research and quantitative data analysis (outcomes 1a and 1d) and writing thought and clarity (outcomes 3a and 3d) were between "*adequate*" and "*good*", somewhat closer to *good*.

Table 2: *Proficiency Scores for Outcomes Assessed in Psychology Courses*

Outcome & Criteria	N	Mean (SD)	1 Not at all	2 Poor	3 Adequate	4 Good	5 Excellent
(1) Scientific Foundation							
a. Critical evaluation of research	1016	**3.79** (1.30)	97 (9.5%)	83 (8%)	149 (15%) *2.7: 4(.4%)* *3.3: 10(1%)*	220 (22%) *3.7:10(1%)* *4.3: 26(3%)*	380 (37%) *4.5: 9(1%)* *4.7: 28(3%)*
b. Research ethics	540	**3.86** (1.16)	35 (6.5%)	35 (6.5%)	81 (15%) *2.7: 4(.7%)* *3.3: 10(2%)*	141 (26%) *3.7: 10(2%)* *4.3:26(5%)*	170(31.5%) *4.7: 28(5%)*
c. Research design	539	**3.39** (1.28)	64 (12%)	67 (12%)	114 (21%) *2.7: 1(.2%)* *3.3: 5(1%)*	150 (28%) *3.7: 5(.9%)* *4.3: 14(3%)*	108 (20%) *4.7: 11(2%)*
d. Quantitative data analysis	117	**3.68** (1.23)	12 (10%)	8 (7%)	13 (11%) *2.7: 1(1%)* *3.3: 5(4%)*	26 (22%) *3.7: 5(4%)* *4.3:14(12%)*	22 (19%) *4.7:11(9%)*
(2) Applying theoretical psychology concepts to:							
a. Science	683	**3.94** (1.20)	57 (8%)	24 (3.5%)	93 (14%) *2.5: 2(.3%)*	223 (33%) *3.5: 3 (.4%)*	268 (39%) *4.5: 13(2%)*
b. Service	51	**3.94** (.86)	0	2 (4%)	14 (27.5%)	20 (39%)	15 (29%)
c. Support	106	**4.24** (.72)	0	0	18 (17%)	45 (42.5%)	43 (41%)
(3) Writing skills							
a. Thought development	909	**3.75** (1.32)	97 (11%)	67 (7%)	151(17%) *2.7: 3(.3%)* *3.3: 5(.6%)*	213 (23%) *3.7: 5(.6%)* *4.3: 12(1%)*	339 (37%) *4.7: 17(2%)*
b. Clarity	910	**3.77** (1.35)	102 (11%)	68 (7.5%)	132(14.5%) *2.7: 3(.3%)* *3.3: 5(.5%)*	210 (23%) *3.7: 5(.5%)* *4.3:12(1%)*	356 (39%) *4.7: 17(2%)*
c. APA style	505	**3.39** (1.28)	58(11.5%)	66 (13%)	112 (22%) *2.7: 1(.1%)* *3.3: 5(.7%)*	145 (29%) *3.7: 2(.4%)* *4.3: 7(1%)*	103 (20%) *4.7: 10(2%)*
(4) Knowledge of and respect for diverse perspectives	685	**3.88** (1.04)	24 (3.5%)	43 (6%)	137 (20%) *2.7: 1(.1%)* *3.3: 5(.7%)*	245 (36%) *3.7: 3(.4%)* *4.3: 5(.7%)*	215 (31%) *4.7: 7(1%)*

Fractions in proficiency rating frequencies resulted from the use of multiple assessments in a course to assess the same outcome, which were averaged to yield students' proficiency scores.

A detailed examination of the rating frequencies suggest that a majority of students received "*good*" to "*excellent*" proficiency scores for each aspects of each of the four learning outcomes. Less than a quarter of students received "*not at all*" or "*poor*" ratings, with some variability across outcomes. The percentage of students obtaining "*not at all*" or "*poor*" ratings ranged from 0% for applying theoretical psychology concepts to support (outcome 1c), to 24.5% for APA style writing skills (outcome 3c).

In sum, a majority of students seem to be successfully reaching psychology department learning outcomes. The greatest strengths seem to be in application of psychology (outcome 2) and understanding of diverse perspectives (outcome 4), and the greatest weaknesses seem to be in research design (outcome 1c) and APA style writing skills (outcome 3c). However, average ratings for psychology learning outcomes did not differ widely from one another. Much greater variability was found in the number of courses and cases assessing different outcomes, with some outcomes (critical evaluation of research; application of theoretical psychology concepts to science; writing skills; understanding of diverse perspectives) being widely assessed in many different courses, and others (quantitative data analysis; application of theoretical psychology concepts to service and support) being assessed in fewer courses.

It is important to note some caveats that can affect interpretation of data. Differences in outcome ratings may reflect students' prior knowledge, in addition to learning in a particular course. Differences in mean ratings may also reflect variations in specific courses, assignments, and instructors involved in assessing each outcome.

The psychology department is continually striving to improve the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of our students and community. This examination of outcomes across our psychology courses continues to be an important tool for continual monitoring and improvement of curricular learning outcomes. We are reviewing and discussing these results in faculty meetings to improve outcomes monitoring and measurement, and support innovative teaching strategies to facilitate student achievement. The Curriculum Committee will meet to plan adjustments and new outcomes assessments, including measures of oral communication skills and use of portfolios for future outcomes assessments. We are also planning an alumni survey to further enhance our assessment of outcomes.

2. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above
The psychology faculty and curriculum sub-committee will continue to meet to discuss the findings and any curricular changes.

3. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting
Inna Rivkin wrote the summary report based on information provided from the department as a whole that Jill Dewey-Davidson compiled. The department as a whole was involved in discussing findings and conclusions, and will be involved in planning curricular changes, the alumni survey, and changes in future assessments of outcomes.