



Program Assessment Report (PAR)

Psychology, BA (PSY) Baccalaureate Degree

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ACADEMIC YEAR COVERED BY THIS REPORT: 2020-2021

I. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

From 2020 assessment plan: Graduates will be able to 1) demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings to discuss how psychological principles apply to behavioral problems. 2) demonstrate basic skills in interpreting behavior, studying research, and applying research design principles. 3) demonstrate familiarity with professional ethics in psychology. 4) demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills. 5) demonstrate professional development by demonstrating competence in teamwork by working on group projects and knowledge of career options. Proposed changes: Based on the Department of Psychology's Learning Outcomes (see Appendix A for a more detailed overview of the Outcomes), graduates will be able to 1) display knowledge of human behavior, 2) demonstrate strong research skills, 3) exhibit strong ethical principles, 4) communicate effectively in verbal and written form, 5) work effectively in teams, both as a member and a leader, and 6) exhibit strong self-management skills.

II. PROCEDURES USED FOR ASSESSMENT

A. Direct Assessment

Original: Assessment of student artifacts
Assessment of student success on marker test items
Proposed changes: Direct assessment : • For specific learning goals for our Research Methods sequence (PSY 3010/3020), a set of questions (see Appendices C and D for specific questions) were developed since our last Assessment report. These questions were administered before the course began and were then re-administered after learning (embedded within exams corresponding with the content). These questions were administered in Fall 2020, Spring 2021, and Fall 2021.

B. Scoring of Student Work

- Based on feedback from Dr. Kahrig, we are proposing that we will also include evaluation of final papers from 2 capstone courses. Two courses will be randomly selected and papers will be assessed using the “Grading Rubric for Assessment of Learning Outcomes (see Appendix B),” with targeted assessment aimed at learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, & 6 (described in Appendix A). By the time students take their capstone courses, they are nearing the end of their studies and should have mastered these outcomes.
- Additionally, final papers from our Research Methods courses (PSY 3010/3020) will be sampled and assessed using the same rubric for but for a broader set of the learning outcomes (1-6). The Methods courses, in some cases more so than the capstone courses, include discussions on ethical principles within research and would require group work (in PSY 3010, in particular).

C. Indirect Assessment

Asked students to report their experiences with respect to learning tools and outcomes in Psychology 1010 survey (survey attached).

III. ASSESSMENT RESULTS/INFORMATION:

Asked students to report their experiences with respect to learning tools and outcomes in Psychology 1010 survey (survey attached).

Psyc 1010 Survey revealed some learning platform features that impeded learning, which we are working to resolve. Although 33% of students never listened to one of the recorded lectures, 40% of students found the recorded lectures useful/very useful. Students found lectures helpful in preparing for tests, course content increased students' interest in psychology, 67% of students said they were mostly/very happy they took the course, and 39% would recommend the course to others. 63% reported the course would be moderately/extremely useful in helping them in their future pursuits (e.g., understanding research, dealing with people). Psyc 3010/3020 Pre-test scores were above chance (about 30-35%) and post-test scores were about 70%. Post-test scores reflected somewhat lower learning/retention than desired. Finally, we did not have data available from a group project in a 3000-level class, we were able to obtain data from 6 marker questions for the class. Correct responses ranged from 0 - 44% on the pretest and from 22 - 78% on the posttest. We observed on average a 33% improvement, and the data highlighted the content students struggled most with.

Students perceived the Psyc 1010 course as useful but we did not tie the questions directly to the learning outcomes. We could do that in future years. Certainly, Psyc 1010 is directly targeted at our Learning Outcome 1 Knowledge of Psychology concepts, etc. Students were not learning/retaining as much as we would like in Psyc 3010 and 3020, so we have revised the course to improve student outcomes. Psyc 3010 and 3020 are targeted at Learning Outcome 2 Research methods, design, etc. We have initial evidence about learning in a completed renovated Psyc 3610 class that we will use to inform changes in instructional focus.

IV. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

We have throughout the year used two vehicles to share information about student learning/retention outcomes. First, we have a monthly UCDC (Undergraduate Curriculum Development Committee) meeting; the committee is comprised of 4 psychology faculty, Sarah Cicora (academic advisor), and the department chair. The committee discusses the status of courses/curriculum, issues/problems with specific courses, suggestions for improvements and planned course renovations. The UCDC reports at the monthly department faculty meeting, not only updating and making recommendations to the faculty on any/all curricular issues but asking for faculty advice and input. Second, we have a monthly department faculty meeting. During these meetings, faculty hear the reports from the UCDC and also can (and do) raise a variety of other curriculum issues that they wish to discuss. Our faculty were extremely helpful during Spring 20 in sharing a diverse array of suggestions, ideas, concerns, "hacks" and "fixes" that related to our shift to remote instructions. We even created a weekly "status check" email thread that faculty could and did use to share ideas in between faculty meetings. Changes to Psyc 1010, 3010 and 3020 have been led by our Lead Instructor (Steve Gabbard has been our lead instructor for all three courses after the loss of Dr. Carmen Culotta). Dr. Gabbard has worked with the two instructor teams (3-4 instructors for 1010 and 3-4 instructors for 3010/3020 sections) to ensure effective and equivalent delivery of instruction in different sections and to develop and implement ideas for improvements for these sections. The lead instructor also has collected data from each of these courses to inform the decisions made. We will continue this practice in future years. For example, these instruction teams made changes to the learning platform and reviewed a new textbook for 1010 and have completely renovated 3010 and 3020 (both the lecture and lab components). I expect our 5 learning outcomes to remain the same at least in the next few years because we are using the learning outcomes defined by the American Psychological Association, and those outcomes remain relatively stable.

V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Additional documentation, when provided, is stored in the internal Academic Program Assessment of Student Learning SharePoint site.