Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP): <u>Psychology</u>

<u>2016-17 Academic Year</u>

A. College, Department, Date

College: Science, Technology, and Health
Department: Psychology
Date: May 31, 2017

B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

Name and Title: Liz Vella, Associate Professor

C. Degree Program

Name of Degree Program: Psychology

D. <u>Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment</u>
   <u>Step 1: Identify the Student Learning Outcomes</u> (SLO's)

   a. Do you have your student learning outcomes published on your department's website?   Not Yet.

   > If yes, please indicate the url: _____

   > **i.** If no, please <u>list 3-5</u> 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.

   b. 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).

      1. Critical Thinking Skills
      2. Meta-Cognitive Self-Regulation

c. 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

d. 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 used 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 were asked to read 14 brief scenarios that involve scientific evidence and conclusions that are based upon the evidence. For each of the scenarios, students specified if there were any problems with the conclusions drawn and if so, to describe the problem. For each of the scenarios, there was 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 involved 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) was 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 our 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.

     e. 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).

Data collection for this ASLP was painstaking, since faculty in the department refused to permit class time to be used to assess their students. So, online data collection became the default, since live assessment was untenable. I used my survey monkey account to gather data by entering the PCTE and MSLQ items into a survey. At the beginning of the Fall semester of 2016, I contacted the psychology department administrative assistant, Lin Wright, to request email contact info for students who had recently declared the psychology major. Beginning in mid-October 2016, these students were contacted through survey monkey with instructions to complete the assessment. A link was provided in the body of the email communication. Students were instructed to complete the assessment at their next convenience on a laptop or desktop computer. Students who had not completed the assessment within a business week were sent weekly reminders through finals week in December. There were a total of 60 students on this list. I was able to receive responses from 22 students in total (37% response rate).

Next, data was collected on psychology major seniors who applied to graduate in spring, 2017. The same process was repeated in the spring for the seniors. I received a MS Excel spreadsheet featuring email address from Lin Wright mid-spring term of all psych seniors who had applied to graduate. Targeted email messages were sent out to these students in March 2017 from my survey monkey acct, with weekly reminders sent out to non-completers throughout the month of April. Out of 34 students who applied to graduate in the spring, I received responses from 19 students in total (56% response rate).

Procedures and Results

I de-identified the dataset by assigning each student a subject ID #. I then scored the PCTE, using the metric described on the bottom of page two. The MSLQ was scored in SPSS via creation of averaged subscale scores for the GSL and CSL inventories. Hand scored PCTE inventories were entered into excel and opened in an SPSS master file with the MSLQ data.

Sociodemographic data was also gathered for each student (e.g., age, gender, and year in college). Here is the demographic breakdown of the new majors:
n = 22. Age: M = 20.5 yrs, SD = 3.5 yrs; range: 17-28 yrs (4 men, 18 women).
Freshman: 13 (59%)
Sophomore: 3 (13%)
Junior: 5 (23%)
Senior: 1 (5%)

Here is the demographic breakdown for the seniors:
n = 19. Age: M = 24.6 yrs, SD = 5 yrs; range: 21-39 yrs (1 man, 18 women).
Senior: 19 (100%)

PCTE Analyses
Of the new majors, 3 did not complete the PCTE, opting to skip over the scenarios and leave the questions blank. So, out of 22 students, I only have 19 PCTE data points for new majors. Likewise, 4 seniors also opted not to complete the PCTE, leaving me with just 15 data points amid the seniors. These data were analyzed via independent samples t-test, yielding a marginally significant effect: $t(32) = -1.73$, $p = .09$. In accord with expectation, seniors demonstrated a higher average PCTE score (M = 24.93, SD = 8.8) when compared to their newly declared counterparts (M = 19.84, SD = 8.3). The fact that this effect is only marginally significant likely stems from the small sample size.

MSLQ Analyses
Being as the MSLQ just features 8 likert type questions, all students completed the inventory. That said, nonsignificant differences were observed when comparing newly matriculated majors to graduating seniors for both the GSL ($t(39) = -.867$, $p = .39$) and CSL ($t(39) = -.89$, $p = .37$) subscales. Although seniors scored higher on both inventories compared to newly matriculated majors, the differences between the two groups are nominal in scope.

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).
No process is in place because the departmental climate has been hostile regarding assessment. I've honestly had faculty in my department converse right outside my office door and refer to my work on program assessment as "bullshit". However, the psychology department will be experiencing three retirements in the fall, which presents an opportunity to begin building a culture of assessment. At present, I am flying solo on program assessment, but this may change in coming years.

       b. What specific changes have been or will be made to improve student learning, as a result of using the program assessment results?
At present, I believe implementing changes to be preemptive. I regard the 2016-2017 data collection to represent a 'pilot study' and would like to add to the data set for one more year, to achieve proper significance on the PCTE. Although I will continue to gather data on the MSLQ for one more year, since it is a very quick and easy to implement assessment, I do not expect to achieve significance here. Possible score values for the GSL and CSL subscales range from 1-7.

The new majors averaged 4.4 on this inventor for the GSL and 5.24 on this inventory for the CSL. One possibility is that the newly matriculated majors are just simply already using this skill, leaving a restricted range of room for improvement on the measure. Another possibility is that students are overestimating what they are doing when reading for a given course. I do believe that an embedded assessment within a given course would be a more revealing indication on whether psych majors are indeed achieving the learning outcome of metacognitive self-regulation.

        c.   Date of most recent program review/self-study?

We completed our most recent self-study in summer 2015 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. My plan is to gather one more year of data on the current assessment protocol and then switch gears to a more concentrated assessment of my experimental methodology course offering (PSY 205/206). I need to decide which learning outcome(s) to assess from this class and whether to utilize an 'off the rack' assessment strategy of pre-post of students, comping baseline assessment from the first day of the semester to assessment scores on the last day of the semester. I teach the methodology lab in a computer classroom, which presents a perfect opportunity to move forward with that design. An alternative, more labor intensive option would involve an imbedded assessment of a given assignment from the course. In my last ASLP, I mentioned the possibility of an assessment plan in progress for a potential internship based capstone for the psychology major. Although I've made progress on this note since last year by joining a capstone based faculty interest group, developing a sample syllabus for the course, and getting some preliminary feedback from the core curriculum committee, I am not at the point yet of being ready to submit the course for formal evaluation. Rather, my efforts at present will center on my new role of psych dept chair and rebuilding the dept following our wave of retirements. Therefore, an internship based capstone is still off in the distance, but when it becomes finalized, it will incorporate assessments of learning outcomes within the foundation of the course.

F. <u>Community Engagement Activities in your departmental curriculum</u>:

a. Does your department have a student learning outcome that is related to any community engagement activities?   Not yet…but we will.

b. Please indicate if any of the community engagement activities listed below are included in your program's curriculum, by noting which activities are required or optional for students in your major.

Community Engagement Activity	*Required/Optional*
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)	None
Study Abroad, or an International Program	None
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	None
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	None
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.