

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025

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 the 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, which offers undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Addiction Studies, as well as 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, as well as scientific and critical thinking, ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, effective communication, and professional development. As part of our educational mission, the Psychology Department offers encouragement and support for research and scholarship to both faculty and students, providing opportunities for practicum and externship training experiences. These activities are designed to foster professionalism and prepare students for graduate education, immediate employment, and community service.

Clinical Psychology Program Mission Statement: The mission of the clinical psychology graduate program is to educate students in the science and practice of clinical psychology enabling them to develop into knowledgeable professionals who are intelligent consumers of research and competent ethical providers of psychological

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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 consists 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% or higher. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

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Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Of the eight students, all but one achieved a score of at least 70% on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 14 to 23 correct responses out of 25 total, pre-test ($M = 16.75$, $SD = 3.20$). For the comprehensive exam, the scores for the same targeted items were much more consistent and ranged from 17 to 23 correct responses out of 25 total, post-test ($M = 19.63$, $SD = .63$) These scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores (two-tailed paired t -test, $t(-2.52)$, $p = .02$), 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 ($M = 19.63$, $SD = .63$) 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.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty implemented the changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The focus was placed on the broader modality of andragogy, and Socratic questioning to encourage a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This method was intended to provide support for the information learned, encourage critical thinking, and allow students to question areas that they individually may struggle with understanding in a positive and supportive environment.

In addition, a portfolio approach was taken for application assignments, complementing each of the major theories addressed in the course with interactive/process andragogy in mind. The hope was that students would increase their 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 intentionally implemented to advance the cycle of improvement.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025. The results showed the students performed significantly better on the post-test ($M = 83.63$, $SD = 8.09$) than on the pre-test ($M = 56.84$, $SD = 19.47$), $t(-4.15)$, $p = .002$. These results indicate that 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.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement.

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The decision at this time is to continue the focus on the broader modality of andragogy by providing course sessions that incorporate 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 method will also provide students with more opportunities to apply the theories in practice. Case studies will be utilized for treatment planning based on various theoretical models, allowing students to experience the differences in techniques and strategies and better understand how to combine them for best practice.

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 three-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 2023-2024, the target was met.

Table 1

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 with clients.	4.5	2

For the application of this knowledge with clients, the ratings ranged from 4 ($n = 1$) to 5 ($n = 1$), with $M = 4.5$. In terms of the SLO, the objective was met, with 100% of students earning a rating of 3 or higher from their supervisor, consistently meeting high standards.

Based on the information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, the students' efforts to apply theory again exceeded their knowledge. Faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The PSYC 5270 Instructor, who conducted weekly group supervision, had students identify their theoretical orientations they intended to practice with their clients at the beginning of their internship. Students were required to conceptualize and identify their treatment goals and interventions within the context of their identified theories as they presented

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their cases during group supervision.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025.

Table 2

Psychological Intervention Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	4.6	0.55
Takes a theoretically based approach to working with clients.	4.4	0.55

As seen in Table 2, internship 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 ($N = 3$) to 5 ($N = 2$), with $M = 4.4$, $SD = 0.55$. In terms of the SLO, the objective was met, with 100% of students earning a rating of 3 or higher from their supervisor, consistently meeting high standards.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2024-20245 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The PSYC 5270 Instructor will continue to emphasize theoretical orientation and application when students present cases during weekly group supervision for the internship. In addition, students will participate in discussions of best practices and utilization of strategies and techniques as they present case staffing with supervisors.

These changes will enhance the student's ability to understand and apply the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to advance the cycle of improvement for this Student Learning Objective (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
PSYC 5750: Psychopathology
PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychotherapy and Intervention

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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 consists 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 higher. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

The AC 2023-2024 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.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The changes in instruction and activities guided by the 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 consistently met the target of earning a score of 70%. Therefore, the targeted score will be increased to 80%. While a grade of 70% is required to pass the comprehensive exam, a grade of B is required for the course to demonstrate competency. Therefore, it is reasonable to increase the targeted grade.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Consistent with years past, the comprehensive exam included 75 multiple-choice questions and two discussion questions, and 69% (nine of 13) of the students passed with a grade of 80% or higher. The exam included the 25 items from the pre-test. Of the 13 students, 69%

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also achieved a score of 80% or higher on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 45.83 to 83.33% (M = 60.07, SD = 13.11). For the same targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 75 to 95.83% (M = 86.36, SD = 7.18) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest, one-tailed paired t-test, $t(12) = 2.61$, $p < .05$. While 80% of the students did not earn a score of 80% or higher, these results indicate 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 2024-2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The changes in instruction and activities guided by the 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. However, a review continues to show a large percentage of the cohorts miss two of the 25 items, one about intellectual disability and one about mood disorders, suggesting that the issue is the wording of the items and not a deficit in knowledge. These items will be replaced with new items for the same disorders, but they will be worded with greater clarity.

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 completing PSYC 5320, students submit a comprehensive psychological assessment report to evaluate their proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examinations, and administering, scoring, and interpreting psychological tests 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.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

In the AC 2023-2024, a module on the neuropsychological effects of marijuana and

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other mood-altering chemicals on cognition, mood, and well-being was provided to psychological assessment students. The pre-test and post-test originally scheduled were not administered. Instead, of questions specifically targeting a more detailed analysis of substance use were incorporated 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 discussions allowing students to benefit from each other's 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.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty provided instruction for the administration of psychological assessment instruments, including the WAIS-5. Students conducted a final comprehensive report that included a clinical interview, mental status examination, personality assessment, and intellectual assessment. Their scores ranged from 85-97% with $M = 90.4\%$, $SD = 4.54$. The results confirm student competency in integrating findings from multiple data sources to formulate a comprehensive psychological evaluation.

Decision or Recommendation

Based on the AC 2024-2025 results, the continued focus on integrating substance-related behaviors evaluation into psychological assessment clinical interviews will be a priority. Additionally, to drive continued compliance with industry standards, students will utilize technology obtained for the Clinical Psychology Master's Program to administer all personality testing instruments on iPads in addition to paper and pencil. This will provide students with the leading methods for administering standardized emotional and personality measures in the workplace.

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

Measure 2.3. (Direct – Intervention Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270 (Internship) 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.

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Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

Table 3

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend a 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

Overall, 100% of students received a satisfactory rating. One of the student's ratings 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, with an emphasis on therapy with college students. The other placements included assessments (clinical interview, MSE, and MoCA) and ABA therapy with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. Currently, a Mental Status Exam workshop is presented to all students in the Clinical Psychology program. The Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) was included to better prepare students in the use of commonly used cognitive screeners. Additionally, students were carefully selected for their internship assignments to ensure better alignment with internship supervisors and students' interests.

The data revealed the target was met for AC 2024-2025.

Table 4

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend treatment plan.	3.5	0.58
Seeks information about therapeutic techniques.	3.75	0.50
Knowledgeable about therapeutic techniques.	3.5	0.58
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	3.67	0.58
Takes a theoretically based approach.	3.75	0.50

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Overall Rating	3.75	0.50
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Overall, 100% of students received a satisfactory rating. One student's placement focused entirely on assessment. Therefore, the therapeutic theoretical orientation was not applicable to her evaluation. Another student received satisfactory ratings but few superior ratings. Last year's assessment revealed a similar trend with other students at this placement that focuses on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Therefore, while our students are demonstrating competency in psychological intervention, the ratings are consistent with the program's more general approach to preparing students for adult populations.

Decision or Recommendation

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. A previous plan, which was not executed last year but will be implemented in Spring 2026, is to introduce ABA principles and techniques in Theories of Psychotherapy (PSYC 5200), as we regularly assign students to this internship setting. However, next year's cohort has already completed the course and will therefore not benefit from that change. Therefore, the goal will be to have assignments completed early in Fall 2025, so that students are familiar with the setting and population for their internship. At the end of Fall 2025, students will be required to give a presentation on the setting, the population, and the therapeutic approach typical to that setting, to demonstrate a basic knowledge prior to starting their internship.

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

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

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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 consists 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 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 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, both statistically and practically, between the pre-comprehensive exam and 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 considered, 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-question pretest, four out of eight students scored 80% or better.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The PSYC 5120 instructor emphasized the importance of acquiring detailed knowledge by educating students on the aspects of critical language and decision making in statistics. These changes were expected to improve the students' ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design, the responsible conduct of research, and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and conduct psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, the target was not met in AC 2024- 2025. For AC 2024-2025, all 25 questions from the pretest were included in the comprehensive exam. Of the eight students who took both tests, zero scored 80% or better on these targeted items from the comprehensive exam, with a range of 32 to 76% ($M = 56.4\%$, $SD = 11.8\%$). Scores on the pretest ranged from 16 to 44% ($M = 31.6\%$, $SD = 8.5\%$). For

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the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t(10) = -4.78$, $p = .001$). As a result, student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased, both statistically and practically, between the pre-comp and comprehensive exams. It is important to also note that although zero of eight students scored 80% or better, when the complete comprehensive examination was considered, which included 75 multiple choice questions and three essay questions, nine out of 12 students scored 70% or higher and one out of 12 students scored 80% or better on the complete comprehensive exam.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Three items that had two possible answers will be revised. Additionally, in AC 2024-2025, as in the previous year, students performed better on essay questions than on multiple-choice questions. Therefore, emphasis will be on enhancing knowledge of detailed information. These changes will improve the students' ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design, the responsible conduct of research, and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and conduct 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 was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-2024, the target was met.

In AC 2023-2024, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025 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 on their research proposals. There 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

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desired. However, anecdotal data have consistently shown that 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 students face in completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner.

In AC 2024-2025, 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 or paper in lieu of the thesis by May 2025, with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. The students (n = 6) who completed theses received a mean overall rating of 3.71 on a 4-point scale. The students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 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 a research course in Summer 2025 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 the 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 2025, to impose structure and required timelines on their research proposals. 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 2024-2025 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 2025. This would prevent the difficulty of all students collecting data simultaneously from the same participant pool.

Areas for improvement noted in the evaluations included the clarity of results and tables/figures, proofreading drafts prior to submitting them to the major professor, and thoroughly addressing the 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. Additionally, these findings will be shared with major professors at the start of the fall semester to incorporate strategies for students to address feedback and reduce revisions.

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

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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 consists of questions developed by a faculty member, designed to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards of practice, as well as their ability to apply 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 2023-24, the target was met.

The students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 33 to 92% and $M = 67$, $SD = 17.05$. Analysis of the post-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. The goal of 90% of students demonstrating proficiency at 85% was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, in AC 2024-2025, the faculty made changes to instruction and activities guided by the analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness, as it had previously been effective. The addition of course instruction and additional information about the ethical responsibilities for self-care in the professional practice of psychology yielded increased awareness on this aspect of professional development. A specific assignment activity was incorporated into the course to emphasize students' current level of self-care and specific areas for improvement as a component of ethical professional development.

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As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2024-2025. The results showed the students performed significantly better on the post-test ($M = 79.38$, $SD = 6.70$) than on the pre-test ($M = 50.77$, $SD = 16.84$), $t(-5.27)$, $p < .001$. 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.

In AC 2024-2025, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 44 - 64% and $M = 50.77$, $SD = 16.84$. Analysis of the post-comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 72 - 88% and $M = 79.38$, $SD = 6.70$. The scores improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2024-2025. The scores suggest improved student performance and increased knowledge of key concepts.

Additionally, in the 2024-2025 PSYC 6000 course, the ethical responsibilities for self-care to mediate stress and the potential for burnout in relation to ethical responsibilities were emphasized as a component of ethical practice in psychology.

Decision or Recommendation:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The addition of course instruction and evaluation of student knowledge regarding 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. Considering this increased awareness, students will continue to prioritize the essentials of self-care while practicing. Additionally, students have provided feedback indicating that they do not feel confident and prepared to create treatment plans or treat ethically upon re-entering the practicum in the fall, despite having retained knowledge gained in the spring theories course. Therefore, it has been decided that a mini workshop/review of the basic components of the theories provided in the Fall of 2025 will be held, as students prepare to see clients for the first time in their practicum.

These changes will enhance students' ability to demonstrate an understanding and application of the theories as they begin to treat clients, and confirm the provision of ethical care, thereby continuing to advance the cycle of improvement.

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 and demonstration of ethical and professional practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate fundamental

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knowledge by scoring 3 (satisfactory) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2023-24, 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.	4.00	0
Ethical behavior.	4.00	0
Respect for confidentiality.	4.00	0
Maturity	4.00	0
Cooperation with others.	4.00	0
Overall Rating	4.00	0

Overall, 100% of students received superior ratings, with an overall mean rating of $M = 4$, $SD = 0.00$. This cohort demonstrated a strength in their ethical and professional conduct during the practicum, earning superior ratings across all areas.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty made 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 related to professionalism of graduate students and young professionals. The decision was made to address issues individually rather than in a workshop. As in previous years, instructors had to address incidents, including professional and casual dress, as well as a pattern of unprofessional conduct (such as chronic tardiness), on several occasions. As the incidents increased, the faculty hosted a mini-workshop in Fall 2024.

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Table 6

Ethical and Professional Conduct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge of ethics.	4.6	0.55
Ethical behavior.	4.8	0.45
Respect for confidentiality.	5	0
Maturity	5	0
Cooperation with others.	5	0
Overall Rating	5	0

Overall, 100% of students received superior ratings with an overall mean rating $M = 5$, $SD = 0.00$. This cohort demonstrated a strength in their ethical and professional conduct during the practicum, receiving superior ratings across all areas.

In previous years, the decision was made to address student issues of ethics and professionalism individually rather than through a workshop. Incidents, such as casual dress and a pattern of unprofessional conduct (e.g., chronic tardiness), were reported by supervisors on several occasions. Because the incidents increased, the faculty decided to host a more direct mini-workshop in Fall 2024. There were no reports of unethical or unprofessional behavior by students during the 2024-2025 practicum or internship. The students understood and successfully applied the information provided during the mini workshop.

Decision or Recommendation:

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Due to observations of unprofessional behavior among the first-year cohort and the absence of concerns during practicum and internship among the second-year cohort, it has been determined that the mini-workshop on professionalism will continue in the Fall of 2025 prior to students' placement in internship settings to better prepare them for professional practice. The faculty supervisor will continue to monitor.

These changes will enhance students' ability to demonstrate an understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in clinical practice, thereby continuing to advance the cycle of improvement.

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

The program faculty made several decisions after examining the results of data analysis from the 2023-2024 academic year, which led to improved student learning and program improvement in the 2024-2025 academic year.

While specific actions have been identified for each objective, the graduate faculty continues to host one activity per semester that brings first and second-year graduate students together to foster a culture that recognizes achievement, peer and faculty-student interactions, and healthy communication. For example, the Graduate Faculty hosted an end-of-year celebration to mark the completion of the first year and the completion of all required coursework for the respective cohorts.

SLO 1

- The focus was placed on the broader modality of andragogy, and Socratic questioning and open discussions regarding the content and application of the theoretical foundations of psychotherapy were utilized. In addition, a portfolio approach was adopted for application assignments, complementing each of the major theories in the course with interactive and process-oriented andragogy in mind.
- To address a previous weakness, emphasis was placed on students identifying and conceptualizing cases from a theoretical perspective. Supervisor ratings improved, and overall, 100% of students earned a rating of 3 or higher from their supervisor, consistently meeting high standards.

SLO 2

- Increasing the target from a 70% to an 80% passing rate proved challenging for the cohort, as only 69% of students met the grade, highlighting areas that needed to be addressed in Fall 2025. However, the results indicate students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comprehensive to post-comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.
- 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 discussions so that all students could benefit from each other's experiential activities. Students integrated the results of the assessment data, and 100% of the students earned at least 80% on their final comprehensive report in PSYC5320, demonstrating students' competency in integrating findings from multiple data sources to formulate a comprehensive psychological evaluation.

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- While all students received a satisfactory rating and are demonstrating competency in psychological intervention, the ratings are consistent with the program's more general approach to preparing students for adult populations and reveal the need for at least a brief introduction to the more specialized settings.

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, nine out of twelve students scored 70% or higher and one out of twelve students scored 80% or better on the complete comprehensive exam.
- 100% of students proposed before the conclusion of the Fall semester and completed their thesis or paper-in-lieu of thesis by May 2025, with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. The students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day.

SLO 4

- Analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified areas of weakness, guiding instruction during course activities.
- A targeted assignment revealed that 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.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2024-2025 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2025-2026:

SLO 1

- 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

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method is intended to provide support for the information learned and encourage critical thinking. This method is showing promise and will be continued.

- 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 the practicum. Students will then be required to conceptualize and identify their treatment goals and interventions within the context of their identified theories. In addition, students will participate in discussions of best practice and utilization of strategies and techniques as they present case staffing with supervisors.

SLO 2

- A review continues to show a large percentage of the cohorts miss two of the 25 items used on both pre- and post-comprehensive assessments despite targeted instructions, suggesting that the issue is the wording of the items and not a deficit in knowledge. These items will be replaced with new items for the same disorders, but they will be worded with greater clarity.
- To drive continued compliance with industry standards, students will continue to utilize technology obtained for the Clinical Psychology Master's Program and administer all personality testing instruments on iPads and via paper and pencil. This will provide students with the leading methods for administering standardized emotional and personality measures in the workplace during professional psychological activities.
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) principles and techniques will be introduced to PSYC 5200 students since we regularly place students in internship sites that use ABA. Additionally, the goal is to have internship assignments completed early in Fall 2025, allowing students to familiarize themselves with the setting and population. At the end of Fall 2025, they will be required to give a presentation on the setting, the population, and the therapeutic approach typical to that setting, demonstrating a basic knowledge prior to starting their internship.

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. Any changes needed will be made prior to the pre-test in the fall of 2025.
- In preparation of AC 2025-2026, the faculty will continue having PSYC 5130, an elective research course, in Summer 2025 with the present cohort in order to

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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 AC2023-2024 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 2025. This would prevent the difficulty of all students collecting data simultaneously from the same participant pool.

SLO 4

- Students provided feedback that they do not feel they retain the knowledge gained in the spring theories course to feel confident and prepared to create treatment plans/treat ethically, when re-entering practicum in the fall. Therefore, it has been decided that a mini workshop/review of the basic components of the theories provided in the Fall of 2025 will be held, as students prepare to see clients for the first time in their practicum. A mini-workshop and review of the basic components of the theories provided in the Fall of 2025 will be held, as students prepare to see clients for the first time in their practicum.
- Because of observations of unprofessional behavior among the first-year cohort and then no concerns during practicum and internship among the second-year cohort, it has been determined that the mini-workshop on professionalism will continue in the Fall of 2025 prior to students' placement in internship settings to better prepare them for professional practice. The faculty supervisor will continue to monitor.