

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Psychology-Clinical Psychology (M.S.) (552)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: Psychology

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Northwestern Mission Statement. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

Department of Psychology Mission. The Department of Psychology (undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Addiction Studies and a master's degree in Clinical Psychology) is dedicated to providing high quality education by actively engaging in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. Students develop a robust knowledge base of concepts and theories, scientific and critical thinking, ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, communication, and professional development. As part of our educational mission, the Psychology Department provides encouragement and support for research and scholarship for both the faculty and students with opportunities for practicum and externship training experiences. These activities are designed to foster professionalism and prepare students for graduate education and/or immediate employment and service in the community.

Clinical Psychology Program Mission Statement: The mission of the clinical psychology graduate program is to educate students in the science and practice of

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

clinical psychology so that they may develop into knowledgeable professionals who are intelligent consumers of research and competent and ethical providers of psychological services.

Methodology: The assessment process for the MS in Clinical Psychology program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator;
- (2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses if required;
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Clinical Psychology Graduate Council, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Students will know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

Course Map: PSYC 5200: Theories of Psychotherapy
PSYC 5260: Practicum I: Psychotherapy and Intervention

Measure: 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

Annually, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation before starting the program to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including theories, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no minimum score is expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5200, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' foundational knowledge of the theories of psychotherapy. The goal was for 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

Of the seven students, 100% earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 36 to 72% ($M=53.14$, $SD=12.80$). For the comprehensive exam, the scores for the same targeted items were much more consistent and ranged from 60 to 84% ($M=68.00$, $SD=10.07$). These scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores (two-tailed paired t -test, $t(7) = 2.30$, $p = .0$), demonstrating increased knowledge of theories of psychotherapy and improvement in the desired direction. The results showed the students performed significantly better on the post-test ($M=68.00$, $SD=10.07$) than on the pre-test ($M=53.14$, $SD=12.80$), $t(7) = 2.30$, $p = .03$. In addition, six out of seven (90%) of students in this cohort responded correctly to the question directly regarding Gestalt theory. These results indicate students' knowledge of theories of psychotherapy significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for this SLO.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, faculty implemented the changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. There was a change in instructors for this course last year. While the goal for the pre-posttests was met, it was noted that students' scores were higher on the essay portion of the test showing understanding and application of the theories than on the pre-posttests, indicating specific detail academic knowledge of the theories. This was suspected to be a consequence of the workshop format focus changing the learning expectations. A review of the pre-posttest questions was conducted to determine if any updates were necessary to assure questions were directly related to the course content. Changes to three questions (1. 6. 25.) were made prior to the pre-test in the fall of 2023 to better reflect the updated course content.

In addition, application assignments were made for each of the major theories addressed in the course with interactive/process andragogy in mind. It was anticipated that these changes would improve the students' ability to balance their academic content knowledge with the ability to utilize and apply this knowledge when they begin working with clients. These changes were purposefully implemented to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024 the target was met. The results showed the students performed significantly better on the post-test ($M = 19.63$, $SD = .63$) than on the pre-test ($M = 16.75$, $SD = 3.20$), $t(-2.52)$, $p = .02$. These results indicate students' knowledge of theories of psychotherapy significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for this SLO.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The results of this goal have been met for numerous cycles and improvement continues. The decision at this time is to move from specifics to a broader modality of andragogy and provide course sessions for Socratic questioning and open discussions regarding the content and application of the theoretical foundations of psychotherapy. This method is intended to provide support for the information learned and encourage critical thinking. Also, to allow students to question areas that they individually may struggle with understanding in a positive and supportive environment.

Measure: 1.2. (Direct – Skill/Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270 (Practicum II) were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and use of theoretical and scientific approaches to psychological treatment, including evidence-based practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge by scoring 3 or higher on the evaluation. The equivalent rating for the recently adopted (2018) evaluation form is a score of 3 (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

Table 1

Psychological Intervention Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	4.6	0.63
Takes a theoretically based approach to working w/clients.	4.6	0.63

For the application of this knowledge with clients, the ratings ranged from 4 ($n = 1$) to 5 ($n = 1$), with $M = 4.33$. In terms of the SLO, the objective was met with 100% of the students earning a rating from their supervisor of 3 or higher, consistently meeting high standards.

Based on this information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, the students' efforts to apply theory again exceeded their knowledge. Faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The decision was made to not move towards an advisory board due to the goals being more aligned with program enhancement versus this specific SLO. Therefore, a decision was made

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

to continue the previous actions of the supervisor in practicum II regarding methods and opportunities in group supervision time with the instructor. Also, the students' learning and understanding by transitioning to a workshop format for the course with strong andragogical interactive activities that allow the students to practice and personalize the skills and techniques of various theories. These assignments/activities were designed to personalize the application of theories, reflected in a submission of a "portfolio" of interactive and reflective work by each student.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Table 2

Psychological Intervention Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	4.5	2
Takes a theoretically based approach to working w/clients.	4.5	2

As seen in Table 2, practicum supervisors rated the students enrolled in PSYC 5270 during the Spring semester fours and fives for demonstrating knowledge of theories and psychotherapy. For the application of this knowledge with clients, the ratings also ranged from 4 ($N = 2$) to 5 ($N = 2$), with $M = 4.5$, $SD = 2$. In terms of the SLO, the objective was met with 100% of the students earning a rating from their supervisor of 3 or higher, consistently meeting high standards.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The PSYC 5270 Instructor who conducts weekly group supervision will have students identify their theoretical orientations they intend to practice with their clients at the beginning of practicum. Students will then be required to conceptualize and identify their treatment goals and interventions within the context of their identified theories.

These changes will improve the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward for this SLO.

SLO 2. Demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

Course Map: PSYC 5300: Intellectual Assessment
PSYC 5320: Personality Assessment

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

PSYC 5750: Psychopathology

PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychotherapy and Intervention

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

The preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including psychopathology. Coordinating targeted items allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5750, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of psychopathology, including its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. The goal was for at least 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

The AC 2022-2023 target was met.

The comprehensive exam included 75 multiple-choice questions and two discussion questions. The exam included the 25 items from the pre-test. Of the six students, 100% earned at least 70% on the entire exam and the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 36 to 84% ($M = 59.43$, $SD = 16.24$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 80 to 96% ($M = 89.14$, $SD = 5.01$) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t(6) = -5.77$, $p < .000$). These results indicated students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The weakest performance on the pre-comp and comprehensive exams again was on the question regarding intellectual disability (0% for pre- and post-test). Given the consistently poor performance on the question regarding intellectual disability, the test item is considered a poor item. The question was revised for the 2023-2024 pre-comp and comprehensive exam. The other weak area was mood disorders, specifically time criteria that distinguish between mood disorders. The instructor used a mood disorder case for one of the case analysis assignments, which required students to differentiate between mood disorders in their selection of the correct diagnosis.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024, the target was met. The comprehensive exam included 75 multiple-choice questions and two discussion questions, and 100% of the students passed with a grade of 70% or higher. The exam included the 25 items from the pre-test. Of the eight students, 100% earned at least 70% on the entire exam and the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 24 to 92% ($M = 75$, $SD = 22.80$). For the same targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 84 to 92% ($M = 89.50$, $SD = 3.66$) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest, one-tailed paired t -test, $t(7) = 2.07$, $p < .04$. These results indicated students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The changes in instruction and activities guided by analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness were effective. This practice will continue as each cohort of students has variable performance levels in these identified areas. In addition, the students have consistently met the target of earning a score of 70%. Therefore, the targeted score will be increased to 80%. While 70% is the required grade to pass the comprehensive exam, a B is required for the course to demonstrate competency. Therefore, it is reasonable to increase the targeted grade.

These changes will have a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate competency in knowledge of psychopathology, including its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment.

Measure 2.2. (Direct – Assessment Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their psychological assessment and diagnostic abilities through formal clinical interviews, mental status examinations, standardized psychological testing administration, scoring, and interpretative evaluation reports they are required to submit for PSYC 5300 and 5320, required assessment courses for Clinical Psychology students. Upon completion of PSYC 5320, the students submit a comprehensive psychological assessment report to evaluate their proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examination, and psychological test administration, scoring, and interpretation used in professional assessment and diagnosis. The goal was for at least 70% of students to score at least 80% on the comprehensive report to demonstrate competency in psychological assessment and diagnostics.

Finding: Target was met.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

In AC 2022-2023 on a pre-test knowledge measure administered at the beginning of the semester students achieved scores with a range of 90 to 100% and $M = 98$, $SD = 0.37$, demonstrating awareness of the basic connections between physical health and psychological well-being. The post-test knowledge measure was not administered due to the high scores demonstrated on the initial measure. Acquired knowledge application evaluation scheduled as a component of the final comprehensive assessment report was discontinued. Comprehensive assessment reports are conducted with student volunteers which places the presenting problems evaluated in the report to chance based on the volunteer's information. For this assignment, comprehensive report activities did not obtain volunteers with reported physical health concerns. Further evaluation of skills application was not possible for this cycle. However, knowledge of physical health and psychological well-being as a component of comprehensive psychological evaluation was noted through initial measurement of student knowledge and additional instruction was provided.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, faculty provided instruction for the administration of psychological assessment instruments virtually and in person to reflect current industry standards in the practice of psychology. Additional education concerning the connection between physical health and psychological well-being as a component of comprehensive psychological evaluation was expanded. This was evaluated with an instructor-provided psychological assessment report rather than a comprehensive report component to ensure data was available for student use. Student scores ranged from 72-94% with $M = 85$, $SD = 6.65$. The results confirm student competency with consideration of physical health and psychological well-being as a component of psychological assessment.

A new instruction component also focused on the need to include medication influences on psychological assessment results. This targeted education instruction included the addition of medication information within the clinical interview component that was included in the psychological assessment reports and to address compliance with medical provider instructions as a component of the summary and recommendations in psychological assessment reports.

Additionally, in the AC 2022-2023, for the first time, students had mock assessment volunteers consistently reporting regular use of marijuana. As the controversy around marijuana use, whether recreational or medicinal use, continues, it is important psychological assessment student instruction addresses the impact of regular marijuana use on cognitive performance and psychological well-being. In the AC 2023-2024, a module on the neuropsychological effects of marijuana and other mood-altering chemicals on cognition, mood, and well-being was provided to psychological assessment students. A pre-test and post-test originally scheduled

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

was not administered, instead there was an incorporation of questions specifically targeting more detailed analysis of substance use into the psychological assessment clinical interview process. Students completed sample activities and conducted three mock comprehensive psychological assessments which included a clinical interview review of detailed substance use behaviors. These experiences were reviewed through class discussion so all students could benefit from each of their peers' experiential activities. All students completed these requirements thereby increasing knowledge of the importance of not only identifying the effects of marijuana, but also of other substances used by mock assessment volunteers during comprehensive psychological assessment activities.

Decision or Recommendation

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results, continued focus on integrating substance-related behaviors evaluation into psychological assessment clinical interviews is a priority. A specific skills test evaluating competency with this component of the clinical interview process in a comprehensive psychological assessment activity will be administered. It is expected that after course instruction and practice, students will achieve at least 80% on this skills test. Additionally, to drive continued compliance with industry standards, students will utilize technology obtained for the Clinical Psychology Master's Program and administer all personality testing instruments on iPads rather than through stationary computers or paper and pencil. This will provide students with the leading methods of performing standardized emotional/personality measures in the world of work when conducting professional psychological activities.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate an understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 2.3. (Direct – Intervention Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270 were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and skills of treatment planning and choosing and implementing evidence-based interventions to effect change. The goal was for 100% of students to be rated satisfactory (3) and demonstrate competency in psychological intervention. The rating scale on the evaluation form is 1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Table 3

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend treatment plan.	3.67	.47
Seeks information about therapeutic techniques.	3.50	.50
Knowledgeable about therapeutic techniques.	3.50	.50
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	3.67	.47
Takes a theoretically based approach.	3.67	.47
Overall Rating	3.67	.47

While 100% of the students earned a satisfactory rating, thereby meeting the goal, it is noted that two students received a satisfactory rating (3) across all areas while the other four students received Superior ratings (4), with two items as exceptions. One of the practicum supervisors was not providing regular supervision for the two students and was prompted to comply with the contractual agreement of weekly supervision. He elected to supervise them virtually, and the topic generally focused on educating the students about assessment rather than specific supervision of their clients and their application of theory. A review of the revised questions that compared knowledge vs initiative/application showed that students who were regularly supervised in person about their clients received superior ratings of their knowledge and application, which met the objective.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, the Clinical Director met with each supervisor, particularly the noted supervisor, to review practicum objectives and supervision requirements with the goal of evaluating the partnership and the University's and site's needs. That supervisor modified his supervision and met weekly with two students for more than an hour per week, exceeding practicum requirements. Practicum I and Practicum II supervisors emphasized student discussion of theoretical conceptualization and application in treatment planning and empirically supported techniques.

Table 4

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend treatment plan.	3.67	.58
Seeks information about therapeutic techniques.	3.50	.58
Knowledgeable about therapeutic techniques.	3.25	.96
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	3.5	.58
Takes a theoretically based approach.	3.5	.58
Overall Rating	3.5	.58

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Overall, 100% of students received a satisfactory rating. One student's rating for knowledge about therapeutic techniques needed *improvement*. Practicum placement revealed a notable difference in evaluations. The students placed at the University Counseling Center received superior ratings. This Practicum II placement is most similar to Practicum I, emphasizing therapy with college students. The other placements included largely assessments (clinical interview, MSE, and MoCA) and ABA therapy with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Decision or Recommendation

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Currently, a Mental Status Exam workshop is presented to all Clinical Psychology students. The Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) will be included to better prepare students in the use of commonly used cognitive screeners. While Behavior Therapy is introduced in Theories of Psychotherapy (PSYC 5200), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is not, which could account for the lower ratings for these students. Since this is a regular practicum placement for our students, ABA principles and techniques will be introduced to PSYC 5200 students.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate an understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3. Students will demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and perform psychological research.

Course Map: PSYC 5100: Psychological Research: Statistics
PSYC 5120: Psychological Research: Design
PSYC 5950: Psychological Research: Application

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

The preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including statistics and research design, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no minimum score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5120 was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of statistics and research design. The goal was for at least 80% of students to

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

For AC 2022-2023, seven students took the comprehensive exam, with seven (100%) of them scoring 70% or better on the entire exam, which exceeds our goal of 80% of the students earning the targeted score. The exam scores had $M = 79.1\%$, $SD = 6.9\%$; scores ranged from 71% to 87%. All 25 questions from the pretest were included in the comprehensive exam. Zero of six students taking both tests scored 80% or better on the questions from the pretest, with a range of 48 to 76% ($M = 64.6\%$, $SD = 11.9\%$). Scores on the pretest ranged from 20 to 52% ($M = 33.1\%$, $SD = 13.0\%$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t(7) = -6.4$, $p < .001$), indicating, student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased, not just statistically but also practically, between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The PSYC 5120 instructor spent additional class time on assumptions, regression analyses, and reviewing homework. In addition, the instructor taught PSYC 5100 and PSYC 5120 with the goal of improving students' comfort and confidence with the material by simplifying the discussion and encouraging questions. Moreover, the instructor had class activities, which allowed students to ask questions and seek guidance.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

For AC 2023-2024, all 25 questions from the pretest were included in the comprehensive exam. Zero of eight students taking both tests scored 80% or better on these targeted items from the comprehensive exam, with a range of 32 to 76% ($M = 61.0\%$, $SD = 13.8\%$). Scores on the pretest ranged from 32 to 64% ($M = 41.5\%$, $SD = 10.9\%$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t(7) = -4.46$, $p = .001$). As a result, student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased, not just statistically but also practically, between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. It is important to also note that although zero of eight students did not score 80% or better, when the complete comprehensive examination was taken into account, which included 75 multiple choice questions and three essay questions, eight out of eight students scored 70% or higher and four out of eight students scored 80% or better on the complete comprehensive exam. In

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

addition, when omitting three items that all students missed on the 25 questions from the pretest, four out of eight students scored 80% or better.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Among the three items omitted that all students missed in AC 2023-2024, two of three of the items were missed by six out of seven students in AC 2022-2023. Therefore, the three items will be revised. Additionally, in AC 2023-2024, students performed better on the essay questions than on the multiple-choice questions. Therefore, emphasis will be on enhancing knowledge of detailed information. These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design, the responsible conduct of research, and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and perform psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 3.2. (Direct - Knowledge)

At the conclusion of each research project, Paper-in-lieu of thesis or Thesis, thesis advisors scored the project using a rubric that assesses critical thinking and analysis of psychology concepts and literature, development of a research question(s) and hypotheses, appropriateness of the research design and methods, presentation, and interpretation of data in psychological research. The goal was for students to earn an overall rating of at least 80% or a rating of 3 on a 4-point Likert scale to demonstrate proficiency.

Finding: Target met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-2023, the target was met.

The ongoing intervention effectively provided structure and increased the number of completed research projects on time – 100% of students proposed before the conclusion of the Fall semester and completed their thesis by May 2023, with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. For accuracy, the survey results were interpreted using a 4-point Likert scale instead of converting them to percentages. The students (n = 6) who completed theses received a mean overall rating of 3.76 on a 4-point scale. The students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day, and two presented at the Southwestern Psychological Association Convention.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, faculty implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. With the Provost's approval, PSYC 5130, an elective research course, was offered as a pilot in Summer 2022 to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals. There

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

were no required courses in the summer that bridged the program's first and second years. The intention for the summer was for students to prepare drafts of their research project and pursue concentrations if desired. However, anecdotal data has consistently shown students do not take full advantage of the time for their research proposal without structure to guide productivity. The intention of this class was to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

The ongoing intervention effectively provided structure and again increased the number of completed research projects on time – 100% of students proposed before the conclusion of the Fall semester and completed their thesis by May 2024, with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. The students (n = 7) who completed theses received a mean overall rating of 3.68 on a 4-point scale. The students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day. In addition, four students presented at the Southwestern Psychological Association Convention, and one student presented at the LSU-S Academic Summit. This same student earned a research award.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Provost approved two years of offering the summer course to collect data; therefore, the faculty will again offer PSYC 5130 as an elective research course in Summer 2023 with the present cohort in order to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals. The intention of this class was to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner, and the results showed 100% of those students successfully completed their theses. Based on this data, the Provost and then Curriculum Review Committee approved the course being added to the curriculum as a required course that will be routinely offered in the summer, including Summer 2024, to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals. The goal is to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner. In addition, faculty will encourage students in the research design planning to consider research designs that require less participants since a main barrier for students in AC 2023-2024 was in recruitment of the initial required number of participants and/or encourage students be proposal ready earlier in the fall semester, so some of them can collect data in the fall of 2024. This would prevent the difficulty of all students collecting data at the same time from the same participant pool.

Areas of improvement noted on the evaluations were clarity of results and tables/figures, proofing drafts prior to submitting it to major professor, and thoroughly addressing advisor's feedback to minimize revisions. Resources and sample write-ups will be added to PSYC 5130 for students to use as models for writing results. In addition, these findings will be shared with major professors at the start of the fall

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

semester to incorporate strategies for students to address feedback and reduce revisions.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate research knowledge and application in a timely manner, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Course Map: PSYC 6000: Ethics and Professional Conduct
PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychological Intervention and Therapy

Measure 4.1. (Direct – knowledge)

Annually, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation before starting the program to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including ethics, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 6000, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students will be administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards of practice and their ability to practice ethical decision-making skills when presented with an ethical dilemma. The goal was for 90% of enrolled students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

In AC 2022-2023, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 48 to 76% and $M = 64$, $SD = 2.65$. Analysis of the comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 88 to 92% and $M = 92$, $SD = 0.45$. The scores improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2022-2023. The scores suggest improved student performance and increased knowledge of key concepts. Of importance to note, analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness for this student cohort guided instruction during course activities. Comprehensive exam item analysis of those same items reflected improved overall student knowledge in the weakest areas, including the rights to privilege in legal settings (pre-comp item target response rate of 14% and comp rate of 100%), ethical guidelines for bartering (pre-comp item target response rate of 14% and comp rate of 100%), dual relationship

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

boundaries (pre-comp item target response rate of 29% and comp rate of 100%), and ethical responsibilities to protect human rights (pre-comp item target response rate of 29% and comp rate of 100%). Additional evaluation of student performance on demonstration-based assignments indicates the student performance scores range from 88-98% with a $M = 94\%$ and $SD=4.06$. The goal of 90% of students demonstrating proficiency at 85% was met.

Additionally, in the 2022-2023 PSYC 6000 course, a new module of the ethical responsibilities for self-care to mediate stress and the potential for burnout in relation to ethical responsibilities was incorporated as a component of ethical practice in psychology. Students effectively demonstrated knowledge of self-care skills, the impact on mental well-being, and how deficits in self-care impact professional performance effectively on a basic questionnaire with a 100% correct response rate. A focus on self-care practice as an ethical responsibility was incorporated across course activities during the semester. A targeted assignment revealed students effectively understand the need for self-care from a professional and personal development standpoint. However, they demonstrated difficulty clearly identifying steps to maintain self-care consistently. The knowledge survey was not administered again at the end of the semester as students demonstrated self-care knowledge effectively from the initial survey. Students received an additional opportunity for personal self-care skills development through a Department of Psychology sponsored guest speaker presentation for student development in October 2023 titled Self Care.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 results, in AC 2023-2024 the faculty expanded the focus to include ethical professional practice to technology-specific platform skill sets and the ethical use of social media platforms in professional practice as these industry standards continue to rapidly evolve. This included another revision of 20% of pre-comp and comp questions specific to the identified areas. Based on greater understanding of student difficulties applying basic knowledge of ethical responsibilities for self-care to improve professional competence in context of professional development, modified course activities addressed this deficit. Students completed a basic ethical responsibilities of self-care knowledge survey at the beginning of the semester. An experiential assignment provided an opportunity for students to rate their initial competence and later progress in developing consistent ethical self-care skills as a component of their professional development.

In AC 2023 - 2024 the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 33 to 92% and $M = 67$, $SD = 17.05$. Analysis of the comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 88 to 100% and $M = 94$, $SD = 4.44$. The scores improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2023-2024. The scores suggest improved student performance and increased knowledge of key concepts. Of importance to note, analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness for this student cohort guided instruction during course activities. Comprehensive exam item analysis of those same items reflected improved

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

overall student knowledge in the weakest areas, including knowledge of unethical behavior by a colleague (pre-comp item target response rate of 38% and comp rate of 100%), the ethics of working with diverse populations (pre-comp item target response rate of 38% and comp rate of 75%), legal privilege (pre-comp item target response rate of 38% and comp rate of 100%), and bartering for services (pre-comp item target response rate of 38% and comp rate of 88%).

Additional evaluation of student performance on demonstration-based assignments indicates the student performance scores range from 86-99% with a $M = 91\%$ and $SD=3.6$. The goal of 90% of students demonstrating proficiency at 85% was met.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Additionally, in the 2023-2024 PSYC 6000 course, the ethical responsibilities for self-care to mediate stress and the potential for burnout in relation to ethical responsibilities was emphasized as a component of ethical practice in psychology. Students effectively demonstrated knowledge of self-care skills, the impact on mental well-being, and how deficits in self-care impact professional performance effectively on a basic questionnaire with a 100% correct response rate. A focus on self-care practice as an ethical responsibility was incorporated across course activities during the semester. A targeted assignment revealed students effectively understand the need for self-care from a professional and personal development standpoint. However, they demonstrated difficulty clearly identifying steps to maintain self-care consistently. As in the previous assessment cycle, the knowledge survey was not administered again at the end of the semester as students demonstrated self-care knowledge effectively from the initial survey.

Decision or Recommendation:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The changes in instruction and activities guided by analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness were effective. This practice will continue as each cohort of students has variable performance levels in these identified areas. The addition of course instruction and evaluation of student knowledge about the ethical responsibilities for self-care in the professional practice of psychology yielded awareness of the need for continued emphasis on this aspect of professional development. A specific assignment activity will be incorporated into the course to emphasize student current level of self-care and specific areas for improvement as a component of ethical professional development.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice,

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

with a new awareness of self-care maintenance as a component of ethical professional development thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270 were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge of ethical and professional practice, as well as their demonstration of ethical and professional practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge by scoring 3 (satisfactory) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2022-23, the target was met.

The supervisors' ratings are summarized in Table 5 and yielded an overall mean rating $M = 3.67$, $SD = .47$, in the superior range, with a minimum rating of 3 (satisfactory) for 100% of the students.

Table 5

Ethical and Professional Conduct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge of ethics.	3.67	.47
Ethical behavior.	3.67	.47
Respect for confidentiality.	3.67	.47
Maturity	4.00	0
Cooperation with others.	3.83	.37
Overall Rating	3.67	.47

Similar to observations in 2.3, two students received a satisfactory rating (3) in nearly all areas while the other four students received Superior ratings (4). This supervisor was not providing regular supervision for the two students and was prompted to comply with the contractual agreement of weekly supervision. He elected to supervise them virtually with a didactic focus rather than specific supervision of their clients which would have presented greater opportunity to observe the students' ethics. A review of the other students' ratings was exciting as it showed 100% superior ratings across all areas of ethical and professional conduct.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2022-2023 data, the Clinical Director met with each supervisor, particularly the noted supervisor, to

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

review practicum objectives and supervision requirements with the goal of evaluating the partnership and the University's and site's needs. He made the desired changes to the structure that included regular weekly supervision. Practicum I and University supervision of Practicum II emphasized ethical dilemmas when students encounter them, and the Practicum II University supervisor posed potential dilemmas to challenge students in the resolution of the ethical dilemmas.

Table 6

Ethical and Professional Conduct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge of ethics.	4	.00
Ethical behavior.	4	.00
Respect for confidentiality.	4	.00
Maturity	4	.00
Cooperation with others.	4	.00
Overall Rating	4	.00

Overall, 100% of students received superior ratings with an overall mean rating $M = 4$, $SD = .00$. This cohort illustrated a strength in their ethical and professional conduct at practicum with superior ratings across all areas.

Decision or Recommendation:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Because of social media and social trends posing ever-changing challenges to professional conduct and development, the intention was to host a mini workshop in Fall 2023 to address various topics pertaining to professionalism as graduate students and young professionals. The decision was made to address issues individually rather than a workshop. Like previous years, instructors had to address incidents, such professional, casual dress, and a pattern of unprofessional conduct (chronic tardiness, for example) on several occasions. Because the incidents increased, the faculty will host the mini workshop in Fall 2024.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in clinical practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on the Analysis of the Results:

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2022-2023 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2023-2024.

- While specific actions have been identified for each objective, the graduate faculty continued to host one activity per semester that brought first and second- year graduate students together to foster a culture that recognizes achievement, peer and faculty-student interactions, and healthy communication. For example, different faculty members took students on a service-learning trip to Nepal, to the Southwestern Psychology Association conference in San Antonio, Texas, and to a Scholar Forum for undergraduate and graduate students present their research at Louisiana State University-Shreveport.
- The Graduate Faculty hosted an end-of-year celebration of completing the first year and for completing all required coursework for the respective cohorts.

SLO 1

- The new instructor conducted an item analysis and modified three items to ensure they aligned with course content and objectives. These results indicate students' knowledge of theories of psychotherapy significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam.
- Practicum supervisors rated the students enrolled in PSYC 5270 during the Spring semester fours and fives for demonstrating knowledge of theories and psychotherapy, with 100% of the students earning a rating of satisfactory or higher.

SLO 2

- Exceeding the desired 80%, 100% of the students at least 70% on the entire exam and the targeted multiple-choice questions, and students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam.
- Students completed sample activities and conducted three mock comprehensive psychological assessments which included a clinical interview review of detailed substance use behaviors. These experiences were reviewed through class discussion so all students could benefit from each of their peers' experiential activities. All students completed these requirements thereby increasing knowledge of the importance of not only identifying the effects of marijuana, but also of other substances used by mock assessment volunteers during

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

comprehensive psychological assessment activities.

- Overall, 100% of students received a satisfactory rating. One student's rating for knowledge about therapeutic techniques needed *improvement*. Practicum II placement revealed a notable difference in evaluations with students placed in sites similar to Practicum I earn higher ratings, which revealed areas of needed training.

SLO 3

- Zero of eight students taking both tests scored 80% or better on the questions from the pretest even though scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest. It is important to also note that although zero of eight students did not score 80% or better, when the complete comprehensive examination was taken into account, which included 75 multiple choice questions and three essay questions, eight out of eight students scored 70% or higher and four out of eight students scored 80% or better on the complete comprehensive exam. In addition, when omitting three items that all students missed on the 25 questions from the pretest, four out of eight students scored 80% or better.
- 100% of students proposed before the conclusion of the Fall semester and completed their thesis by May 2024, with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. The students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day. In addition, four students presented at the Southwestern Psychological Association Convention, and one student presented at the LSU-S Academic Summit. This same student earned a research award.

SLO 4

- Analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weaknesses guided instruction during course activities.
- A targeted assignment revealed students effectively understand the need for self-care from a professional and personal development standpoint. However, they demonstrated difficulty clearly identifying steps to maintain self-care consistently.
- Overall, 100% of students received superior ratings with an overall mean rating $M = 4$, $SD = .00$. This cohort illustrated a strength in their ethical and professional conduct at practicum with superior ratings across all areas.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2022- 2023 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2023-2024:

SLO 1

- The results of this goal have been met for numerous cycles and improvement continues. The decision is to move from specifics to a broader modality of andragogy and provide course sessions for Socratic questioning and open discussions regarding the content and application of the theoretical foundations of psychotherapy. This method is intended to provide support for the information learned and encourage critical thinking.
- The PSYC 5270 Instructor who conducts weekly group supervision will have students identify their theoretical orientations they intend to practice with their clients at the beginning of practicum. Students will then be required to conceptualize and identify their treatment goals and interventions within the context of their identified theories.

SLO 2

- The students have consistently met the target of earning a score of 70%. Therefore, the targeted score will be increased to 80%. While 70% is the required grade to pass the comprehensive exam, a B is required for the course to demonstrate competency. Therefore, it is reasonable to increase the targeted grade to 80%.
- A specific skills test evaluating competency with this component of the clinical interview process in a comprehensive psychological assessment activity will be administered. It is expected that after course instruction and practice, students will achieve at least 80% on this skills test. Additionally, to drive continued compliance with industry standards, students will utilize technology obtained for the Clinical Psychology Master's Program and administer all personality testing instruments on iPads rather than through stationary computers or paper and pencil. This will provide students with the leading methods of performing standardized emotional/personality measures in the world of work when conducting professional psychological activities.
- The Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) will be included to better prepare students in the use of commonly used cognitive screeners. While Behavior Therapy is introduced in Theories of Psychotherapy (PSYC 5200), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is not, which could account for the lower ratings for these students. Since this is a regular practicum placement for our students, ABA principles and techniques will be introduced to PSYC 5200 students.

Assessment Cycle 2023-2024

SLO 3

- While the goal for the pre-posttests was met, it was noted that students' scores were higher on the essay portion of the test showing understanding and application of the theories than on the pre-posttests, indicating specific detail academic knowledge of the theories. A review of the pre-posttest questions will be conducted to determine if any updates are necessary to assure questions are directly related to the course content, especially for the three test items that all students missed. Any changes needed will be made prior to the pre-test in the fall of 2024.
- In preparation of AC 2023-2024, the faculty will continue having PSYC 5130, an elective research course, in Summer 2024 with the present cohort in order to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals in an effort to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner. In addition, faculty will encourage students in the research design planning to consider research designs that require less participants since a main barrier for students in AC 2022-2023 was in recruitment of the initial required number of participants and/or encourage students be proposal ready earlier in the fall semester, so some of them can collect data in the fall of 2024. This would prevent the difficulty of all students collecting data at the same time from the same participant pool.

SLO 4

- The changes in instruction and activities guided by analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness were effective. This practice will continue as each cohort of students has variable performance levels in these identified areas.
- The addition of course instruction and evaluation of student knowledge about the ethical responsibilities for self-care in the professional practice of psychology yielded awareness of the need for continued emphasis on this aspect of professional development. A specific assignment activity will be incorporated into the course to emphasize student current level of self-care and specific areas for improvement as a component of ethical professional development.
- Social media and social trends pose ever-changing challenges to professional development. For example, on several occasions, instructors had to address students' professional conduct. The faculty will host a mini workshop in Fall 2024 covering various topics pertaining to professionalism as graduate students and young professionals.