

University of Dayton Department of Psychology
Preliminary Assessment Plan
May, 2010

The purpose of this paper is to lay out a preliminary plan for the assessment of the Psychology curriculum. This plan was informed by the student learning outcomes as described in the Assessment CyberGuide for Learning Goals and Outcomes (2009) developed by the American Psychological Association to address undergraduate psychology education and by the University of Dayton's Habits of Inquiry (HIR; 2006).

Scholarship:

Students will be able to describe the basic characteristics of the science of psychology (Goal 2.1; APA, 2009).

Measure: Students in PSY 101, which is required of all majors, will be required to take an online quiz related to the science of psychology and the methods and tools used to address questions in psychology. Students in major capstone courses (to be proposed to the AAC in Fall 2010), which will be required of all majors, will be required to take an online quiz related to the science of psychology and the methods and tools used to address questions in psychology. It is expected that significant improvements in scores will be noted with 100% of students achieving at least 70% on the post-test.

Students will design and conduct basic studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods (Goal 2.4; APA, 2009).

Measure: As part of their course work in PSY 217, a course required of all majors, students will design and conduct studies to address psychological questions. These research studies will then be publically presented at one of the following forums: Stander Symposium, Social Science Symposium, and Student Research Website (to be developed). Students in PSY 216 will be required to evaluate at least one study and provide comments or questions regarding the study to the investigator. A syllabus audit will ensure that this is a requirement in all sections of PSY 216. Although currently a majority of our majors complete PSY 216, a number take MTH 207 to meet the statistics requirement which is a prerequisite for PSY 217. This fall a proposal will go before the AAC to remove MTH 207 as an option for meeting the statistics requirement. Once this is in place, 100% of majors will be required to take PSY 216.

Practical Wisdom:

Students will identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems (Goal 4.2; APA, 2009).

Measure: Students in the capstone courses will produce either a research project or analytic writing product which addresses a question in psychology. All majors must obtain a minimum grade of C- in the capstone course in order to successfully complete the course. A syllabus audit will ensure that this is a requirement in all capstone courses.

Students will apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life (Goal, 4.4; APA, 2009).

Measure: Syllabus audits will be performed to ensure that PSY 101 students will be assigned writing assignments in which they apply psychological concepts, theories and research findings to their lives and reflect on that application. A random sample of 5% of papers will be evaluated to determine whether application and reflection is presented. It is expected that at least 80% of sampled papers will provide evidence of application and reflection

Diversity:

Students will explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others and vice versa (Goal 8.3; APA, 2009).

Measure: 100% of majors will obtain a C- or better in two of the following courses: PSY 341 Social Psychology; PSY 351 Child Psychology; PSY 361 Personality; and PSY 363 Abnormal Psychology, courses which specifically address individual differences and their impact on interpersonal interactions. A syllabus audit will be performed, and 100% of sections in these courses will address individual differences and their impact on interpersonal interactions.

Students will recognize and respect human diversity (Goal 5.5; APA, 2009).

Measure: Using items Ie (Included diverse perspectives in class discussion or writing assignments) and II.1 (Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds) on the National Survey of Student Engagement, responses from Psychology majors as first year students will be compared with their responses as seniors. Aggregate ratings will move from neutral or low in the first year to high in the senior year.

References:

American Psychology Association. APA Board of Education Affairs' Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies. (2009). *The Assessment CyberGuide for Learning Goals and Outcomes (2nd ed.)*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/assessment-cyberguide-v2.pdf>

University of Dayton, The Marianist Education Working Group. (2006). *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection: A Report on Education in the Catholic and Marianist Traditions at the University of Dayton*, Retrieved from http://academic.udayton.edu/Senate/documents/senate%20documents/06-09_%20Report%20from%20the%20Marianist%20Working%20Group.htm