

Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP): **Psychology Program**2015-16 Academic Year**A. College, Department, Date**

College	Science, Technology, and Health
Department	Psychology
Date	June 20, 2016

B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

Name and title: Elizabeth Vella, Associate Professor of Psychology

C. Degree Program

Name of Degree Program: Psychology

D. Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment**Step 1: Identify the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)**

- a. Do you have your student learning outcomes published on your department's website? No

If yes, please indicate the url: _____

- i. If no, please list 3-5 of the most important student learning outcomes for your program. **What will students know by the end of your program?**

1. **Quantitative Literacy:** Students will demonstrate competence in statistical computational skills; interpretation of graphs, tables, and statistical results; and ability to define statistical significance and differentiate it from practical significance.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Students will effectively and accurately extract meaning from complex texts; demonstrate innovative and integrative thinking; analyze problems from multiple perspectives; evaluate the quality of evidence supporting an argument; develop effective arguments, employing clear thesis, acceptable evidence, and sound logical argument; and identify errors in psychological reasoning, including errors arising from psychological, social, and cultural influences on our own reasoning processes.
3. **Meta-Cognitive Self-Regulation:** Students will attend to and monitor the quality of their thinking processes and academic performance; design strategies to produce desired changes in outcomes.

Please identify **which of your student learning outcome(s) were assessed this past academic year**. (One or more of the outcomes and corresponding assessment plans could come from your department's CORE Course Blueprint(s)).

An attempt was made to assess Quantitative Reasoning last academic year, but my attempts were derailed. My department presented multiple obstacles that made the originally approved assessment plan untenable. The original plan was to assess quantitative reasoning and metacognitive self-regulation during the 2015-2016 academic year and critical thinking alongside metacognitive self-regulation during the 2016-2017 academic year. The department approved a system that would have involved me going to freshman/sophomore level classes in the psychology dept (e.g., Introduction to Psychology and Psychology of Statistics) and then to also assess the learning outcomes amid students enrolled in a senior level course (e.g., Physiological Psychology). I would have needed to administer hard copies of the assessment tools, enter the hard copies into an electronic form to score, and then run analyses to compare freshman/sophomores to junior/seniors. However, after departmental approval of the assessment plan, instructors of Intro Psych and Statistics refused to permit class time for my assessment. Further, our physiological psychology instructor (Dr. Broida) passed away and currently this course is being taught online by an adjunct. So, I switched gears and Prof Gayton permitted me to assess his PSY 102 course. I gathered data on ~70 or so students before realizing that only a small fraction of them were actual psychology majors (PSY 102 is a requirement for a variety of programs outside the psychology dept). Therefore, the data currently gathered to date is not very useful. I've now decided to just move forward on my own and adopt a new strategy, given the number of obstacles to the original assessment plan. I have retrieved a list of newly matriculated psychology majors, which includes their email addresses. I am going to upload my critical thinking and metacognitive self-regulation assessment tools into survey monkey and then send them to these newly matriculated majors, alongside an email that specifies the reason for the assessment and the anticipated time frame for completing the assessment tool. I am going to include an item on the survey for student name, to permit me to keep track of who has completed that assessment tool; this strategy will enable me to be persistent in achieving a strong and hopefully representative completion rate. I will then do the same thing for students who have applied for graduation.

- b. Do you have a **matrix or curriculum map** showing when your student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses? No.

Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented

Identify which direct measures (other than course grades), that were used to determine whether students achieved the stated learning outcomes for the degree.

The critical thinking assessment tool that I am going to use is entitled the Psychological Critical Thinking Exam (PCTE; Lawson, Jordan-Fleming, & Bodle, 2015), which represents a validated assessment tool for measuring critical thinking specific to the discipline. Students are asked to read 14 brief scenarios that involve scientific evidence and conclusions that are based upon the

evidence. For each of the scenarios, students must specify if there are any problems with the conclusions drawn and if so, to describe the problem. For each of the scenarios, there is a problem with the evidence interpretation (e.g., failure to use a control group, or making use of a biased/nonrepresentative sample). Scoring the PCTE involves ranking student responses using the following scale: 0 = no problem identified; 1 = problem recognized, but misidentified; 2 = correct problem identified, but irrelevant other problems also stated; and 3 = only correct problem identified. Possible scores range from 0-42.

Reference:

Lawson, T.J., Jordan-Fleming, M.K., & Bodle, J.H. (2015). Measuring psychological critical thinking: An update. *Teaching of Psychology, 42*(3), 248-253.

The General Strategies for Learning subscale (5 items) and the Clarification Strategies for Learning subscale (3 items) from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) will be used to assess Metacognitive Self Regulation (Dunn, Lo, Mulvenon, & Sutcliffe, 2012).

General Strategies for Learning (GSL) Scale

1. When reading for this course, I make up questions to help focus my reading
2. If course readings are difficult to understand, I change the way I read the material
3. I work hard to do well in this course even if I don't like what we are doing.
4. I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the material I have been studying in this course.
5. Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.

Clarification Strategies for Learning (CSL) Scale

1. When I become confused about something I'm reading for this course, I got back and try to figure it out.
2. When studying for this course, I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well.
3. If I get confused taking notes in class, I make sure I sort it out afterwards.

Note: Students are instructed to respond to each item of these inventories on a scale of 1-7, with 1 = 'not at all true of me' and 7 = 'very true of me'

Reference:

Dunn, K.E., Lo, W.J., Mulvenon, S.W., & Sutcliffe, R. (2012). Revisiting the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire: A theoretical and statistical reevaluation of the metacognitive self-regulation and effort regulation subscales. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 72*(2), 312-331.

- a. Briefly describe when you implemented the assessment activity, and if a scoring rubric was used to evaluate the expected level of student achievement. (This information may be shown on your curriculum map).

As indicated above, the assessment tools have yet to be administered. I will send off the first round of assessment tools via email link by the end of this month (June 2016) to newly matriculated psychology majors, keeping track of progress. The email communication will specify a date by which to have completed the inventories (probably a couple weeks after the circulation of the first link). Students who have not completed the inventories by mid-July will then be recontacted by email with a friendly reminder and readministration of the link. Those who have not completed the inventories by early August will then be contacted by phone to ascertain whether they have checked their maine.edu email over the summer. At this point in time, I will also request whether they would prefer to complete a hard copy of the inventories. If so, I'll solicit their mailing addresses and circulate hard copies with postage paid return addresses upon request. The same system will be utilized at the end of the academic year to assess seniors who have applied for graduation.

Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning

- a. Briefly describe your unit's process of reviewing the program assessment results (i.e. annual process by faculty committee, etc). I will reserve time from my schedule in summer 2017 to analyze the data collected during the 2016-2017 academic year, at which time I will share the findings with my departmental colleagues and your offices.
- b. What changes have been or will be made to improve student learning, as a result of using the program assessment results? N/A
- c. Date of most recent program review/self-study? We completed our most recent self study a year ago and had our external reviewers evaluate the program in Fall 2015. These materials can be made available to your office upon request.

- E. **Course Assessment Activities:** Is your program able to report any assessment-related activities at the Course-Level... (i.e. created grading rubrics to use in required courses, examined student progress in entry-level courses, developed a new course, etc)? Please briefly explain any assessment projects.

No, not at present. I am planning to propose a new internship based capstone for the psychology major at some point this summer. This course offering will incorporate regular assessment of course learning objectives.

F. Community Engagement Activities in your departmental curriculum:

- a. Does your department have a student learning outcome that is related to any community engagement activities? If so, please state the outcome. No, not at present
- b. Please indicate what community engagement activities are included in your program’s curriculum, and whether the activities are required or optional for students in your major.

<u>Community Engagement Activity</u>	<u>Included</u>	<u>Required/Optional</u>
Student Research (related to a community-based problem)		Optional
Student-Faculty Community Research Project		Optional
Internship, or a Field Experience		Optional
Independent Study (community-related project)		Optional
Capstone Course (community-related project)		Not Yet
Service-Learning (course-based)		Not Included
Study Abroad, or an International Program		Not Included
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)		Not Included
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)		Not Included
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (advisory boards, committees, conference presentations)		Optional
Other Activities (not mentioned above):		

- c. Please list any courses (i.e. EDU 400) that have a community engagement activity in your program.

Entry-level courses: N/A

Mid-level courses: N/A

Upper-level courses: PSY 400*, PSY 401*, PSY 410

*Note: Depending upon the faculty advisor, PSY 400/401 may or may not have a civic engagement component. PSY 410 is internship and always includes civic engagement.